



Bible Student's Notebook™

The Herald of His Grace

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

Volume 38
Issue 939

Things I Misunderstood

Part 5

7 Things I Misunderstood about Prophecy

An Exposé of Evangelical Prophetic Interpretation

Personal Reflections by — Clyde L. Pilkington, Jr.



Key Points:

Paul's original ministry to the Gentiles was under the auspices of Israel..... 7929
In Paul's original ministry, Israel had priority over the Gentiles..... 7932

In Paul's latter ministry, all of Israel's advantages have been removed..... 7934
Finally, the Gentiles find themselves at the very zenith of revelation..... 7934

**What about the end times?
What about the end of the world?**

**What about the last days?
What about the rapture?**

Are any of these near?

Section 4

I Misunderstood the Nature of Paul's Early Ministry and Epistles

After my first decade of dedicated Bible study I came to embrace Paul's distinct ministry,¹ yet it would be years later that I would finally appreciate the stark difference between his earlier and latter ministries.²

Eventually I would come to see that, prior to the revelation of the present Secret Administration³ found in Ephesians and Colossians,⁴ **Paul's ministry was a**

prophetic light "to the Gentiles" that operated under the auspices of Israel.

Lo! We are turning to the nations. For thus the Lord has directed us: "I have appointed thee for a light of the nations; for thee to be for salvation as far as the limits of the Earth" (Acts 13:46-47, CV).

And He saying to me, "A slight thing is it for you to become My servant, to raise up the Tribes of Jacob, and the dispersed of Israel to restore. Behold! I give you also for a light of the nations, to become My salvation unto the ends of the (continued on page 7931)

1. With the assistance of such authors as C.R. Stam (1909-2003), Charles F. Baker (1905-1994) and William R. Newell (1868-1956).
For a short overview of my journey see:
– [The Steps I Have Taken](#), (on the [order form](#) under "Pilkington").
2. Supported by the studies of authors such as Vladimir Gelesnoff (1877-1921), A.E. Knoch (1874-1965), E.W. Bullinger (1837-1913), Charles H. Welch (1880-1967).
3. For a detailed study on the Secret Administration, see:
– [The Administration of the Secret](#), on the [order form](#) under "Compilations."
4. For a look at the uniqueness of Paul's letters of Ephesians and Colossians, see:
– [Ephesians and Colossians: Scripture for the Present Administration](#), on the [order form](#) under "Pilkington."

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Bible Student's Notebook™

Paul Our Guide – Christ Our Goal

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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 universality of death and resurrection (I Corinthians 15:21);
- the unique gospel of Paul – which he calls "my gospel" (Romans 2:16; 16:25; II Timothy 2:8; I Corinthians 15:1-4; Acts 13-28; Acts 20:24);
- the "preaching of Jesus Christ, according to the revelation of the mystery, which was kept secret in ages past" (Romans 16:25);
- the epistles of the present Secret Administration being Ephesians & Colossians (Ephesians 3:2, 9; Colossians 1:25);
- true freedom and liberty apart from law (Galatians 5:1);
- the organic nature of the One Body (Ephesians 4:16);
- the Secret Administration, being the operational revelation for today (Ephesians 3:9);
- the unprophesied, Celestial hope and calling of the One Body (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."

We are always open for discussion, but never for disputation. – André Sneidar

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Neither did I understand that, during Paul's earlier ministry, by his own admission his teaching was limited to what “the prophets and Moses did say should come.”

Witnessing both to small and great, saying **none other things**⁶ than those which the prophets and Moses did say should come: that Christ should suffer, and that He should be the first that should rise from the dead, and should show light unto the People,⁷ and to the Gentiles⁸ (Acts 26:22-23).

I would come to see that the salvation that he proclaimed during the Acts period was bound up in Israel's restoration and the “sure mercies of David” (Acts 13:34).

