



Bible Student's Notebook™

The Herald of His Grace

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

Volume 38
Issue 944

Things I Misunderstood

Part 5

7 Things I Misunderstood about Prophecy

An Exposé of Evangelical Prophetic Interpretation

Personal Reflections by — Clyde L. Pilkington, Jr.

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 6, Installment 2

I Misunderstood Israel's True Prophetic Landscape

Key Points:

The earth will experience an extended time of harmony and peace before Christ returns.....7971
History tells us of far worse times than today..... 7972
The prophesies in Mathew, Mark, and Luke were for the disciples

- not us.....7975
All predictions during this current administration are designed to fail.....7976

MATTHEW 24: THE SIGNS OF CHRIST'S COMING [PAROUSIA] AND OF THE END OF THE AGE

... The disciples came unto Him asking, "What is the sign of Your Coming [Presence - CV] and of the end of the age? [conclusion of the eon? - CV] (:3).

You shall hear of wars and rumors of wars ... Nation shall rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom: and there shall be famines, and pestilence, and earthquakes ... (:6-7).

... And this gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in all the world for a witness unto all nations; and then shall the end come (:15).

For then shall be great tribulation, such as was



not since the beginning of the world to this time, no, nor ever shall be (:21).

Immediately after the tribulation of those days shall the sun be darkened, and the moon shall not give her light, and the stars shall fall from Heaven, and the powers [authorities] of the Heavens shall be shaken: and then shall appear the sign of the Son of Man in Heaven: and then shall all the tribes of the Earth mourn, and they shall see the Son of Man coming in the clouds of Heaven with power and great glory (:29-30).

When you shall see all these things, know that it is near, even at the doors. Verily I say unto you, "This generation shall not pass, till all these things be fulfilled" (:33-34).

(continued on page 7971) ↗

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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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Wars, Famines, Pestilence and Earthquakes

Peter, James, John and Andrew inquired of Christ privately as to what would be the sign of His Coming (*Parousia*), and of the end of the age. Matthew chapter 24-25, Mark 13, and Luke 21 record His response to them.¹ The initial signs that He gave them were:

- Wars, and rumors of wars (:6),
- Famines (:7),
- Pestilence (:7),
- Earthquakes (:7).

I grew up repeatedly hearing of these signs, but eventually, I would begin to ask myself, “What kinds of signs are these? What planet did Jesus live on, that wars, famines, pestilence and earthquakes would be among the initial signs of His coming?”

After all, I knew that history was filled with *all* of these. Even the first author of Scripture aptly declared, “*Yet man is born unto trouble, as the sparks fly upward*” (Job 5:7). So, what kind of signs are these, really?

The dilemma would be solved for me when I came

1. These parallel passages are often referred to as *The Olivet Discourse*, because the instruction took place on the Mount of Olives.

For a further look at this Olivet Discourse, see,

- “The Olivet Discourse in Matthew 24 and the Pre-Millennial Kingdom,” Tom L. Ballinger, [Bible Student’s Notebook #942, 943](#).

to realize the actual context of these future signs. **Prophetically, the Earth will experience an extended time of harmony and peace *before* Christ returns for His *Parousia*.**² Then at the end of this peaceful period

2. *Parousia* (παρουσία) at its base means “personal presence,” and is used for the official presence of Christ on Earth as manifest during the Millennial Kingdom. The *Parousia* is initiated by Christ’s Second Advent. Thus, it is translated: “coming” (KJV), “arrival” (MNT; ALV), and “presence” (CV; ED; REB; YLT). The *Parousia* is central to the Messianic prophecies and Israel’s ultimate hope. However, the *Parousia* is not the hope of the One Body, and therefore the word “*parousia*” is not found in Ephesians or Colossians, the epistles of the Secret Administration. Our hope is our 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).

