



Bible Student's Notebook™

The Herald of His Grace

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

Volume XVII
Issue 424

The Greatest Author of All Time

by — Clyde L. Pilkington, Jr.

I have always enjoyed visiting historical places. Perhaps this was influenced by being born and raised in Hampton, VA, the oldest continuous English-speaking settlement in America. Within a short distance from my childhood home were Jamestown, Williamsburg and Yorktown.

Later, in adulthood, I moved near Appomattox, where General Robert E. Lee surrendered the Army of Northern Virginia to General Grant. The house where the surrender took place is the centerpiece of a National Park there.

I also spent some ten years near Charlottesville where Thomas Jefferson's home, Monticello, is located.

Not only have I found local history interesting, but when travelling I appreciate seeing the historical places of the area.

When I was a child my parents took me on a memorable trip to Hartford, CT. While there we toured the home of Samuel Clemens. I really knew little about him before visiting his home, but felt an attachment to him after having done so.

Some of the highly celebrated figures in society have been great authors, especially novelists, such as Mark Twain. It is amazing to me how, from a blank sheet of paper, they create multiple characters, intertwined circumstances, drama and intrigue.

Great novelists are honored and respected. Their work is adapted for the big screen. Their homes turned into memorial museums.

A verse from the Psalms will introduce us to the greatest Author of all time:

My days, all of them were written upon Your scroll;



the days were formed when there was not one of them (139:16, CV).

With great drama and intrigue God is telling His story. On the stage of human history He unfolds the revelation of Himself. Humanity plays the characters in His great production. Believers are privileged to be called to the leading roles.

God is "El" in the Hebrew; "Theos" in the Greek. The first means "Subjector"; the latter, "Placer."

The true God is the Supreme Placer, the Supreme Subjector. He is the Creator, the Owner and the Proprietor. He is Planner and Executor. He is Supplier and Sustainer. He is Author, Producer and Director.

He wills all, He writes all, He orders all, He stages all, He directs all – He is **GOD!**

Sadly, there are some who would teach of a "god" who somehow is less than *THE* GOD. That "he" can't seem to manage to do exactly what "he" wants to do, that "his" creatures somehow write their own stories, and that "he" is somehow actually subject to them. This is the "god" of religion, but it is not *THE* GOD of Scripture.

Purely and simply, regardless of what His creatures may assert to the contrary – even by those who profess to represent Him – *the true and living God of Scripture is the great Author: 100% absolute God and the Sovereign of His Own universe.*

I find great rest in this.

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Bible Student's Notebook™

Paul Our Guide – Christ Our Goal

ISSN: 1936-9360

Volume XVII, No. 424 – November 26, 2013

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).

This publication is not connected with any "church," "denomination," "movement," "organization," "mission," "creed," "meeting," "school," "conference" or "fellowship."

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AUTHOR (continued from front page)

GOD STARTED WITH AN EMPTY PAGE

God started with a blank slate, an empty canvas, an empty page. God created everything out of HIMSELF. So EVERYTHING is “out of God” – obviously, there is no other choice.

Out of Him, and through Him, and to Him, are ALL things (Romans 11:36).

Everything is out of God. Every effect must have a cause. He is the First Cause. He is the Great Cause. He is the Last Cause. He is the Ultimate Cause.

We must ever remember that God is God, and as God, He is,

Operating all in accord with the counsel of His will (Ephesians 1:11, CV).

God is currently releasing some 8 billion of the “novels” He has written. They are spinoffs, intertwined with each other. Unlike the novels of Twain, God writes His “novels” and then animates them – bringing them to life.

YOUR JOURNEY IS HIS STORY

God has written your life, and day-by-day He is animating it. The lines are jumping off of the page of His book! His will is being accomplished perfectly.

God is responsible for all of His creation. This is what being GOD is all about.

Why do people balk at this idea?

Who balks at Twain for having power over his characters?

GOD IS IN CONTROL OF THE SCRIPT

Can you imagine Twain losing control of Tom Sawyer? That somehow Tom took on a life apart from Twain? That by some means Tom managed to exercise “free will” over Twain?

Out of Him, and through Him, and to Him, are ALL things (Romans 11:36).

We must learn this first if we will learn anything. We must start our doctrine with God.

We must start LARGE (with God) and then work toward the minute details (with ourselves).

If God is not our starting place of understanding, and we have as our start ourselves (and the minute details of our lives), we will end up humanistic and evolutionary.

GOD’S MEMORIALS

Man makes a mess of history as he does with everything else. Men of earthly power and success are allowed to tell their version of history. One day human history will be set straight. One day God’s work will be duly noted.

While living in Hampton I would visit Fort Monroe and see the jail cell where Jefferson Davis, the former President of the Confederate States of America, was imprisoned.

I suggest to you that God will preserve a history of His work on this planet, not only in people, but in the places of those people as well. Not just with His work in Israel, but with the Body of Christ also.

There are places I have always longed to see. I don’t see why, in the resurrection, I will not be able to see them.