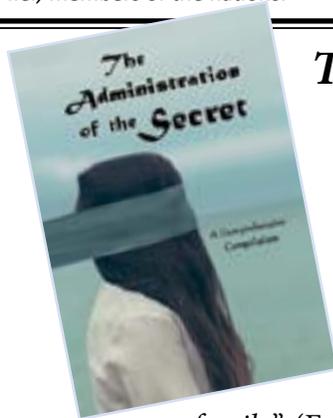
5. This is not to be confused with how the Gentiles will, at a later time, be brought to God through the rise of national Israel:
“Arise, shine; for thy light is come, and the glory of the LORD is risen upon thee. For, behold, the darkness shall cover the earth, and gross darkness the people: but the Lord shall arise upon thee, and His glory shall be seen upon thee. And the Gentiles shall come to thy light, and kings to the brightness of thy rising” (Isaiah 60:1-3, KJV).
6. “Nothing besides” (YLT);
“nothing else” (REB);
“nothing outside” (CV);
“not one thing outside” (DT).
For more information see the book,
– [None Other Things](#), Charles Welch (see the [order form](#) under “Welch.”)
7. “The People” is a reference to Israel. For a study of “The People,” see the article:
– “The People” in Contrast to “the Nations”: A Preliminary Examination of the Word “People,” by Charles H. Welch (Part 1, 2, 3, [Bible Student's Notebook #564](#), [#565](#), [#566](#)).
8. *i.e.*, members of the nations.

Due to my reliance on poor Scripture translation,⁹ I had also missed the fact that Paul himself identified this prophetic work as his *priestly* ministry.

Yet more daringly do I write to you, in part, as prompting you, because of the grace being given to me from God, for me to be the minister of Christ Jesus for the nations, **acting as a priest**¹⁰ of the evangel of God, that the approach present of the nations may be becoming well received, having been hallowed by holy spirit (Romans 15:15-16, CV).

Thus, according to Paul's own testimony, during his Acts-period ministry, he preached “the hope of Israel,”¹¹ for at the end of this time he plainly declared,

9. For more information, see:
– [The King James Version: 400 Years of Bondage](#), by Clyde L. Pilkington, Jr. (see [order form](#) under “Pilkington”).
10. “Acting as priest” (YLT). For more on this, see:
– Video: *Paul's Priestly Ministry* <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sagMNGyKl3I>
– Book: [Paul's Priestly Ministry: A Compilation](#), found on the [order form](#) under “Compilations.”
11. “The Hope of Israel” concerns the coming physical, literal kingdom reign of Jesus the Messiah over a resurrected Israel (nation), in fulfillment of the prophesied Davidic (king) and Palestinian (land) covenants. This is yet future and is foretold throughout the Old Testament, the Gospels, Acts, New Testament Jewish Epistles, and the Book of Revelation. By contrast, our hope today under the Secret Administration is a joint-appearing with Christ in Glory, “far above all Heavens” (*i.e.*, among the Celestials in the Super-Heavens – Colossians 3:1-4; *cf.* Ephesians 4:10).
For more information, see:
– [Hope](#), Charles H. Welch, on the [order form](#) under “Welch.”
– [The Hope of Paul's Acts Epistles](#), Tom L. Ballinger, on the [order form](#) under “Ballinger.”
And by contrast see,
– [The Believer's Hope Today](#), Tom Ballinger, also on the [order form](#)



The Administration of the Secret

A Comprehensive Compilation

308 pages

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

The Secret Administration, revealed through Ephesians and Colossians, is characterized and empowered by the dispensing of transcendent grace (Ephesians 1:7; 2:7; 3:2). Now, believing Gentiles are “no longer guests and sojourners,” as they were in the Pentecostal and Readjustment Administrations, but are “fellow-citizens of the saints and members of God's family” (Ephesians 2:19). This outstanding work includes 45 chapters, by 17 authors, spanning nearly 200 years. Author's include: Oscar M. Baker, Tom L. Ballinger, J. R. Caldwell, E. H. Clayton, J.J.B. Coles, John Essex, J.H. Evans, H.W. Fry, Vladimir Gelesnoff, William B. Hallman, Richard Holden, John H. Kessler, A.E. Knoch, Adlai Loudy, Clyde L. Pilkington, Jr., and Charles H. Welch.

... for **the hope of Israel** I am bound with this chain (Acts 28:20, KJV).