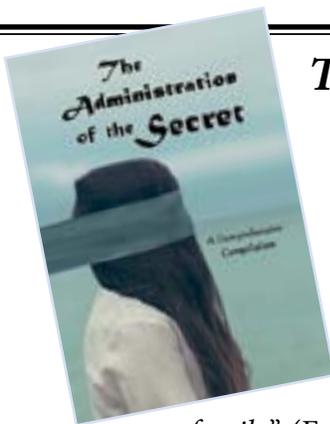
“When we think of the Lord Jesus Christ returning to this Earth, we think of it as Him *Coming* to take His place as King. The normal word (Greek, *erchomai*) just means ‘to come,’ but the special word for ‘personal coming’ (Greek, *parousia*) is said to be ‘a being alongside’ or ‘a presence’ (*Young’s Analytical Concordance*, page 188). This word *parousia* really is a personal presence, an appearance in an official capacity because of who He is and what He can do.” – Otis Q. Sellers (1901-1992), *Glossary of Words*.

“The Greek word rendered ‘*Coming*’ (*Parousia*), it does not mean simply ‘coming.’ ... Many have recognized that *parousia* does not mean merely ‘coming,’ so, they have said it means ‘personal presence.’ This is partially correct, but it is not the whole of the matter. The Greeks used the word *parousia* when someone had to be present at an event because of who he was and what official function he was to perform. ...

“The Pre-Millennial Kingdom is the Divine process which consummates in the *Parousia* of Christ on Earth for 1000 years. ... The consummation of “*the Day of Christ*” will be when He returns to Earth with great fanfare and mighty power (I Thessalonians 4:16-17), to have rule and dominion over the Heavens and Earth in His *Parousia* for a thousand years.” – Tom L. Ballinger, “The Olivet Discourse in Matthew 24 and the Pre-Millennial Kingdom” (part 1), [Bible Student’s Notebook #942](#).

For more information on the *Parousia*, see:

- “*Parousia*,” Charles H. Welch, [Bible Student’s Notebook #631](#);



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.

there will be an outbreak of wars, famine, pestilence and earthquakes. Thus, I would come to appreciate that these were signs that would be manifested at the end of an unprecedented period of their extended absence.

There will be a prophetic period of wonderful peace PRIOR to the “Great Tribulation” and Christ’s Second Advent. This is the period of kingdom-peace which Christ referred to as “*the Kingdom of the Heavens.*” It is the inauguration of “*the days of Heaven upon the Earth,*” known as “the Day of Christ,” as mentioned previously.³

When I understood this key period of Israel’s prophetic program, Matthew 24 came clearly into focus.

If we learn anything from Scriptures, it is that man’s current lot on Earth is but a series of endless cycles.⁴ Over, and over again, the sun comes up and it goes down. This is true of all things earthly.

Listening to the constant barrage coming from prophetic prognosticators, I thought that wars, earthquakes, pestilence and famine were surely uniquely on the rise worldwide during my lifetime. But such is *not* the case.

Statistically, if any current calamities were the actual signs of Christ’s coming, there were much more ideal prospects for His return to be found earlier in history. For history tells us of far worse times than those of our own day.

War Statistics

Max Roser, researcher at Oxford University and founder and editor of *Our World in Data*, and his associates, tell us that empirical evidence shows that we may now live in the most peaceful time historically. They write,

It would be wrong to believe that the past was peaceful. One reason why some people might have this impression is that many of the past conflicts feature less prominently in our memories; they are simply forgotten.⁵

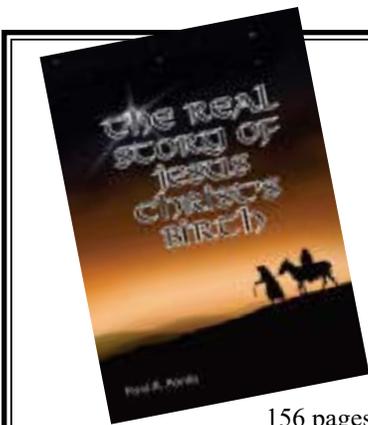
Famine Statistics

Again, Max Roser and his colleagues write,

It is nonetheless very clear that in recent decades the presence of major life-taking famines has diminished significantly and abruptly as compared to earlier eras.⁶

- “What Does Parousia Mean?” Otis Q. Sellers, [Bible Student’s Notebook #699](#);
 - “The Parousia of the Lord Jesus Christ,” Otis Q. Sellers, [Bible Student’s Notebook #785](#).
3. The last installment of this series, [Bible Student’s Notebook #941](#).
 4. An entire book of Scripture is devoted to the theme of earthly cycles: Ecclesiastes.

