



Bible Student's Notebook™

The Herald of His Grace

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

Volume 38
Issue 945

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 7

I Misunderstood the Nature of Death

Key Points:

Death is the opposite of life and will happen to everyone.... 7979
Christ joined us in our experience of suffering and death so that we could join Him in His experience of resurrection..... 7979
Our peace and joy are not dependent on the avoidance of

death, but on our resurrection and appearance "together with Him." 7981
To each one the moment of death will seem the moment of rousing..... 7984

OLDEST TRICK IN THE BOOK

For most of my life, by misinterpreting and then misapplying Scripture, I had unwittingly bought into the lie, "Ye shall not die" (Genesis 3:4, REB).

It was Satan who introduced the idea of escaping death. It was his deception from the beginning, back in Eden's Garden. I had fallen for the oldest trick in the Book.

I had misunderstood the very nature of death. No place emphasized this more than my Evangelical upbringing that gave me a hope of evading death by a supposed imminent "Rapture."

I had been misled concerning the sure plight of all humanity: mortality and death. I failed to recognize that the believer's hope in every age had always been



resurrection from the dead – and then that which laid beyond.

So, what made me think that Satan was actually right after all – and that I was not going to die? What made me expect that, of all of the people who had ever lived before me, that I would somehow be among a group who would be able to *escape* death? I would come to see that the answer was, in one word: tradition.

My thinking had been greatly skewed by religious theories. The case in point was twofold: (1) the erroneous doctrine of the "immortality of the soul,"

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7) I Misunderstood the Nature of Death.....7977
Tidbits of Truth #477982



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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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and (2) the supposed "imminent Rapture." I would come to see that these two theories contradicted the divinely revealed truth throughout Scripture of the certainty of *death and resurrection*.

The truth is, as long as death reigns one thing is sure for every individual: death. This is true for the believer *and* unbeliever alike.

As believers, regardless of when our "appearing" with Christ takes place, our expectation is to be resurrected and then glorified. This expectation does not negate the fact of our death beforehand. In fact, *the hope of resurrection necessitates death*.

AN APPOINTMENT WITH DEATH

I would come to understand that, if I were to *escape* death, it would make void God's Word regarding mankind having at least one *appointment* with it.

It is appointed unto men once to die (Hebrews 9:27).

Although I had fallen for Satan's lie, nonetheless, the plain truth of Scripture is that, as long as death exists, death is the lot of all humanity – without exception. I had to come face-to-face with the reality that I was going to die, and that every one of the prophetic prognosticators I listened to was going to die as well.

"In Adam All Die"

I would come to appreciate the actual teaching of Scripture, that (1) death is the opposite of life – the absence of life, and (2) that it is a sure thing for all of

the offspring of Adam. Who can escape death?

The bedrock fact that "*in Adam all die*" is the prerequisite to the glorious truth that "*even so in Christ shall all be made alive*" (I Corinthians 15:22). After all,

The living know they will die (Ecclesiastes 9:5).

All go to one place; all are of the dust, and all turn to dust again (Ecclesiastes 3:20; cf. 3:2; 12:7).

"Together With Him"

Just like Christ our Head, every member of His Body will die. After all, we are not only united in His resurrection, but in His death and burial. We (Christ and His Body) are all in this together. Christ joined us in *our* death – not so that we could *escape* dying, but so that we could join Him in *His* resurrection.

One of the greatest truths of the Dispensation of Grace is that of the believer's union "*together with Him*" (Colossians 2:13). The One Body is a Divine unit, prehistorically planned (Ephesians 1:4). It is made up of Christ and His members. Thus, we have a shared experience: He with us, and we with Him. This shared experience is mutual – it is reciprocal: He joined us, we joined Him; His lot became ours, our lot became His; His history became ours, our history became His.

Christ joined us in *our* experience of suffering and death so that we could join Him in *His* experience of resurrection, celestial ascension and exaltation. He entered into our experience so that we could enter into His. I would find out that this is more than some no-



70 pages

The Doctrine of Substitution: An Erroneous Teaching *A Compilation*

This is an exposé of Christianity's erroneous doctrine of "Substitution." Though it is widely accepted, it is not the teaching of Scripture. This is a compilation of authors, including: *A.P. Adams, Vladimir Gelesnoff, Andrew J. Jukes, A.E. Knoch*.

