



# Bible Student's Notebook™

## The Herald of His Grace

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

Volume 36  
Issue 880

# God's Plan in Me

by — Arthur P. Adams (1847-1920)

God has a definite purpose in the creation of everything, a definite end in view, and that end is certain to be reached. In other words, every creature ultimately fulfills the purpose of the Creator in its creation. For us to suppose otherwise would be to suppose a failure on the part of the Creator, which is unthinkable.



I am a seed, destined to a certain result. The seed may pass through many unexpected changes in reaching that result, like the seed in the hand of an Egyptian mummy lying dormant for a thousand years, but still its end is fixed, and that end it will reach, and none other.

I may seemingly frustrate the *grace* of God, as in Galatians 2:21, but I cannot frustrate His *will*. I may be disappointed many times in my failing to be what I would *like* to be, and what I *imagine* I might have been, and so my *experience* will correspond to the poet's words,

Of all sad words by tongue or pen,  
The saddest are these, "It might have been."<sup>1</sup>

Yet this *experience* is a part of my training, and by it I am *continually* being advanced toward what in the providence of God I *am to be*.

Let no one say, "This is fatalism." Nay, it is "Godism" if I may reverently use such an expression. None need fear a "fatalism" that makes God supreme, absolute, almighty.

This glorious consummation will be reached when *all are gathered together in one* (Ephesians 1:10) and God is "*All in all*" (I Corinthians 15:28). Thus, may the

(see *PLAN*, last page)

1. John Greenleaf Whittier (1807–1892), *Maud Muller* (1856).

The believer's attitude toward God then might be thus expressed:

God has created me for a definite purpose. That purpose I shall ultimately fulfill in His economy. It is a wise and good purpose, one with which I should be perfectly satisfied and contented, if I only understood it all.

Toward that end I am continually moving. *All things* advance me in that one direction, and I shall surely arrive. I shall surely fulfill the purpose of my creation, I am in His hands as clay in the hands of the Potter to be fashioned according to His will.

It is a great satisfaction and pleasure to think of our relationship to God in this light, for God has something in His mind to make of me, and I shall surely become that something. Furthermore, since God is wise and good, that something will please and satisfy me perfectly. When I reach the place for which God created me, and for which He has fitted me, then I shall have no regrets that it is not another place, but I shall realize that it is my place and shall be satisfied, perfectly satisfied with the accomplishment of the ever blessed and good will of God in me.

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# The Two-Sided Principle of Planning

by — Clyde L. Pilkington, Jr.

God has already written out the exact details of our lives; we are simply living what He has masterfully planned.

*My days, all of them were written upon Your book; the days were formed when there was not one of them (Psalm 139:16).*



while He, with perfect precision, directs our steps in utter harmony with that which He has written long ago. Some of our dreams and plans are realized, some are eventually altered or abandoned, others are completely shattered – and yet all is in perfect accord with the details of His wise script.

The two-sided principle of (1) our own planning and (2) God's pre-written script are expressed fittingly in Proverbs 16:9.

*A man's heart devises his way: but the LORD directs his steps.*

We are the imagined *devisers*, yet He is the absolute *Director* – thus, the old adage, “Man proposes, God disposes.” Our part in this equation is that we go about with our thinking, dreaming and planning, all the

Keep thinking, keep dreaming, keep planning – after all, even these are all out of Him. Such devising is our role. This is how God directs and prepares us for His way in our lives. Meanwhile we can find great rest and comfort in the certainty that our successes, and even our disappointments, are all up to Him!

BSN

#### TOPICS:

**Major:** Planning; Sovereignty  
**Minor:** Believer's Walk; Peace

### Bible Student's Notebook™

*Paul Our Guide – Christ Our Goal*

ISSN: 1936-9360

Volume 36, No. 880 – July 26, 2021

*Scripture education in a weekly format!*

This free electronic publication is dedicated to:

- the absolute sovereignty and deity of God (Romans 11:36);
- the proclamation of the riches of God's abundant, exceeding grace (Romans 5:20; 11:6; Ephesians 1:7);
- the affirmation that God will save all 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 in ages past" (Romans 16:25);
- true freedom and liberty apart from law (Galatians 5:1);
- the organic nature of the Body of Christ (Ephesians 4:16);
- the Secret Administration, being the operational revelation for today (Ephesians 3:9);
- the unprophesied, Celestial hope and calling of the Body of Christ (Colossians 3:4);
- the distinct message and ministry of Paul, the apostle to the nations (Ephesians 3:1-3);
- 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);
  - union in His death, burial and resurrection and ascended seated position among the celestials (Romans 6; Ephesians 2:6);

– adult sonship position (Ephesians 1:5).

