



Bible Student's Notebook™

The Herald of His Grace

Presenting **every man** perfect in Christ Jesus. Colossians 1:28

Volume XVI
Issue 385

The Firstborn of Every Creature

by — Tony Nungesser

Preceding the wonderful revelation exclusively given to the apostle Paul concerning the reconciling of all in the heavens and all on the earth are four words. The reconciling of all hinges on this cardinal phrase. These words are,

Firstborn of every creature (Colossians 1:15).



“Loosen” is used many times in the Septuagint (the Greek Version of the Old Testament) for each of two Hebrew words: *gal*, **redeem**, and *phde*, **ransom**. Ransom is used only in relation to the claims of Yahweh, especially as to the firstborn of man and beast. Redeem is used of human rights. Ransom involves the divine, redeem the human; the former is religious in scope, the latter social, and seldom used in the latter Scriptures.

Paul, being a Jew and raised in the law, knew the great significance of this four-word phrase. It must have been an incredible revelation to the incarcerated apostle! In bonds, with few visitors, his spirit must have been overwhelmed with joy at this revelation – Christ! Firstborn of every creature!

Being well versed in the law, Paul knew about the kinsman redeemer and must have read the heart-warming story of Boaz and Ruth many times. As a result of Boaz redeeming Ruth, the supreme Great Redeemer, Christ, came – for Ruth became the wife of Boaz, and to them was born Obed, father of Jesse the Bethlehemite!

In the story, there was a nearer redeemer to Ruth, but he refused to redeem her. So terrible was this that the Scriptures just call him “*So-and so*” (Ruth 4:1). Henceforth, from that time on, that “*So-and so*” is to be called “*House of Pulled-off Sandal*,” for the law required a sandal to be pulled off (:8). Had Ruth been present when “*So-and so*” refused to redeem her, the law would have required her to spit in his face (Deuteronomy 25:9).

In the Greek New Testament, “*redeem*” and “*ransom*” are used for the same Greek word, *lutroo*. A.E. Knoch, in the *Keyword Concordance*, made a distinction when using these two words.

That being the case, according to the Greek, Christ being the “*Firstborn of every creature*,” and thus being every creature’s Kinsman Redeemer, every creature must be loosed from being bound in enmity to God and freed into a reconciled relationship of friendship and peace.

It is of interest that as to Christ being the correspondent Ransom for all, as stated in I Timothy 2:6, God wills to loose all mankind from sin and death into His salvation. He is “*vivifying all*” (I Timothy 6:13).

(see **FIRSTBORN**, page 3474)

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Bible Student's Notebook™

Paul Our Guide – Christ Our Goal

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This free weekly electronic publication (52 times a year) is dedicated to:

- the proclamation of the riches of God's abundant, exceeding grace (Romans 5:20; 11:6; Ephesians 1:7);
- the affirmation of God's purpose to save all mankind through the death, burial, and resurrection of Christ (I Timothy 2:3, 4; 4:10; Titus 2:11);
- the "preaching of Jesus Christ, according to the revelation of the mystery, which was kept secret since the world began" (Romans 16:25);
- true freedom and liberty apart from law (Galatians 5:1);
- the organic nature of the church, the Body of Christ (I Corinthians 12);
- the distinct message and ministry of Paul, the apostle to the nations (Romans 11:13);
- the importance of receiving all whom Christ has received (Romans 14-15);
- the recovery of rich Biblical truth that has too long remained hidden under the veils of traditionalism, prejudice, misunderstanding, and fear (Mark 7:7, 13);
- the completeness of the believer in Christ (Colossians 2:10), with:
 - total freedom from sins (Colossians 1:14);
 - identity in His death, burial, and resurrection (Romans 6);
 - adult sonship position (Galatians 4).

This publication is a joint effort of a few members of the body of Christ. It is a product of our individual lives and ministries together. We do not claim infallibility for its contents. Our readers are asked to be as the Bereans and search the Scriptures (Acts 17:10-11; I Thessalonians 5:21).