See [order form](#) under "Compilations." "The best book I've read in ten years." – Richard Kirsch

tion of substitution,¹ or of mere identity. This is union. This is mutual involvement – “*together with Him.*”

So, the members of Christ’s Body actually have a *need* to die, *so that we can be raised.* Of a certainty Christ died; and we, too, of a certainty will die. This is the process of our *union with Him.* He entered into our condition so that we could enter into His. We experience oneness with Him in suffering, death, burial, resurrection, ascension, exaltation and celestial enthronement at God’s right hand. He did this together with us, we are doing this *together with Him.*

Dean Hough reminds us that,

When Christ died, everyone died – not at that moment in history, but proleptically.² Yet thus, in looking to the eventual results of the cross, we are to understand that the death of the entire old humanity is as certain as was the death of Christ Himself.³

Therefore, knowing the truth of death and resurrection, as well as the truth of the Secret Administration:

(1) Christ is *not* returning in our lifetime. The hope of His Coming (*Parousia*)⁴ belongs to Israel and is precluded by their current abeyance and by the very nature of the Secret Administration.

(2) Neither Christ’s appearing nor our joint-appear-

ing with Him will take place in our current lifetime. The natural law of death and resurrection precludes this. Our appearing with Him, rather than taking place *during* our lifetime, will take place *out from* our deathtime.

The theories of (1) being “raptured,” and/or of (2) being in Heaven while we are dead, are both doctrines that attempt to nullify the Scripture truth of death and the vital importance of resurrection. Both are adversarial substitutions for the biblical doctrines of death and resurrection.

Now, I certainly understand the prevailing confusion that exists, as there are several misunderstood and misinterpreted passages that are used to uphold such no-death theories. So, I am surely sympathetic for those caught in their sway, for I too once was held captive by them.⁵


HOPE: CONFIDENT EXPECTATION? OR MISGUIDED WISH?

I would come to see that within Christendom there is a skewed understanding of “*hope*” – especially the hope of the believer today.

The word “*hope*” used in most translations does not mean “*wish*” as it often does in daily speech. The Greek is ἐλπίς (*elpis*), meaning *a confident expectation*⁶ of that which will surely come to pass – a sure and absolute hope (CKC). It is a divine certainty. This

1. For more on the erroneous idea of substitution, see:
– [The Doctrine of Substitution: An Erroneous Teaching](#) (see [order form](#) under “*Compilations*”).
2. [Editor:] “The representation of a thing as existing before it actually does.” – *Oxford*
3. *Unsearchable Riches*, Volume 81 (1990).
4. See footnote 2, in the previous installment: Things I Misunderstood, Part 5, Section 6, Installment 2 ([Bible Student’s Notebook 944](#)).

5. For an in-depth look at the subject of death, see the following books:
– [Will We Escape Death?](#) Clyde L. Pilkington, Jr., on the [order form](#) under “*Clyde Pilkington.*”
– [Death, the Intermediate State and the Resurrection](#) (A Comprehensive Compilation), on the [order form](#) under “*Compilations.*”
6. “*Confidence*” (SEC); “*confident expectation*” (TGL).



Are Bride and Body Identical?

by — F.H. (Fredrik Homer) Robison

That there is a “Bride” mentioned in Scripture, and also a “Body,” probably no Bible student, or even Bible reader, would deny. As to whether these different terms refer to the same or to distinct classes of believers is the subject of this work.

128 pages See [order form](#) under “*Robison.*”

is why the CV translates it as “expectation.”

Our “hope” is a confident expectation of a divine reality that unquestionably will take place. However, to add a human wish-factor to it diminishes its grand power, so that it is not a “hope” at all.

The “hope” in our joint-appearance with Christ is indeed something that is sure and certain to take place, because God promised it. However, if we confuse our true “hope” with some illusory idea that we will not experience death, we make our “hope” merely a “wish.”

Our joint glorification at His appearing is our hope. Scripturally, our hope is not that of escaping death. Otherwise, the “hope” of all of the believing dead would have been in vain, because they all died and thus, in reality, it was only a “wish” and not a truth.

Let me explain further.

THE DIVINE GUARANTEE

Paul was given the confident expectation of our hope during the Secret Administration. This hope was a divine guarantee; but this came with no such pledge that Paul himself would not experience death. Escaping the personal experience of death was not a sure and certain expectation of his greater revelation.

Consequently, if any believer during the past 2,000 years had confused their hope with *not* experiencing death, then surely they would have “hoped” in vain – and vanity is not a part of faith.