This publication is the product of humble efforts of ordinary men intended to stimulate the earnest study of Scripture. We do not claim infallibility for the contents of this publication; thus they are not meant to imply finality on any subject discussed, or that further research would not add further light from the Word of God. God's storehouse of truth is inexhaustible, so draw on its wealth by prayerful study. 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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For definitions of abbreviations/acronyms, see index after the [order form](#).

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# Our Calling in Him

## Brief Studies in Ephesians 1:3-2:7

Part 1 of 5

by — Vincent Bennett

### INTRODUCTION

There are divine distinctions made in the Word of God that must be recognized by every student who desires to show himself “*approved unto God, a workman who needs not to be ashamed*” (II Timothy 2:15).

We must “*distinguish between the things that differ*” (Philippians 1:10, marginal rendering). While all Scripture is for us and is profitable, yet not all truth is about us or to us (II Timothy 3:16). In order to obtain the true interpretation of any passage of Scripture, we must take into consideration the particular period of time in which the message was given and to whom it was addressed.

Much of the confusion today, the different interpretations that are accepted by different groups, and the diverse and strange doctrines that are carrying away even some of the most zealous and earnest, can be traced back to a mishandling of the Word of God and a disregard for the injunction just mentioned.

Today we find men, not understanding their distinct calling as members of the Church which is His Body, trying with every conceivable plan and program to

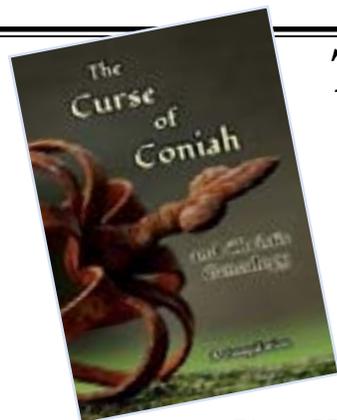


bring in an earthly Kingdom of blessedness that is God’s purpose for Israel. Would to God that Paul’s prayer in Ephesians 1:17 could be answered in us today; that we might have our understanding enlightened and know what is the hope of His calling. Many not knowing the nature of this calling, which is heavenly, in ignorance seek to realize the vocation of Israel, which is earthly.

God has a definite plan and purpose for Israel on the Earth and our God, Who cannot lie, will yet fulfill the covenants He has made with His people. The entire prophetic Word has its climax in the coming of the Messiah and the setting up of His Kingdom (Luke 1:31-33).

Later, in Ephesians 3:1, the Apostle Paul tells of a definite truth that God had given to him: truth not made known to previous ages and generations; and he is the dispenser of this new revelation. Could any statement be more clearly stated? (Ephesians 3:1-11; Colossians 1:24-28).

While the Kingdom is in abeyance and blindness has happened to Israel, God made known to Paul this secret hidden from ages and generations. Not one of Israel’s prophets knew this mystery; neither



76 pp., PB

## The Curse of Coniah and Christ’s Genealogy (A Compilation)

The virgin birth of our Lord, Jesus Christ, was an absolute necessity, judging from the genealogies. At first glance the opposite seems to be the logical deduction. Why should His descent be traced back to David and Abraham unless He was their natural Heir? Why go back to Adam unless He had a perfect pedigree? Authors include: John Cale, Joseph Hartill, A.E. Knoch and Fred Meldau.

See [order form](#) under “*Compilations.*”

did John the Baptist nor the Twelve Apostles. Not until the glorified, ascended Lord revealed it to Paul was the manifold wisdom of God made known: that before the overthrow of the world He had purposed the making of a new thing, whose nature, calling and destiny would be heavenly.

Paul is the minister of this revelation which completes the Word of God (Colossians 1:25; the word “fulfill” is “complete”). God is now definitely concerned with the making of a “New Man” (Ephesians 2:15); i.e., the “Church which is His Body,” of which Christ Jesus our Lord is the glorious Head (Ephesians 1:22-23; Colossians 1:18-28.)