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PO Box 265, Windber, PA 15963

Office: (800) 784-6010

Local: (814) 701-0063

Clyde L. Pilkington, Jr. – Editor

(clyde@studyshef.com)

André Sneidar – Managing Editor

Rick Lemons – Associate Editor

Department Managers and Assistant Editors

Windber, PA: Clyde L. Pilkington, III, Nathan H. Pilkington, Janet L. Maher, Aaron Locker

Treasure Lake, PA: Steven Hill

Amherst, VA: Nadine Sneidar

Canada: Don Bast

Netherlands: Wim Janse

Foreign Representatives:

Australia:

Robert Tangchue
12 Weeroona St
Chermside Brisbane
Queensland 4032
rtangchue@optusnet.com.au

Canada:

Rick & Donna Longva
5211 Morrison Place
Peachland BC V0H 1X2
www.GodisGod.ca
rick@godisgod.ca

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Strictly Personal

THE STORY OF JUDAS

As you may be able to tell, Judas has been on my heart a lot lately in my personal studies and meditations. So much so, that in the last issue we ran one of A.E. Knoch's fine articles entitled *The God of Judas*.

The true details surrounding Judas are greatly neglected by Christendom: when he is considered, the circumstances are distorted to the extreme. All of God's creation has a role to play in His great drama. Judas is an amazing intersection of truths.

Last fall I devoted my talks at the Seneca Falls, NY conference to some of the many rich themes surrounding him. In fact, I have been working on a future written project on him myself.

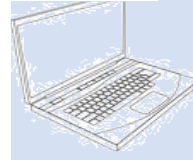
Toward this end, I have read some very good material related to this subject from past authors. The last issue was not the first time we have carried such material in these pages. In [BSN #239](#) we ran *The Case of Judas* by H.W. Martin; and in [BSN #238](#) we ran a compiled Q&A on Judas, *Better that He Was Never Born*.

In a future BSN we plan to run at least one more article on Judas by Knoch, *The Salvation of Judas*, before I begin running the material which I have been preparing. Hopefully these articles will prove to be foundational for the things that I will share with you from my own studies.

Reveling in God's grace,

Clyde L. Pilkington, Jr.

Our Mailbox



My family and I have enjoyed your writings, and I am thankful to the Father for your life. – **NV**

I just finished your [World Affairs and National Politics](#) book. Loved it. I learned a lot. I am going to read *Suffering* next. Then the OK book. You are a great writer and researcher. Keep doing what you do. I look forward to meeting you sometime. God bless you and your blessed work. – **GA**

I have finished the [Church in Ruins](#). Great insight. – **Australia**

I received [BSN #379](#) and what you say is spot on, scripturally. Few know this [Paul's] gospel, and those that do, try to add other gospels to it, like John 3:16. This gospel, that you know, is the only gospel, since the destruction of the temple in 70 A.D. – **PA**

Your book [Suffering: God's Forgotten Gift](#) is amazing. Your words in this book continue to help me stay sane. – **LA**

We use the BSN a lot in our Bible studies. As a matter of fact, last Sunday I read your [Justification, The Ultimate Freedom From Sin](#) article word for word from the podium as the message for the day. It was enthusiastically received! – **SD**

Thanks for all you do in your ministry, Clyde. I know you are reaching many people with the truth. – **KY**

I just wanted to say how important a book [The Church in Ruins](#) is. Your layout and comments helped me clearly see how the apostasy is clearly revealed in Scripture. I just got a 5-pack and pray with you that it can be used here, where religion spreads vast tentacles. – **TN**

I just finished reading, [The Abuse of Tongues at Corinth \(BSN #379\)](#). What a mind- blower, to say the least! WOW! – **NM**

Bonnie, Bonnie Banks

and the “Earlier Expectation”

by — Wim Janse
The Netherlands

I walked, long ago, on the “bonnie, bonnie banks of Loch Lomond” in Scotland, and I can confirm that the banks of that wide lake, north of Glasgow, are very, very “bonnie”¹ indeed. Never could I then have imagined that there would be something in a beautiful song about that lake that I could use to express why believing is necessary and beneficial.