Faith leads to joy, happiness, contentment and peace. Exchanging a scriptural “hope” for a theoretical “wish” to evade death tends only toward distraction, disappointment, disillusionment and depression. This often has been the experience of those who have confused such a human “wish” for divine certainty.

However, when we realize that “*in Adam all die,*” then we can remain genuinely steadfast day-by-day through the trials of life, even until death.

Be sure to grasp the serious and crucial distinction. Our “wishing” for something, regardless of how sincere and earnest we may be, simply will not make it so – nor will it make it the truth of Scripture.

Never let anyone take away the object of our “hope” and substitute it with some ill-founded “wish.” **Our peace and joy are *not* dependent on the avoidance of death, but on our resurrection and appearance “together with Him.”**

In spite of death, our confident expectation, our sure
(see PROPHECY, last page)

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Tidbits of Truth #47

“Tidbits” is a column dedicated to short comments, thoughts, studies and excerpts.

The Two Realms and Their Two Fundamental Dispensations

[To: J.F.] When I read what Russell H. Schaefer (1919–1999) has written,¹ it seems to be in harmony with my current understanding. I think that he is bringing an important point to the discussion. That being, that, according to Scripture, Israel and her Kingdom are repeatedly taken back to *“from the disruption of the world.”*

The point that I perceive Schaefer making is that we can boil things down to two basic realms: *“Created by the Elohim were the Heavens and the Earth”* (Genesis 1:1). For me, this remains a foundational principle, one that I have personally dealt with previously in a video and article: *Bible Basics #4: The Two Realms.*²

My understanding is that, while there are these two basic realms, we can break both of them down even further.³

1. “Before Abraham: What about those from Adam to Abraham?” (Tidbits of Truth #27), Russell H. Schaefer, *Bible Student’s Notebook #897*. Schaefer was the author of *The Mystery Ministry of Paul* (see [order form](#) under “Other Authors”).
2. Video: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mnemZucJ-6Q> ; Article: *Bible Student’s Notebook 847*.
3. Correspondingly, Schaefer also breaks down the dispensations into their two most basic elements. See, – “Two Basic Administrations,” (Tidbits of Truth #27), Russell H. Schaefer, *Bible Student’s Notebook #897*. For more on these two basic administrations, see:

For example, the Earth-Realm can be broken down further between Jew and Gentile, Israel and the Nations – two distinct groups, yet one realm, with the Nations being subservient to Israel, operating under their auspices. Israel will be above the Earth-Realm, both in position (authority) and location (preeminently, believing Israel, eventually from the New Jerusalem). Thus, Gentile hope is ultimately tied up scripturally in Israel, who will have authority over them. So, Earth, although one realm, has various groups (*i.e.*, Israel and the twelve Gentile Nations – Deuteronomy 32:8).

The same can be said of the Heaven-Realm. It can be broken down into various groups – for example there are the various celestial beings that are already there, as well as Christ Himself Who is above it all, both in position and location.

Additionally, believing Israel’s expectation is also *“reserved in the Heavens”* (I Peter 1:4) – specifically that city *“whose builder and maker is God”* (Hebrews 11:10). The New Jerusalem will not be in the Heavens during the Day of God (the Post-Millennial Kingdom), but rather it will be heavenly in nature, *“coming down from God out of Heaven”* (Revelation 21:2).

– “Dispensational Continuity of Major Bible Events,” Ray I. Psalm-onds, *Bible Student’s Notebook #894*.



The Mystery Ministry of Paul

by — Russell H. Schaefer (1919–1999)

This book takes a look at the “Mystery” ministry of Paul as revealed in his letters of Ephesians and Colossians. It surveys this teaching as well as its relationship with the rest of his epistles.

80 pp., PB

See order form under “Other Authors.”

So, in a way, the Heavens incorporate aspects of multiple groups:

- the celestial beings already there;
- those who currently rule over them – “*principalities and authorities in the heavenlies*” – Ephesians 3:10);
- Israel’s stored treasures (Matthew 6:20) and her new capital city (Revelation 21:2);
- and, of course, Christ (Head and Body), enthroned high above it all, in both position and location (Ephesians 4:10).

Thus, the Heavens are a realm, broken down into different aspects related to different groups.

Consequently, we, as members of Christ’s One Body, do not have a different realm, but a different position and hope – the Super-Heaven, “*far above all Heavens*” (Ephesians 4:10). Thus, as Israel is at the top of the Earth-Realm, so too, Christ (Head and Body) is atop the Heaven-Realm and thus above all of God’s Universe.