I did not realize that throughout Paul's former ministry, as recorded during the book of Acts, Israel had continuing dispensational priority over Gentiles. It was, plainly,

To the Jew first (Romans 1:16; 2:10).

Neither did I understand the significance of the believing Gentiles of Paul's early ministry being grafted into the root and fatness of Israel.

You, being a wild olive tree, were **grafted in among them, and with them partake of the root and fatness of the olive tree** (Romans 11:17).

Thus, as a priest of God to the nations, Paul was a competent dispenser of Israel's New Covenant to them.

Who has also made us **able ministers of the New Covenant** (II Corinthians 3:6).

Nor did I truly appreciate that, during Paul's early ministry, the believing Gentiles were made guests of the promises covenanted to Israel.

Guests of the covenants of promise (Ephesians 2:12, CV).¹²

I would come to see that these Gentiles of the Acts

[form](#) under "Ballinger."

12. Paul was writing to the Ephesian believers regarding their former (Acts-period) relationship to Israel.

Period¹³ were thus made partakers of Israel's "spiritual things."

The Gentiles have been made partakers of their spiritual things (Romans 15:27).¹⁴

Thus, the Gentiles were brought in and counted as spiritual seed of Abraham and provisional heirs of Israel's promises.

If you are Christ's, then you are Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise (Galatians 3:29, BSV).

I would come to realize that Paul taught believing Gentiles during the Acts period not only that Abraham was their "father," but also that Jerusalem was their "mother."

Jerusalem which is above is free, which is the mother of us all (Galatians 4:26, BSV).

In time I would also come to understand that it was not until the very close of the book of Acts that Paul

13. For a look at Gentiles during the Acts Period, see:

- "A Dispensational Consideration of Paul's Acts Ministry," Clyde L. Pilkington, Jr., [Bible Student's Notebook #791](#);
- "Gentiles During the Acts Period," David Tavender, [Bible Student's Notebook #733](#);
- "Gentile Inclusion Before Acts 28," Brian R. Kelson, [Bible Student's Notebook #746](#);
- "The Acts Period and the Acts Period Epistles," Tom L. Ballinger, [Bible Student's Notebook #604](#).

14. "With their spiritual things the nations have come into fellowship" (REB);

"For if the nations participate in their spiritual things" (CV).



58 pages

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

Paul's Priestly Ministry (A Compilation)

Prior to the revelation of the present *Secret Administration* found in Ephesians and Colossians, Paul's ministry was a prophetic light "to the Gentiles" (Acts 13:47) under the auspices of Israel (Isaiah 49:6), Paul himself "acting as a priest" (Romans 15:15-16, CV). During his earlier ministry, by his own admission, his teaching was limited to what "the prophets and Moses did say should come" (Acts 26:22), proclaiming "the hope of Israel" (Acts 28:20). This vital key is crucial to the proper understanding of the epistles which Paul wrote prior to Ephesians, letters which were "out of an installment" (I Corinthians 13:9-10, 12, CV).

This is a collection of eight important articles, by four authors: Vladimir Gelesnoff (1877-1921), A.E. Knoch (1874-1965), Adlai Loudy (1893-1984), and Clyde L. Pilkington, Jr.



declared to Israel the final¹⁵ prophetic blinding fore-

told by Isaiah of their generation:

15. In the book of Acts there was a threefold digression of Israel's apostasy, which in turn resulted in the threefold progression of Paul's ministry – turning, going, sending:

"we **turn** to the Gentiles"

"henceforth I will **go** to the Gentiles"

"the salvation of God is **sent** unto the Gentiles."

Notice these three stages unfolded in their contexts:

"... seeing ye put it from you, and judge yourselves unworthy of everlasting life, lo, **we turn to the Gentiles**" (Acts 13:46).

"... when they opposed themselves, and blasphemed, he shook his raiment, and said unto them,

'Your blood be upon your own heads; I am clean: from **henceforth I will go unto the Gentiles**'" (Acts 18:6).

"... And when they agreed not among themselves, they departed, after that Paul had spoken one word, **Well spake the Holy Ghost by Esaias the prophet unto our fathers, saying,**

'Go unto this people, and say, *Hearing ye shall hear, and shall not understand; and seeing ye shall see, and not perceive: 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**" (Acts 28:25-28).