The apostle Paul is very clear: believers have an earlier expectation, are pre-expectant. Since it is an *earlier* expectation, there must also be a *later* expectation. If *believers* now have an earlier expectation, then it must be that those who now do not believe may look forward to that later expectation! Right?

Many people ask me (or is it more a remark?), “If all people will be saved anyway, why should one believe?” Good question! The solution is really simple. Faith is the “ticket” that will bring us quicker to our destination.

In the Celtic folk song about those beautiful shores of Loch Lomond – The Bonnie, Bonnie Banks of Loch Lomond by John McDermott – is a chorus, which goes like this:

O ye'll tak' the high road,
and Ah'll tak' the low (road)
an' Ah'll be in Scotlan' afore ye.
Fir me an' my true love
will ne-er meet again
On the bonnie, bonnie banks o' Loch Lomon'.²

I'd like to point at the first two lines of the chorus. Here it says that the one who takes the “low road” will arrive sooner at his destination than the one who takes the “high road.” It does *not* say that only the one who takes the low road will arrive at his destination. Both will arrive! The difference is that the one who travels via the low road will be there sooner.

That we should be for the laud of His glory, who are pre-expectant in the Christ (Ephesians 1:12, CV).

1. A Scottish word meaning “beautiful.”
2. Oh, you'll take the high road, and I'll take the low (road) and I'll be in Scotland before you. For me and my true love will never meet again on the beautiful, beautiful banks of Lake Lomond.

The song about Loch Lomond speaks about “the high road” and “the low road.” Believing during this administration of grace is not always a nice and calm walk over a path of roses. It comes with suffering and with contempt from others while going along this “low road.” “Being saved without doing anything yourself? You must be nuts to believe in such a thing! It's a disgrace!” That is how someone who believes in the salvation and reconciliation of all mankind often is scorned. This attitude of others will see to it that one stays humble, and expecting all from God. It is the low road, the humble road.

Do you know what is so remarkable? That “low road” brings us to our destination sooner than the “high road” can ever do! Even though that “low road” is full of pits and bumps, it is the fastest road in God's roadmap! ■

THE REJECTION OF ERROR

A sacred regard to the authority of God ought to lead us to reject an error, however old, sanctioned by whatever authority, or however generally practiced.

— William Tyndale (c. 1494-1536)
Cited in Theological Writings on Various
Subjects
Peter Nead (1850), page 271

Involvement in Politics

by — Dan Sheridan

I used to be involved in politics. What I started to observe was that my attitude toward my fellow man gradually changed the more I got involved. Once you start defending your so-called “rights,” the more you **hate** those who “trample” on your rights, and are willing to use **violence** to do it.



Just look at those who say they believe Paul’s message and the Bible, and see what their attitude toward President Obama is. Do they pray for Obama as Paul told us to? I’ve seen materials that glorify violence to protect so-called “rights.” Is this what Paul would do? Did Paul in Prison complain about his “rights” being trampled?

What happens to those who believe Paul’s message when they get involved in politics? They no longer view people as objects of redeeming love and their mission field, but as potential threats to their com-

fort and flat screen TV. As a result, they become enemies and threats to their *property*. *Real estate* becomes more important than those for whom Christ died! Sad transformation.

God isn’t at variance with the present governments. That’s why Romans 13 tells us to submit to them. Where in the Scripture do we read about these “rights?” “Enlightenment” thinking has been blended with Christianity to produce this war-like revolutionary spirit among Christians – but it is totally contrary to Paul. Get a copy of Clyde Pilkington’s book ***World Affairs and National Politics: And the High Calling of God in Christ Jesus***.

I used to think I needed to defend my “rights,” but the more I examined it, the more I realized I was being conned out of my high calling in Christ Jesus by “Christian/enlightenment’s” false patriotism. Peace my friends! ■

Paul’s Message

by — Dan Sheridan

The litmus test of God’s servants isn’t success, but faithfulness to Paul’s message in a time of failure and apostasy.

- If the message is mainstream, it isn’t Paul’s message.
- If it fills stadiums, it isn’t Paul’s message.
- If it makes the news, it isn’t Paul’s message.

If it has clergy, pews, stained glass, baptismals, worship teams and steeples, it isn’t Paul’s message.