5. “War and Peace,” an extensive research work by Max Roser, Joe Hasell, Bastian Herre and Bobbie Macdonald, with multiple charts, published in *Our World In Data* (2016).
 - [War and Peace](#);
 - [Global deaths in conflicts since the year 1400](#);
 - [The Visual History of Decreasing War and Violence](#).
6. [Famines](#), a 56-page research work, published by Our World Data, with multiple charts and graphs and 92 cited references, by Joe



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

For the past two millennia, religious organizations have been conflicted and confused about the actual details of the birth of Jesus. 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.

156 pages

See order form under
“Other Authors.”



Earthquake Statistics

In *Earthquake Science*, Camille Bhalerao, who has a degree in Earthquake Engineering, recently answered the question, “Are We Having More Earthquakes Than Usual?”

It’s natural to conclude that all natural disasters are on the rise.

Explaining why this conclusion is made, she writes,

Information is now available instantly via social media, online, and TV news. While instant information has many advantages, it can also lead to cognitive biases such as clustering illusion. We perceive more earthquakes to be happening when we see them frequently in the news. Increased media coverage and monitoring of earthquake activity makes it seem like there are more earthquakes than usual.

She even goes on to say,

If we chart known earthquakes from 1900 to the present day, it appears that dramatically more earthquakes are happening. However, this [too] is misleading: for the first half of the 1900s, we were not recording small or moderate earthquakes, nor did we have enough seismic monitoring stations to record earthquakes worldwide.

The number of monitoring stations has prolifer-

Hasell and Max Roser, was first published in 2013 and substantially revised in 2017.

ated over the past 60 years, leading to significantly more records of seismic activity. For example, the Southern California Seismic Network grew from 20 seismic monitoring stations in 1960 to nearly 400 in 2010.

Almost all major fault lines are now continuously observed by seismic monitoring stations. This means we have more statistics to analyze the past 20 years of earthquake activity.⁷

Turn of the Millenia Hysteria

It is not a coincidence that the interest in prophecy has been high-pitched for about four decades prior to the change of the recent millennial change (year 2000) until now (1960-present). There’s something spellbinding about such a transition into a new millennium. Thus, if you study history of a thousand years ago, this same hype was in play at the turn of the previous millennium (year 1000). Many reacted drastically.

The Brethren historian Andrew Miller (1810-1883) wrote,

No period in church history, or perhaps in any history, or in any country, presents a darker picture than Christian Europe at the close of the tenth century ... all mankind were panic-stricken ...

But if ever man might be forgiven the dream of believing that the end of the world was come, it

7. [Jumpstart](#), June 4, 2021, published with charts and graphs.



624 pages

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

Paul the Apostle: His Acts and Post-Acts Ministries

(A Comprehensive Compilation)

This ultimate dispensational collection of 97 works by 28 authors spans over 130 years. It is an extensive reference work that is essential for every library. Authors include: Sir Robert Anderson, Oscar Baker, A.E. Bishop, Robert C. Brock, E.W. Bullinger, J.J.B. Coles, E.H. Clayton, Vladimir Gelesnoff, Stephen Hill, Richard Holden, M. Jaegle, Win Johnson, A.E. Knoch, Adlai Loudy, William Mealand, D.L. McCroskey, William R. Newell, Alan Reid, Danny Russino, John D. LaVier, Clyde L. Pilkington, Jr., Frank Neil Pohorlak, A.A. Sandoz, R.B. Shiflet and Charles H. Welch.

was then. The clergy preached it, and people believed it, and it rapidly spread over all Europe.

It was boldly promulgated that the world would come to an end when a thousand years from the Savior's birth were expired. From about the year 960 the panic increased, but the year 999 was looked upon as the last which anyone would ever see. This general delusion ... was founded on a total misunderstanding and false interpretation of prophecy. ...