Thus, as Vladimir Gelesnoff (1877-1921) wonderfully wrote in the first volume of the Unsearchable Riches magazine:

"Paul's ministry passed, as it were, *three stages*, each based on a special revelation – each successive revelation coinciding with a new turn of Israel's apostasy. The rejection of the Spirit in the land brought forth the gospel of God or **Justification**. The hostility of the Dispersion disclosed the mystery of the gospel, or the secret news – the **Reconciliation**. The last thing revealed is a **Secret Economy** of transcendent favor, where physical distinctions have *no* place. ...

"As Israel declines, those Israelites and Gentiles who attended Paul's ministry were lifted higher and higher. They began in the grace of *justification*; they proceeded in the peace of *reconciliation*; they attained a culmination, acme and climax in the *zenith glory of heavenly realms*. In the process of disclosure their vision dilates [widens], forward and backward, and sights on either side lofty peaks of truth beyond the range of other prophets and seers.

Hearing you will hear, and will not understand; and seeing you will see, and not perceive: for the heart of this People has become dense, 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 (:26-27).

Paul then pronounced the decree that now, apart from Israel,

The salvation of God is sent unto the Nations (Acts 28:28).

The next time Paul speaks of his imprisonment, he is not bound for "*the hope of Israel*," but, by his own inspired testimony, he was shackled for the "*secret*."

The Secret of Christ, for which I am also in bonds (Colossians 4:3, KJV; cf. Ephesians 6:19-20).

"The retrograde [backward] tendency of Paul's unfoldings is as remarkable as the proleptic.

"**Justification** goes back to Abraham in uncircumcision.

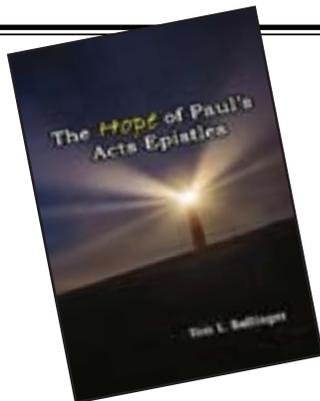
"**Reconciliation** reverts to Adam.

"**Secret Economy** reaches even beyond sin's entrance.

"One after another the grim shadows of past ages are passed and left behind, and still their flight continues, onward and upward, to the source and cause of all – God Himself – and there undisturbed by physical distinctions, unafrighted by a law inflexible, *justified, reconciled, seated with Christ, complete in Him*, we are left in the presence of our Father in the unalloyed enjoyment of His love."

Our readers are highly encouraged to read Gelesnoff's entire article,

– Onward and Upward: The Stages of Paul's Ministry (Paul's Priestly Ministry Transitioning Toward His Celestial), [Bible Student's Notebook 509](#).



The Hope of Paul's Acts Epistles

by — Tom L. Ballinger

A brief consideration of the believers' hope as recorded in the epistles of Paul written during the Acts-Period.

38 pages

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

I did not grasp that, in Paul's latter ministry alone, he wrote and ministered concerning a new *Secret Administration*.

The Administration of the Secret (Ephesians 3:9, CV).

This administration he identified as,

The Administration of the Grace of God (Ephesians 3:2, CV).

In God's present purpose today, all covenant and national advantages have been removed (Ephesians 2:14-15), and believers are now able to enjoy a new and superior calling and hope: the *Celestial Appearing with Christ in Glory*.

When Christ, Who is our life, shall be made manifest, then shall you also be manifest with Him in Glory (Colossians 3:4).

A.E. Knoch wrote concerning the timing of this grand transition of Paul "from glory to glory" (II Corinthians 3:18),

Israel is not finally set aside until Paul is a prisoner in Rome. Isaiah's solemn message is sounded in their ears for the last time, and the salvation of God is sent direct to the nations (Acts 28:28). Not until this crisis was it possible to reveal the last and crowning ministry of the great apostle. Hitherto blessing must be in some sort subordinate to Israel; now they are out of the way, and

grace is free to carry out the dictates of love.