One day the Body will be complete, the last soul that will realize His inheritance in the saints (Ephesians 1:19) will be called from justification to glorification. When that day comes our heavenly hope will be realized and the Body will be joined to the Head in the glory! After that, God will deal with Israel again, for they have not been cast away forever (cf., Romans 11:27). God’s purpose with them and the setting up of the earthly kingdom will be established.

Looking back, we can easily see how the Jews were blind when they rejected Jesus Christ and said, “We will not have this man to reign over us.” Yet those people are equally blind today who take for themselves Christ’s message to the Jews and apply it to the dispensation in which we live.

Paul’s later Epistles have a distinct message for this age. In them is found truth for us concerning the Church which is His Body, as distinct from Kingdom truth for Israel. May God reveal to us what is the hope, character, and destiny of our calling!

To this end we are going to study *the Epistle to the Ephesians* which was written by the Apostle Paul during his imprisonment at Rome, after the final rejection of Israel and the judicial sentence in Acts 28:27-28.

*For the heart of this people is waxed gross and their ears are dull of hearing, and their eyes have they closed: lest they should see with their eyes, and hear with their ears, and understand with their heart, and should be converted, and I should heal them. Be it known therefore unto you, that the salvation of God is sent unto the Gentiles, and that they will hear it.*

### THEME OF THE EPISTLE

The most glorious revelation that God has given, the highest and deepest truth He has made known to man, He communicated through the Apostle Paul. *The Epistle to the Ephesians* stands without a peer in the whole range of the inspired Book. Its love surpasses knowledge. Its riches are unsearchable. Christ Jesus is far above all principalities and powers, seated in the heavenlies, into which God’s grace has brought us in Him. The truth takes us back before the overthrow of the world and points forward to the ages to come when believing sinners shall be made the display of His grace in Glory.

In Colossians 1:25, Paul states that this truth which he is dispensing “completes the Word of God.” How many really know and understand this final word which God here declares, this truth which God kept secret from former ages and generations, this mystery which was hidden in God’s heart, this purpose which He purposed in Himself before the overthrow of the



## ***100 Scriptural Proofs that Jesus Christ Is the Savior of All and 150 Reasons for Believing in the Final Salvation of All Mankind***

by — Thomas Whittemore & Erasmus Manford

108 pp, PB This reprint of two historical works from the 19th century examines Scripture passages taking the reader through a logical train of thought proving universal reconciliation.

See [order form](#) under “Whittemore.”

world? What a message of pure unadulterated grace!

## KEYNOTE — “IN CHRIST”

Throughout this epistle we find this dominant recurring expression which occurs more than 20 times and is the keynote of the book.

“*In Christ!*” Isn’t it wonderful? We are in Him and, as Colossians 2:10 puts it, we “*are complete in Him.*” Oh! the matchless grace of our God! To think that the sin question is forever settled, that we are justified freely by His grace, and are made one with the Lord Jesus. In Him we stand holy and without blame before the Father.

Before going into an exposition of the Epistle, I want to give you a simple outline which will be a picture of the contents of the book before you.

### OUTLINE OF PAUL’S EPISTLE TO THE EPHESIANS

- ◆ Salutation and Benediction (Ephesians 1:1-2)
- ◆ Our calling in Him (Ephesians 1:3-3:21)
- ◆ Our conduct in Him (Ephesians 4:1-6:9)
- ◆ Our conquest in Him (Ephesians 6:10 -18)
- ◆ Conclusion (Ephesians 6:19-24)

Let no man think that he can come to this Epistle and grasp its riches, scale its heights, or fathom its depths aided only by the natural mind. There must be more than an intellectual understanding of the truth. Spiritual things must be spiritually discerned. We pray then that in the meditation of this portion of His Word that God would be our teacher, and that we shall go on from Glory to Glory.

### SALUTATION AND BENEDICTION Ephesians 1:1-2

*Paul, an apostle of Jesus Christ by the will of God, to the saints which are at Ephesus, and to the faithful in Christ Jesus: Grace be to you, and peace, from God our Father, and from the Lord Jesus Christ.*

These opening verses hold riches of spiritual wealth that are well worth mining, and the workman in the

Word will be amply repaid for any labor expended in study, as God by His Spirit reveals one rich vein of truth after another.