The ordinary cares and employments of this life were given up. The land was left untilled; for why plough, why sow, when no one would be left to reap? Houses were allowed to fall into decay; for why build, why repair, why trouble about property, when a few months will put an end to all terrestrial things? History was neglected; for why chronicle events, when no posterity was expected to read the records? The rich, the noble, the princes, and bishops, abandoned their friends and families, and hastened to the shores of Palestine, in the persuasion that Mount Zion would be the throne of Christ when He descended to judge the world.

Large sums of money were given to the churches and monasteries, as if to secure a more favorable sentence from the supreme Judge. Kings and emperors begged at monastery doors, to be admitted as brethren of the holy order; crowds of the common people slept in the porches of the holy buildings, or at least under their shadow ...

The day of doom drew nearer and nearer. The last evening of the thousand years arrived: a sleepless night for all Europe! Imagination must fill up the

doleful picture. But in place of some extraordinary convulsion, which all were tremblingly waiting for, the night passed away as other nights had done, and in the morning the sun shed forth its beams as peacefully as ever ... The close of the first thousand years of the church's history; the darkest day ... in the annals of Christendom.⁸

The Remaining Signs

Christ referred to wars, famines, pestilence and earthquakes as merely the lead-in signs of His coming *Parousia*. For in the very next verse, He plainly states,

All these are the beginning of sorrows (:8).

Thus, after, the "*Gospel of the Kingdom [is] preached in all the world for a witness unto all nations (:14)*, the signs would intensify profoundly:

Great tribulation, such as was not since the beginning of the world to this time, no, nor ever shall be (:21).

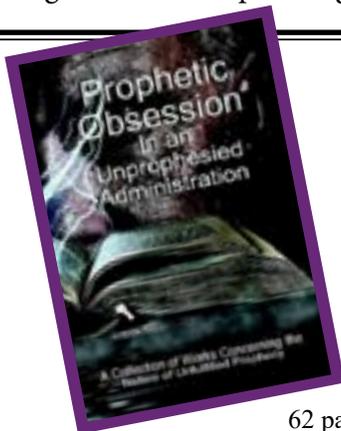
The sun will be darkened, the moon will not give light, the stars will fall from Heaven, and the powers (authorities) of the Heavens will be shaken (:29-30).

When you shall see ALL these things, know that it is near, even at the doors (:33).

The Timing of All These Signs

It is always crucial that we become fully aware of the context of any passage that we are studying. The first

8. "The Supposed End of the World," *Short Papers on Church History* (1876), Andrew Miller, volume 2, pages 16-18.



Prophetic Obsession in an Unprophesied Administration

(A Collection of Works Concerning the Nature of Unfulfilled Prophecy)

List of authors contained in this work are: Sir Robert Anderson (1841-1918), Cecil J. Blay (1906-1976), A.E. Knoch (1874-1965), J. Vernon McGee (1904-1988), Andrew Miller (1810-1883), Sir Isaac Newton (1642-1727), Clyde L. Pilkington, Jr., Otis Q. Sellers (1901-1992) and C.R. Stam (1909-2003).

62 pages

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

important part of every context is: who is speaking, and who is being spoken to.

It would take decades for this simple truth, as it related to this passage, to have its full impact on me. I certainly knew in some elementary way that Christ was the one teaching, and that His disciples were the ones that He was privately instructing at this time. After all, Mark 13:3 plainly stated,

*And as He sat upon the mount of Olives over against the temple, Peter and James and John and Andrew asked Him **privately**.*

Yet, what I would come to realize eventually is that I could understand the significance of Christ's repeated words "**you**" throughout this passage, only once I faithfully observed this vital principle. The "**you**" throughout the teaching was specifically Peter, James, John and Andrew.

You [Peter, James, John and Andrew] shall hear of wars and rumors of wars ... (:6).

When **you** [Peter, James, John and Andrew] shall see all these things, know that it is near, even at the doors ... (:33).

Then shall they deliver **you** [Peter, James, John and Andrew] up to be afflicted, and shall kill **you** [Peter, James, John and Andrew]: and **you** [Peter, James, John and Andrew] shall be hated of all nations for my name's sake (:9).

When **you** [Peter, James, John and Andrew] therefore shall see the abomination of desolation, spoken of by Daniel the prophet, stand in

the holy place (whoso readeth, let him understand) (:15).