So a secret is made known – *the secret of Christ* – which places Him upon the highest place in Heaven, even as He shall be upon the Earth. And this secret it is which underlies Paul's final ministry. It leaves Earth for Heaven. Jewish privileges disappear. **The nations are not discriminated against in this supernal glory but are blessed equally with the chosen people in the heavenly spheres. ... At last we find ourselves at the very zenith of revelation.** This is found in Ephesians, Philippians¹⁶ and Colossians, epistles written after the apostle was imprisoned in Rome. They contain the truth of all truth for us. They are the touchstone of all doctrine for the present. They are the limit of glory beyond which there can be no more. ... Paul's earlier ministries need modification to accord with the present truth.¹⁷

(to be continued)

NOTE: For the video version of this study, [Things I Misunderstood about Prophecy](#), go to our Biblical Resources channel at YouTube.

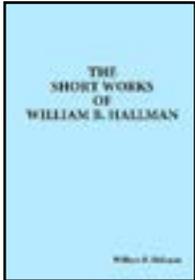
NOTE: See the previous installments from this series:

- Part 1** – "3 Things I Misunderstood about God," [BSN 917](#);
- Part 2** – "3 Things I Misunderstood about Salvation," [BSN 918](#);
- Part 3** – "3 Things I Misunderstood about Christ's Sacrificial Work," [BSN 919](#);
- Part 4** – "4 Things I Misunderstood About the Rich Man & Lazarus," [BSN 920](#);
- Part 5** – "7 Things I Misunderstood about Prophecy," Section 1, [BSN 926](#);
– "7 Things I Misunderstood about Prophecy," Section 2, Installment 1, [BSN 933](#);
– "7 Things I Misunderstood about Prophecy," Section 2, Installment 2, [BSN 934](#);
– "7 Things I Misunderstood about Prophecy," Section 3, [BSN 936](#).

TOPICS:

Major: Paul's Priestly Ministry; Prophecy
Minor: Gentiles; Grafted In; Israel; Mystery; Right Division

- 16.** Most who came to see the Secret Administration included Philippians in with Ephesians and Colossians. It is easy to understand why they did so. Yet, rather than being a part of the Secret Administration, Philippians stood on the threshold of the grand Ephesian-Colossian writings. It was the gateway epistle to the Celestial writings of Paul. For a look at the unique nature of Philippians, see:
– "Philippians: Paul's Pivotal Letter Pressing Toward the Mystery," Clyde L. Pilkington, Jr., [Bible Student's Notebook #788](#).
- 17.** "From Glory to Glory," A.E. Knoch (1874-1965), [Bible Student's Notebook 511](#).



The Short Works of William B. Hallman
by — William B. Hallman
(1903-1973)
110 pages, PB (See [order form](#) under "Hallman.")
Contents: Complete in Christ; Flowers and Birds of the Bible; From Guilt to Glory through Grace; A Study of the Book of Ruth; In the Heavens (Ephesians); Introduction to the Psalms; The Lord's Prayer: It's Historical Place and Dispensational Purpose; A Metaphor of the Mystery: The Body of Christ; Satan's Greatest Surprise; The Unsearchable Riches of Christ in the Dispensation of the Secret; The Uniqueness of Our Calling.

Concerning God's Sovereignty

by — André Sneidar

To wish something different in our lives – past, present or future – is to desire something different than what God in His absolute sovereignty has designed for each of us. No doubt Judas would've changed his mind had he known what Satan would do in him, but God wrote His script for him, as revealed in prophecy, long before Judas was even born. And we don't judge Judas for it, we only glorify God in His wisdom of His plan and purpose. It's only God Who is working all things in all people in all circumstances.



stances, who else could take credit for that? If God is not sovereign in and over all, then He is not sovereign AT ALL. The thinking that anyone in God's creation has a "free will" is a fallacy based in religious myth. God is demonstrating every iteration of evil that can be done until His creatures finally say, "only God is the answer," and one day, at the consummation, God will eliminate all sin/evil by eliminating death.