### “Paul”

His name was originally “*Saul,*” and it is interesting to note the transformation of this man’s life and the circumstances under which his name was changed. Only as we understand Paul’s conversion from his former life will the glory of the message of grace shine out in full splendor.

Philippians 3:5 gives us the information that Saul of Tarsus was

*circumcised the eighth day, of the stock of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, an Hebrew of the Hebrews: as touching the law, a Pharisee.*

The Pharisees were the strictest sect of the Jews’ religion, a group of “separatists” with an “holier-than-thou” attitude, who not only strived to observe the law but endeavored to go beyond its ceremonial requirements and sought justification in the carrying out of the traditions of the elders. Saul was behind none in meeting the exacting demands of his religion. Listen to him in Galatians 1:14.

*And profited in the Jews’ religion above many my equals in mine own Nation, being more exceedingly zealous of the traditions of my fathers.*

He could say that, as touching the righteousness which is of the law, he was “*blameless*” (Philippians 3:5). His zeal in his religion knew no bounds. Persecuting the early believers, he wrought havoc in the assemblies (I Corinthians 15:9; Galatians 1:13; Philippians 3:6).

Acts 7:57-58 and 8:1 tell of how the infuriated Jews, who stoned Stephen, found this man Saul consenting to their murderous actions and more than willing to take care of their clothes.

To the end of his days Paul never forgot the grace of God which so gloriously transformed his life from the chief of sinners into the Apostle of the risen and ascended Lord (I Timothy 1:15-16).

The passage of Scripture which records his change of name is also very significant. In Acts 13:7 the name of his first Gentile convert is mentioned, “*Sergius Paulus*” This man desired to hear the Word of God, but Elymas, a Jew, sought to turn this Gentile away from the faith, whereupon Saul, vindicating his apostleship to the Gentiles, performs a miracle of judgment and blindness upon the offender, one of his own kin, Elymas, the Jew. From this time the Hebrew name “*Saul*” passes from the record and the Apostle to the Gentiles is called by the same name as his first Gentile convert, “*Paul*.”

Is it not also singularly significant that this incident is typical of Saul’s ministry?

*The Jews ...Forbidding us to speak to the Gentiles that they might be saved, to fill up their sins always (I Thessalonians 2:14-16).*

In Acts 28:27-28, after the rejection of the message by the Jews, Paul pronounced the judicial sentence of blindness on his own people and the word of salvation is sent to the Gentiles.

The name “*Paul*” means “*little*.” Is not that suggestive of humility and the outstanding characteristic of this Apostle who, so conscious of his unworthiness, expresses himself as being “*less than the least of all saints*”? Yet to such an one is grace given to make known truth which has been hidden from ages and generations: “*the untraceable riches of Christ*” (Ephesians 3:8).

### **“The apostle of Jesus Christ by the will of God”**

The origin of Paul’s apostleship is “*the will of God*,” and so is his message. That which is to be dispensed in this Epistle, through the Apostle (one sent) to the Gen-

tiles, is all in accordance with God’s will for the working out of His Own purpose in Christ Jesus, which He planned in his infinite wisdom “*before the world began*.”

Notice how “*the will of God*” is made the background of the truth of the first chapter:

- Paul’s apostleship is by “*the will of God*” (:1);
- We are given the “*son place*” “*according to the good pleasure of His will*” (:5);
- He is the God “*Who worketh all things after the counsel of His own will*” (:11).

So, it is well to realize that the unique truth of this epistle has its origination, revelation, manifestation and consummation in *the will of God*.