For instance, I want to see:

A rental property in Rome (where Paul lived and taught for two years).

A prison cell in Rome (where Paul spent his last lonely days of life and ministry).

A home in Colosse (where Philemon and his family lived and hosted the saints).

A tavern in Wittenberg, Germany (*The Black Eagle Tavern* where Martin Luther spent evenings in lively conversations about life and Scripture).

A home in Bromley, Kent, England (Where E.W. Bullinger labored and wrote his books).

A home in Beverly, MA (Where A.P. Adams lived, ministered and was given to hospitality).

A home in Los Angeles, CA (Where A.E. Knoch devoted his life to study, writing and translating).

One day God is going to clear the deck. He is going to set the record straight.

God is not unjust, to be forgetting your work and the love which you display for His name when you serve the saints, and are serving (Hebrews 6:10). ■

A Normal Life in Nazareth

Are You Normal?¹

by – Dan Sheridan

And He came and dwelt in a city called Nazareth; that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the prophets, "He shall be called a Nazarene" (Matthew 2:23).

AS A VERY YOUNG BOY

The Lord Jesus took up residence in Nazareth when He was a very young boy – He lived in Jerusalem before that – but one day Joseph and Mary took the boy Jesus and high-tailed it out of town. That's because the mad-man Herod started killing two year old kids. So they fled to Egypt to get away from that insane murderer.



their homeland. They ended up settling in Nazareth this time. They didn't want to go back to Jerusalem because the son of the madman Herod was running things. Why risk it?

Nazareth wasn't the best of places. As a matter of fact, those who lived there were treated with contempt by the middle and upper class folks.

Most thought that a person from Nazareth wouldn't amount to much. Nazareth was a running joke.

Herod eventually kicked the bucket. Thank God! So, the danger being past, Joe and Mary came back to

That's where Joe and Mary settled down to raise a family.

A BOY GROWS TO MANHOOD

The years passed. They always do. Nothing in Nazareth made the headlines in those days. The leaders of the day didn't pay any attention to Nazareth – but

(see *NORMAL*, page 3794)

1. [Editor] In this article Dan does a great job of painting the picture of how "normal" Jesus' life was on earth. Though His life was pretty ordinary from day to day, it was also very extra-ordinary in other respects – especially toward the end of His life. There was nothing "normal" about the miracles that Christ performed or His crucifixion. The aim of the this great article is to call readers to be content with normalcy, depicting Christ's life as such. Yet, while we (like Jesus) live pretty normally day-to-day, God calls us also to be extraordinary as we suffer and promote the evangel for Christ's sake (Stephen Hill).



The Real Story of Jesus Christ's Birth

An in-depth biblical and historical look into the truths surrounding the birth of Jesus

by – Paul R. Pontis

Leave it to religion to get things all messed up. It can't even get the plain story of the birth of Christ correct. This work contains a wealth of historical and scriptural knowledge, effectively displacing commonly held traditions and legends surrounding the birth of Christ. Besides being enjoyable to read, this work is also a valuable reference guide.

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I just listened to the video sessions on Judas. I found myself crying because of the love I feel from Father for His children. All of them. Can't believe that, after all of these years of struggling to try to please Him He finally gets it through my thick skull that He loves me more than I love me and that all is OK between us. I can't believe that He has called me to understand while people a lot smarter than me are busy being "know-it-all" and looking down on stupid me because I no longer believe in God the way they *think* I should. I feel so blessed and am so glad I'm one of the "specially the believers." Thanks for your words. They thrilled me. – *WA*

I have watched "[The Things I Did Not Learn in Sunday School](#)." What a treat! It is wonderfully true, and delightfully humorous! You have that marvelous ability to teach what is true in a non-judgmental way (which evokes laughter!). Thank you for sharing this. Surely something I will share with others. – *OK*

I have been receiving your [Daily Email Goodies](#) for a while now, as well as your [Bible Student's Notebook](#). I am very appreciative for Study Shelf and its wealth of information. The materials on your site have definitely helped me grow in knowledge and hopefully wisdom as well. – *TN*

Hard to believe that I am almost half way on my 67th trip around the sun! In terms of the sun's orbit around the galaxies of +230 million years that would be a little shy of 10 seconds! Now does that not put this "vapor life" into perspective?! I watched the steam coming off the tea kettle this morning and that is what brought it to mind. Life is too short of a journey to get distracted by "religion" and other worldly things. Kind of redefines "short" as well, huh? – *CA*

[BSN #402](#) (How Scriptural Is "Morality"?) was excellent! Thank you so very much. I know I am still being influenced by some religious, moral bondage at times, but thanks be to Father, He is releasing me more and more out of these bondages. I am seeing His truth more and more. I am living in His freedom more and more. Thanks be to our Father-God and to Jesus Christ our Lord and Savior. Such a release! – *NM*

I pray for you and the marvelous work our Lord has placed before you. – *OH*

Regarding your critics who claim to be bored with some of your pioneering books, I think I could produce a fairly simple exam that would be difficult for them to pass, on nearly every chapter. – *CA*

Thanks so much for your hospitality. I felt so welcomed and loved that it was almost overwhelming!