“*Having a pattern of sound words, which you hear from me [Paul]*” is always followed by “*all those in the province of Asia were turned away from me [Paul].*”

Study Paul’s letters in the *Concordant Version* – a

version not associated with clergy, robes, candles, stained glass and seminaries; in other words, the apostasy. ■

I CREATE EVIL

I form the light, and create darkness: I make peace, and create evil: I the LORD do all these things (Isaiah 45:7).

We did not write the passage in Isaiah, nor is the prophet responsible. It is the word of Yahweh Himself, and He ought to know.

— A.E. Knoch (1874-1965)
The Problem of Evil

The True Meaning of Love

by — John F. Vickers

*For thus God loves the world, so that He gives His only-begotten Son, that everyone believing on Him should not be perishing, but may be having life-
eonian (John 3:16).*

Many are the times we hear quoted the above well-known Scripture. This verse is often used in the quest to evangelize, but I wonder how many using it can really comprehend with a heartfelt understanding the length and depth and breadth of affectionate love therein.

The word “love” is bandied about willy-nilly in our supposedly well informed society, but all too often it is used as a synonym for lust. In the world there is no desire to understand the divine meaning of the word “love.”

If we are to get a clear understanding of its meaning, we should read Romans 5:6-9. Verse 7 reveals something that few ever consider, but let us do so in this manner, by asking the question, “How many of us would be prepared to take the place of someone who was condemned to die for a terrible crime?” Yes,

that’s right, any man of us would find it difficult to die even for a good man, never mind one convicted of terrible crimes. Not so with Christ: He willingly consented to die on our behalf and while we were yet sinners! Now *that* is super-abundant love!

Can we begin to understand the great sacrifice that God made by offering His only begotten Son? His great love for us caused Him not to count our offences. We read that God is “*not reckoning men’s offences against them*” (II Corinthians 5:19).

Do we fully understand what Christ was willing to give up for us? Let us be informed:

For you know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that, being rich, because of you He became poor, that you, by His poverty, should be rich (II Corinthians 8:9).



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by – Daniel Russino

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The riches spoken of here are far beyond our human capability of understanding, because they are none other than spiritual blessings being prepared for those who have accepted personal responsibility for the death of their Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ. His love for us and His willingness to complete His Father's will becomes apparent.

For let this disposition be in you, which is in Christ Jesus also, Who, being in the form of God, deems it not pillaging to be equal with God, nevertheless empties Himself, taking the form of a slave, coming to be in the likeness of humanity, and being found in fashion as a human, He humbles Himself, becoming obedient unto death, even the death of the cross (Philippians 2:5-8).

We are reminded that all is of God (II Corinthians 5:18), so let us consider what the love of God has achieved for us in Christ Jesus (Colossians 1:18-20). Because of what God, through Christ, has done, we now have peace with Him. In each of Paul's epistles we are greeted with,

Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

Not only have we received peace; we now discover something more:

For you did not get slavery's spirit to fear again, but you got the spirit of sonship, in which we are crying "Abba, Father!" The spirit itself is testifying together with our spirit that we are children of God (Romans 8:15-16; cf. Galatians 4:5-6; Ephesians 1:5).

If we continue in Romans 5:18-19 we read,

Consequently, then, as it was through one offence for all mankind for condemnation, thus also it is through one just award for all mankind, for life's justifying. For or even as, through the disobedience of the one man [Adam], the many were constituted sinners, thus also, through the obedience of the One [Christ], the many shall be constituted just.

Being, then, justified by faith, we may be having peace toward God, through our Lord Jesus Christ, through Whom we have the access also, by faith, into this grace in which we stand, and we may be glorying in expectation of the glory of God (Romans 5:1-2).

What a wonderful revelation! Because of God's love for us and the sacrifice He was willing to make, we now have peace with Him. We have been justified – *there is no condemnation to those in Christ Jesus!* (Romans 8:1). This allows for a peaceful relationship with the Father, and that incredible blessing of sonship. We also have a promise of our glorification.