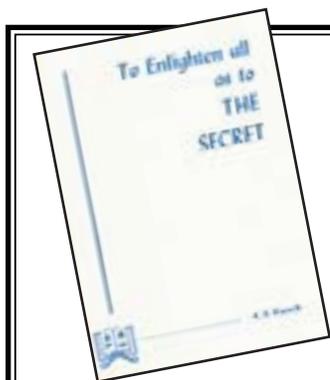
### **“To the saints which are at Ephesus and to the faithful that are in Christ Jesus”**

Whether or not this Epistle was sent just to the church at Ephesus or was a circular letter sent first to the Ephesian saints and then passed on to other places, is a subject outside of the scope of our study and must be left to others. *We are looking for the teaching of the epistle.*

“*Saints*” and “*faithful*” – all believers are called “*saints*” and are made one with the Lord Jesus in death, burial, resurrection and ascension. They are therefore “*in Christ Jesus*.” But not all who are saved by His grace are “*faithful*.” Notice how Paul closes this epistle:

*Grace be with all them that love our Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity (6:24).*

God’s best can be given to only the “*faithful*” and only the faithful will pass on that which God reveals. In this respect Paul gave the commission to Timothy:



## ***To Enlighten All as to the Secret***

by — A.E. Knoch (1874-1965)

The letter to the Ephesians is an elaboration of the definition of the present secret economy of which Paul became the dispenser.

63 pp., BK

See [order form](#) under “*Knoch*.”

*And the things that thou hast heard of me among many witnesses, the same commit thou to faithful men, who shall be able to teach others also (II Timothy 2:2).*

**“Grace be to you, and peace, from God our Father, and from the Lord Jesus Christ.”**

Glory to God for such a benediction! Separated from God by sin, yet by the provision of His mercy, “*grace*” and “*peace*” come from God to span the gulf between us. And nothing but God’s grace can span that gulf. There is no peace apart from Christ. Oh, how futile is man’s effort to bridge the distance between himself and God by his own works. Man cannot accomplish it, but God has done it; and in the Son of His love, I can call God “*Father*.”

“*Grace*”! Who can fathom its depths? “*Peace*”! Who can fully express its satisfaction? “*Grace*” is the source of blessing, “*peace*” its crown. They never come in reverse order. God never gives peace apart from grace; neither can the sinner experience peace until he has known grace.

Such is the salutation and benediction of this wonderful epistle – and the best is yet to come as the wonderful theme of His marvelous and matchless grace is unfolded.

## OUR CALLING IN HIM

Ephesians 1:3-3:21

### The Plan and the Work of God

Ephesians 1:3-14

After our study of the opening verses of this epistle, we are now ready to meditate upon one of the most wonderful portions of the Word of God. What a different atmosphere is here found from that in Galatians. There it is a battlefield; here it is a heart meditation. There we find the strife of controversy; here the blessedness of a Heaven-born unity.

Here, in a single sentence of two hundred and sixty-four words (1:3-14), the greatest sentence in all of the literature of the world, is woven the plan and work of God. These verses must be taken in their entirety so that the completeness of the truth before us is not

broken. Not to be ignored are these *glorious* words,

*To the praise of the **glory** of His grace (:6).*

*That we should be to the praise of His **glory** (:12).*

*Unto the praise of His **glory** (:14).*

Notice the scope of this truth: from “*before the overthrow of the world*” (Ephesians 1:4), to the “*redemption of the purchased possession*” (1:14). Who can begin to sound forth the full richness of this? Is not this glorious passage, like the entire epistle, scaling heights and spanning breadths unknown?

The *key* to the instruction and construction of this marvelous sentence is found in the word “*according*” which occurs five times:

*According* as He hath chosen us in Him before the overthrow of the world (:4).

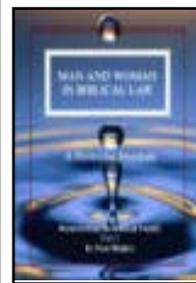
*According* to the good pleasure of His will (:5).

*According* to the riches of His grace (:7).

*According* to His good pleasure which He hath purposed in Himself (:9).

*According* to the purpose of Him Who worketh all things after the counsel of His own will (:11).

After some glorious truth or fact has been declared, the consequences and issues are made known and the word “*according*” ties the verses together. It is the link in the chain that keeps the theme in progressive



### **Man and Woman in Biblical Law**

by — Tom Shipley

268 pages, PB

The goal of this book is to lay the foundation for the establishment of a truly biblical social order, especially within the community of Bible-believing, Christ-honoring families. The subject matter is patriarchy. The biblical exposition contained herein is devoted to establishing the proposition that it is patriarchy which was and is mandated by God ever since the original creation of man and woman. The scriptural discussion on polygamy here serves as a supporting role to the fundamental proposition of God-ordained and mandated patriarchy.