I enjoyed the conversations. I felt encouraged and motivated to continue on this journey no matter the consequences. – *PA*

These [Daily Email Goodies](#) continue to be a blessing for all who read and look forward to them daily. What deep truth you write in so few words!

Stay healthy my friend. We all will need your calling and enlightenment, more than ever, in the coming days. Had Father not brought me to you, I don't think I would be equipped to benefit and mature from my afflictions.

Thanks to Father for your training and thanks to you for sharing. Loving you and your mission, May Father continue to bless us through your work and personal sacrifice. – *LA*

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NORMAL (continued from page 3792)

something incredible was going on there.

Jesus was living life. He grew up a normal boy. He loved God. He loved Scripture. He loved and honored His parents. He wrestled with His brothers. He played with the neighborhood kids. He skinned His knee. He worked with His dad as an apprentice carpenter.

He grew to manhood.

AS A MAN

His trade skills increased and He became self-sufficient. He transacted business. Met deadlines. Dealt with economic and political matters. Collected fees. Paid bills.

He wiped sweat from His brow on hot days. He went to the bathroom. He bathed. He fixed broken stuff. Exercised. Took rest breaks. Yawned. Scratched. Dealt with unreasonable people.

He attended the local synagogue. He sat with His friends and neighbors as they sang hymns together. He read Scripture in the meetings. He listened to messages from the spiritual leaders. He attended national feasts.

He was invited to weddings. He rejoiced with the family, congratulated the parents. A few years after the wedding He held the children of the wedded couple. He changed the baby after it made doo-doo.

He ate breakfast with mom and dad. They discussed domestic issues. They lodged strangers in their home. They held family and neighborhood parties. At those parties He grilled steaks and played with the kids. He knew about His mother's sicknesses and pains. He applied a cold rag to mom's forehead when she had a fever. Dad's too.

One day He had to bury His father. He wept with His mother at the grave site. He attended other funerals too. He mourned the passing of family and friends.

He lived a normal life.

He lived it in obscurity. After He began His public ministry the leaders were astonished that such a normal person could have been so smart. They wondered

what His secret was. He didn't receive the high class education of the day, yet He was really smart. He even puzzled His brothers who grew up with Him.

THE SECRET OF NORMAL

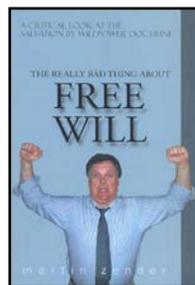
What did God think of those years in obscurity?

And Jesus, when He was baptized, went up straightway out of the water: and, lo, the heavens were opened unto Him, and He saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove, and lighting upon Him: And lo a voice from heaven, saying, "This is My Beloved Son, in Whom I am well pleased." (Matthew 3:16-17).

God said this before the Lord Jesus started His public ministry. Before He performed one miracle. God was well pleased with the normal man who lived a normal life.

What was the secret to His normal life? He lived it in the atmosphere of the Word of God. His first public words were, "It is written." God's Word is for normal people living a normal life.

Are you normal? ■



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A Critical Look at the "Salvation by Willpower" Doctrine
by — Martin Zender

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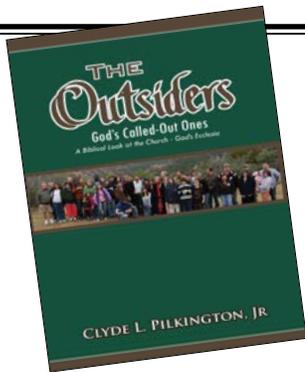


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The Outsiders: God's Called-Out Ones – A Biblical Look at the Church – God's Ecclesia

by — Clyde L. Pilkington, Jr.

In 1995, after sixteen years of being in the “pastorate” the author walked away. He left the “religious system” by resigning from the very “church” and “ministry” he had formed. In many ways this work is a testament to these actions. This testimony was thirty years in the making – the results of a spiritual journey that the author found to be common to other saints scattered throughout the world and across history. This is an opportunity to explain why some who love the Lord no longer “go to church.” It does not seek to persuade others to do something different; but rather to be simply who and what they already are “in Him.” This is an uncovering of the truth of the church, and an encouragement for the members of His Body to enjoy the position and standing “in Christ” that they already possess, realizing that they are truly “complete in Him” (Colossians 2:10), that He alone is their Life (Colossians 3:4), and that His Life is full of freedom (Galatians 5:1).

128 pp., PB. (#4125) \$9.²⁵
(+ \$3.²² s&h = \$13.²⁴)

The Outsiders was very encouraging. Thanks for your thoughts and study on the true Body of Christ and the lonely road we travel at times. – **MO**

I thank God for *The Outsiders*. I couldn't put it down. Read it all in one sitting. – **PA**

The Outsiders has something different about it. Upon finishing it an awareness has taken hold of my mind and spirit – a “knowing” that I have been afforded a special measure of His grace in just being allowed to be exposed to the truth contained within. – **KS**

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