God, being rich in mercy, because of His vast love with which He loves us (we also being dead to the offences and the lusts) vivifies us together in Christ (in grace are you saved!) and rouses us together and seats us together among the celestials in Christ Jesus (Ephesians 2:4-6).

Many are aware of the "Love Chapter," I Corinthians 13 (:4-7), but let us read verse 13.

Yet now are remaining faith, expectation, love – these three. Yet the greatest of these is love.

Why is this? Well, the first two in this trinity will pass away. Faith is given as a free gift, expectation is looking towards the payment in full of God's promises. When these two are fulfilled, that which remains is "Love."

Now isn't that interesting? This is where it all started,

For thus God loves the world!

We are forced to draw the conclusion that "Love" is the greatest word in the whole universe, and God demonstrated its meaning in the most effective way by [giving] His Son's blood to be shed for us all, so that He may become,

All in all (I Corinthians 15:28).



The Ministry of Comfort

by — J.R. Miller (1840-1912)

Comfort one another with these words (I Thessalonians 4:18).

THE NEED OF COMFORT

Comfort all that mourn (Isaiah 61:2).

There always are, in any company of people, many who have sorrow – many at least who need uplifting and cheer. There is always a place for those who comfort. There are few who really understand the art of giving comfort. Many who seem to think they do and who are ready on every occasion to seek to console others who are in trouble, fail in their efforts.

Job said that the friends who came to him in his calamity and spoke to him so talkatively concerning his afflictions were only “*miserable comforters*.”¹ Those who have passed through experiences of trouble and have had their friends and neighbors come and sit with them and give them what they considered words of consolation have found often that they gave but small help. The burden of sorrow was not lighter after they had gone. No new light broke through the clouds on those who sorrowed as they listened to the words of their friends. Their hearts were not quieted. They had learned no new song of joy.

LEARNING TRUE COMFORT

How then comfort ye me in vain? (Job 21:34).

It is worth our while to learn what true comfort is, and how we can speak tenderly to others. No ministry is more needed or finds more frequent opportunity for exercise. Those who would be wise in comforting must be *sympathetic*. They must be *patient* with even the smallest griefs of others.

1. [Stephen Hill]: The first set of Job's friends came and sat silent with him for seven days and seven nights because they saw his grief was great. They didn't say a single word in seven days! They bore his burdens to the point of weeping aloud and tearing their robes when they first saw him (Job 2:11-13). Sometimes words are not necessary at all and will only do harm. We are not only to experience suffering to help others, but to bear their burdens with them. We literally feel their pain and cry with them.



Indeed, weakness of this kind needs comfort that will *cure* it and transform it into manly strength. *Sympathy*, to be truly rich and adequate in its helpfulness, must be able to enter into every form of suffering – even the smallest – and to listen to every kind of complaining and discontent, to every fear and anxiety, however needless.

THE EXAMPLE OF CHRIST

Be of good comfort (Matthew 9:22).

Be of good comfort (Luke 8:48).

Be of good comfort (Mark 10:49).

It was thus that Christ condescended to all human frailty. He never treated anyone's trouble, however small, or anyone's worry, however groundless, with lightness, as if it was unimportant. He bade to come to Him all who were weary, receiving graciously everyone who came. He was *infinitely strong* – but His strength was *infinitely gentle* to the weakest. Nothing in this world is more beautiful than the sight of a strong man giving his strength to one who is weak, that he may help him also to grow strong.

EXPERIENCE

Blessed be God, even the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies, and the God of all comfort; Who comforteth us in all our tribulation, that we may be able to comfort them which are in any trouble, by the comfort wherewith we ourselves are comforted of God (II Corinthians 1:3-4).

Before we can be true comforters of others, we must know by experience in our own lives the meaning of the things which give us pain or distress. If we do not, we cannot help them by any words we may say to them. There is nothing in our experience to interpret to us what they are suffering.