But pray **you** [Peter, James, John and Andrew] that **your** [Peter, James, John and Andrew] flight be not in the winter, neither on the sabbath day (:20).

Now, what is vital to understand, is that the "great tribulation, such as was not since the beginning of the world to this time, no, nor ever shall be" (:21) did not take place during the lifetime of Peter, James, John and Andrew. None of them lived to experience the foretold darkening of the sun and moon, the falling of the stars from Heaven, and shaking of the powers (authorities) of the Heavens (:29-30).

None of these took place during the lifetime of Peter, James, John and Andrew. Thus, this prophecy awaits their resurrection to be fulfilled.

What is additionally noteworthy about this context is that John was among those to whom Christ said, "and they shall kill you." Yet, this was not true of his first life according to history, for it tells us that he died a natural death as an old man. Thus, for the prophecy of him being killed to be fulfilled, John must be resurrected to become a future martyr.

The True Placement of the So-Called Rapture, or Snatching Away

For most of my early teaching ministry I misunderstood and misinterpreted so-called "Rapture" or "Snatching Away" passages. I had grown up unquestionably believing that the supposed Rapture, and subsequent Great Tribulation and Second Coming



A time of study and fellowship in the Birmingham, Alabama area.

Saturday, January 14, 2023 Sunday, January 15, 2023

Speakers:

Clyde L. Pilkington, Jr.; Mark Vogt

Host: Will Marshall

*Space for the currently planned meeting place is limited, so please **RSVP your plans to attend.***

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of Christ were impending, or imminent. These were the consistent backdrop of my upbringing.

Many prominent Evangelical teachers, for whom I had learned to have some measure of respect, made reckless and unfounded predictions of the Rapture. Most prefaced them with some measure of disclaimer, enabling them attempt to save face, if their predictions would not materialize.

Essentially, the entirety of unfulfilled prophecy had been relegated to two future periods – the Great Tribulation, and the Millennial reign of Christ. All the while, the period of peace and restoration that is to take place *before* Christ's Coming (known as "the Kingdom of the Heavens," i.e., "the Day of Christ") had been totally overlooked or disregarded.

I would come to understand that the so-called "rapture," or "snatching away" teaching, was based on a passage from Paul's early ministry, in his early epistle of I Thessalonians, when he was a priest of God to the Nations. It matches prophetically the Second Advent, and has nothing whatsoever to do with the end of the current Secret Administration. All of the particulars of the passage are a perfect match to the Second Coming of Christ.⁹

9. For a closer look, see:

Not understanding the true nature of Israel's prophetic landscape, the Scriptures, sadly, are used by many as a handbook for prognostication.¹⁰ We do not deny these prophetic passages as being true, we simply realize that their fulfillment are in abeyance until after the Secret Administration has been brought to a close.¹¹ **All prophetic speculation and predictions during this current dispensation of necessity are destined to fail.**¹²

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

TOPICS:

Major: Olivet Discourse, The; Matthew 24; *Parousia*; Pre-Millennial Kingdom
Minor: "End Times"; History, Human; Prognosticators; Signs

– "The Hope of Israel in Paul's Early Epistles," Clyde L. Pilkington, Jr., [Bible Student's Notebook #485](#).

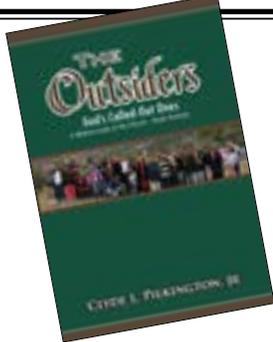
10. For more information on the nature of prophecy and the Secret Administration, see:

– [Prophetic Obsession in an Unpromised Administration: A Collection of Works Concerning the Nature of Unfulfilled Prophecy](#) (see [order form](#) under "Compilations").

11. For a detailed studies on the Secret Administration, see:

– [The Administration of the Secret](#), on the [order form](#) under "Compilations."

12. In an upcoming issue of the *BSN* we will survey Evangelical prophetic prognosticators from the last half of the last century.



128 pp., PB.

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

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).

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**