(See [order form](#) under “Other Authors.”)

✚ *We are monuments of God's grace witnessing to the "untrackable riches of Christ" (Ephesians 3:8).* – William B. Hallman (1902-1985)  
revelation until the plan of God is worked out.

— 1934  
(abridged & edited)

(to be continued)

**Bennett**, an Englishman who came out of the Dutch Reformed Church, was a graduate of Cliff College (Sheffield, England), Moody Bible Institute, and McCormick Presbyterian Seminary

(Chicago). He was an active Bible conference speaker, the Assistant to the President of Wheaton College, pastor in Muskegon, MI a few blocks from Harry Bultema (1884-1952) who was at the Berean Church, and university pastor at John Brown University (Siloam Springs, AR).

**TOPICS:**

**Major:** Ephesians; Grace; Mystery; Peace  
**Minor:** Paul; Right Division

PLAN (continued from front page)

trusting child rest in God both for himself and for the "whole creation" (Romans 8:22), and with the utmost confidence that he may commit all of his interests to Him "as to a faithful Creator" (I Peter 4:19). **BSN**

— [The Purposes of God and the True Basis of Redemption](#)

Original printing: 1885.  
Bible Student's Press, reprinted 2010.<sup>2</sup>

(edited excerpt)

**Arthur P. Adams**, author and publisher, was the great-grandson of President John Adams. He was a Methodist minister whose independent study of the Scriptures led him to separate from his denomination in 1878.

For a short while he was acquainted with Charles Russell (1852-

1916), and then with Nelson Barbour (1824-1905). Barbour was purported to have held to "Rellyism," the doctrine of Universal Reconciliation taught by James Relly (1722-1778).

Adams disassociated with Russell early in the 1880s. He became associated with John Paton (1843-1922). One source states that "Adams became a significant force among those opposing Zion's Watch Tower."

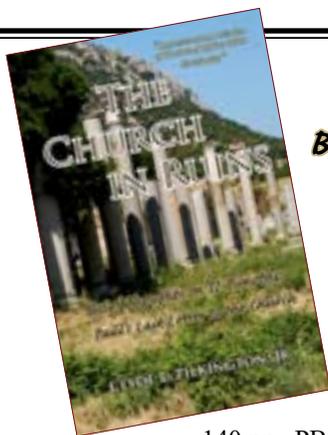
In 1885 he became the editor of [The Spirit of the Word](#)<sup>2</sup> published out of Beverly, MA. He published this for at least 23 years.

He published at least one major book, [Bible Harmony](#),<sup>2</sup> first in 1890 by his Bethabab Publishing House. He was known to have lived and ministered in New York and New Hampshire, as well as his home state of Massachusetts. He died in Meredith, NH and was buried in Rhinebeck, NY.

**TOPICS:**

**Major:** Destiny; Fulfillment; Sovereignty  
**Minor:** Consummation; Fatalism

2. [Editor:] See [order form](#) under "A.P. Adams."



140 pp., PB

See [order form](#)  
under "Pilkington."

Priceless. – OH  
Awesome. – TX  
A real eye opener. – MI  
Groundbreaking stuff. – OH

## THE CHURCH IN RUINS

*Brief Thoughts on II Timothy, Paul's Last Letter to the Church*

by — Clyde L. Pilkington, Jr.

This brief survey of Paul's last epistle will reveal that while almost 2000 years have transpired, the condition of the church has remained the same, and indeed has worsened in accordance with Paul's warning to Timothy.

This book is not a call for a re-awakening of "the church," because it is apparent that this is not Father's plan. Rather, it is a call to individual men – men whose place in the Christian religious system has left them empty, stagnant, and restless – to awaken to Father's call to be His faithful servant and stand outside of that system to look for other faithful men as well.

### WHAT READERS ARE SAYING ABOUT THIS BOOK:

One powerful message. – HI  
Impressive. – TX  
Another nail driven by the Truth. – WI  
A thrill to know that I'm not crazy after all! – PA

Great clarification on the subject. – WI  
An outstanding little book, one that needs  
to be read by every member of His Body,  
and I do not exaggerate. – KS

[www.ChurchinRuins.com](http://www.ChurchinRuins.com)