GOD USES EVIL ACTS FOR A PURPOSE

If God is using evil acts done by men and celestial beings alike, then He must have a purpose for it. Once you understand this, then you can rest and be at peace with all of the "bad things" that go on in the world, knowing that it's all part of His plan and purpose of totally breaking everyone's thoughts of self-sufficiency, so that they realize that only God is their Father and can and will completely provide their sufficiency. God's plan is to reconcile, redeem and correct all wrongs in all lives in all time, and we will be called to teach the celestial beings these same truths.

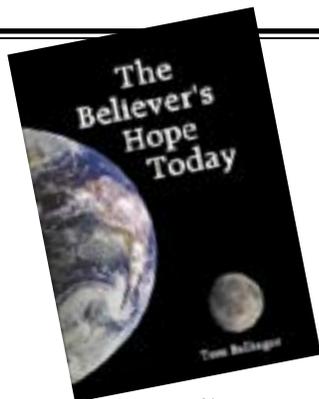
In the meantime, God said, "I create evil,"¹ and since He is working all things in all people in all circum-

If you look at it honestly, you'll find that the heart of determining "better" or "worse" sin or evil is always self-morality – "Oh, I would never do that terrible sin ... I may sin in 'less' evil ways, but never as bad as that other person." It's the same concept as Christ's sacrifice – either He is 100% effective in His sacrifice, or He is totally ineffective. If you leave even .000...1% to anyone's own determination, then He failed, because He's not the Savior of ALL, only of those who self-determined to do/think/say whatever in their mind was "required" to accomplish salvation for themselves.

Didn't God write Christ's and Judas' story in prophecy? And was Calvary not the greatest evil ever committed? Nothing else that man can do can come close. Yet God planned it all, just like Christ told Pilate – no matter what you "decide" to do or not to do, God has already determined it.² God said that He knows the

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

2. "Jesus answered, 'Thou couldest have no power at all against me, except it were given thee from above ...'" (John 19:11).



60 pages

The Believer's Hope Today

by — Tom L. Ballinger

This is a look at the believer's "blessed hope" at Christ's appearing as contrasted with "the hope of Israel" in the Acts period. It will show that the hope about which Paul wrote in I Thessalonians 4 and I Corinthians 15 is found not only in the Old Testament Scriptures, but was taught by Jesus Christ in His earthly ministry in Matthew 24 and other places. It also reveals our hope for today as found in Paul's latter epistles.

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

end from the beginning. He's not some bored deity who wound up his creation and released it to haphazardly unwind in some game of chance.

Men make exceptions to God's sovereign plan in order to "help" Him out of a conundrum that they can't logically resolve. In so many places God has clearly stated that HE has set things in motion and continues to manage their execution. Consider Isaiah 46:10,

Declaring the end from the beginning, and from ancient times the things that are not yet done, saying, "My counsel shall stand, and I will do all My pleasure."

This is not some supposed "super-sovereignty" position; it's just God's sovereignty – period, except it's *super* because it's God doing it all. I get that it's hard to understand. It took me a while. Our compilation book *The Absolute Sovereignty of God* puts a lot of this information together.³

Therefore, they could not believe, because that

3. See, on the [order form](#) or at [Study Shelf](#) under "Compilations."

Esaias said again,

"He hath blinded their eyes, and hardened their heart; that they should not see with their eyes, nor understand with their heart, and be converted, and I should heal them."

These things said Esaias, when he saw His glory, and spake of Him (John 12:39-41).

Even so have these also now not believed, that through your mercy they also may obtain mercy. For God hath imprisoned them all in unbelief, that He might have mercy upon all. O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! how unsearchable are His judgments, and His ways past finding out! For who hath known the mind of the Lord? or who hath been His counsellor? Or who hath first given to Him, and it shall be recompensed unto Him again? For of Him, and through Him, and to Him, are all things: to Whom be glory for the ages. Amen (Romans 11:31-36).

BSN

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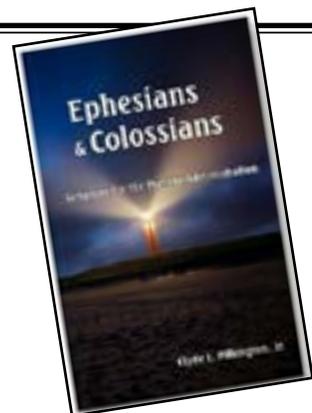
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