If we would help those who are in trouble, we must know what *comfort* really is. Many people do not. Many think that if they merely weep with those who weep (Romans 12:15), that they have comforted them. There is a measure of help in this. It does us good when we are suffering – to know that another feels with us. It brings another life into fellowship with ours. We are not alone – somebody cares. This makes us stronger to endure. We can bear our pain better if a friend holds our hand. This is the only way some people think of giving comfort. They sit down beside us and listen to our recital of grief. They let us tell it out in all of its details. They encourage us to dwell on the painful incidents. They give expression to their pity, entering with us into our suffering as if it was their own. They dwell on the bitterness of our trial, emphasizing its sharpness and poignancy, thus *adding* to our pain and distress. Then they rise and go their way – leaving us just where they found us when they came in! They have shown their *interest* in us, their *sympathy* with us; but they have not given us the best *comfort*!

THE MEANING OF COMFORT

The word “*comfort*” is from a root that means to

strengthen.² In our modern use of the word, we have almost dropped this thought of its original sense; but we would better recall it. To *comfort* is to *strengthen*. When we would give comfort to others, we are not merely to let them know that we are their friends and are sorry for them. We are not just to try in some way to alleviate their pain. It is not enough that we in some measure relieve their distress. We are to seek to have them *grow strong* – so that they can endure the trouble and rejoice in it. This should be our aim in our ministry of comfort to others. We have not finished our work with them, therefore, until we have brought them some divine truth which will cast light on their sorrows, which will inspire them with hope and courage!

The comforter needs *gentleness*, for a harsh word would make the sorrow deeper. He needs *patience*, for grief yields slowly even to most faithful love. He needs *faith* – He must believe in God, must know Him, and must be sure of God's love. Then he will know how to sustain *with words* him who is weary.

Comfort one another with these words (I Thessalonians 4:18). ■

2. Comfort is a compound English word: *com* meaning “with,” and *fort* (fortification): with fortification. [Editor].

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FIRSTBORN (continued from front page)

Should Christ fail to redeem every creature, He would be relegated to the status of a “So-and so,” would have to relinquish His sandal and for evermore have the derogatory title, “House of the Pulled-off Sandal,” and everyone not redeemed would be required to spit in His face.

God highly exalts Him, and graces Him with the name that is above every name, that in the name of Jesus every knee should be bowing, celestial and terrestrial and subterranean, and every tongue should be acclaiming that Jesus Christ is Lord, for the glory of God, the Father (Philippians 2:9-11).

Does such a horrid fate await Him Who gave everything so that all would be vivified, justified, reconciled and saved? No! We see that,

Firstborn of every creature – what a wonderful revelation given to the apostle Paul for us! ■

VICTIMS OF RELIGION

Organized crime is one of many obvious evils in the world, but religion has claimed far more victims – people who have literally worried themselves to death dreading God, straining to meet His standards, then damning themselves for failing Him. What a crime. What an evil. Indeed, religion is the best cloak evil ever had.

— Martin Zender

How to Be Free From Sin While Smoking a Cigarette
(2007) Page 25

He Maketh No Mistake

by — A.M. Overton

My Father’s way may twist and turn,
My heart may throb and ache,
But in my soul I’m glad to know,
He maketh no mistake.

My cherished plans may go astray,
My hopes may fade away,
But I’ll trust my Lord to lead
For He doth know the way.

Tho’ night be dark, and it may seem
That day will never break,
I’ll pin my faith, my all in Him,
He maketh no mistake.

There’s so much now I cannot see,
My eyesight’s far too dim;
But come what may, I’ll simply trust
And leave it all to Him.

For by and by the mist will lift
And plain it all He’ll make,
Through all the way, tho’ dark to me
He made not one mistake.



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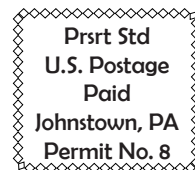
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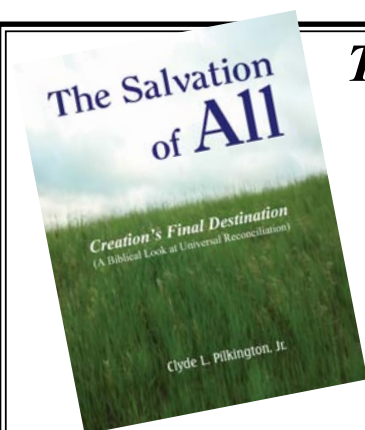


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