I think that this is what Schaefer was referring to when he wrote:

- (1) a household for the Earth (old and new) – Abraham and his family; and
- (2) a family of sons in Christ for the Heavenlies, along with the Princes and Magistrates of that realm, and Christ over them (Ephesians 1:21-23).

— Clyde L. Pilkington, Jr.

Propitiation and Atoning in the Epistle of I John

And He is the propitiation for our sins: and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world (I John 2:2).

Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that He loved us, and sent His Son to be the propitiation for our sins (I John 4:10).

[*Excerpt:*] Propitiation⁴ is a negative satisfaction.⁵ Necessary though it is, it is yet lower than the grace that provides and secures for us a celestial allotment.

An *anointing*⁶ is spoken of by John (I John 2:20, 27). No such thing is mentioned in the Prison Epistles, and only once in the Pre-Prison Epistles of Paul (II Corinthians 1:21).⁷



4. [Editor:] Propitiation: ἱλασμός (*hilasmos*), Strong’s G2434.
“That which appeases anger and brings reconciliation with someone who has reason to be angry with one” (I John 2:2; 4:10).” – Strong’s Complete Word Study Concordance. See: – “Propitiation,” Clyde L. Pilkington, Jr., *Bible Student’s Notebook* #32.
5. [Editor:] Interestingly, other than I John, the only other place “*propitiation*” appears, this time as ἱλαστήριον (*hilastērion*, G2435) is in Romans 3:25, and then in Hebrews 9:5 as “*mercycseat*.”
“Whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in his blood, to declare his righteousness for the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God” (Romans 3:25).
“And over it the cherubims of glory shadowing the mercycseat; of which we cannot now speak particularly” (Hebrews 9:5).
6. Χρίσμα (*chrisma*) G5545.
“[An] ointment, usually prepared by the Hebrews from oil and aromatic herbs. Anointing was the inaugural ceremony for priests.” – TGL
7. [Editor:] A reference to Paul and Timothy (II Corinthians 1:2).



268 pp., PB

See **order form** under “*Compilations.*”

Death, the Intermediate State and the Resurrection (A Comprehensive Compilation)

Are you afraid of death or “hell”? Well, you needn’t be. After all, Christ has the keys to both of them. Authors include:

Arthur P. Adams (1847-1925), Cecil J. Blay (1906-1976), E.W. Bullinger (1837-1913), Joseph E. Kirk (1903-1974), A.E. Knoch (1874-1965), Aaron Locker, Adlai Loudy (1893-1984), Clyde L. Pilkington, Jr., Charles H. Pridgeon (1863-1932), William B. Screws (1884-1961) and André Sneidar.

II John is a private communication, not so much as an apostle as in the capacity of an elder. Doctrine is made a test of fellowship (:10) because the miraculous gifts of knowledge and discernment were still with them (I John 2:27; 4:1). Also, divergence of view meant a departing from the teachings of the spirit. Doctrine is not now a test of fellowship, but rather cleanness of motive (II Timothy 2:22).



III John identifies itself as being to a believing Jew by referring to the faithfulness of other believers who had taken “*nothing of the Gentiles*” (:7).

— F.H. (Fredrik Homer) Robison (1885-1932)
[Are Bride and Body Identical?](#)

BSN

Topics:

Major: [The Two Realms and Their Two Fundamental Dispensations:] Realms, The Two; Earth; Heaven; New Jerusalem; Administrations [Propitiation and Atoning in the Epistle of I John:] Propitiation; Atoning; John, The Books of I, II & III

PROPHECY (continued from page 7981)

and certain destiny, is to join Him in His appearance in Glory!

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

Or, perhaps more accurately, we will join Him in His manifestation in Glory.

*Whenever Christ, our Life, should be **manifested**, then you also shall be **manifested** together with Him in Glory (CV).*

*As soon as, the Christ, shall be made **manifest**—our Life, then, ye also, together with Him, shall be made **manifest** in Glory (REB).*

*When the Christ – our Life – may be **manifested**, then also we with Him shall be **manifested** in Glory (YLT).*

Thankfully, we can make a relative application of these truths to our own lives. I often remember some

very precious words from A.E. Knoch (1874-1965) that I will adapt here for us:

In actual practice our appearing with Christ is not *relatively* a far-off future meeting, with long centuries of waiting in between. To our consciousness it comes immediately at the close of life. To be sure, the Lord does not appear at the decease of His saints; but to those who die it will seem just as if He has. To a sleeper, the morning immediately follows the evening. The night is nothing. **To each one the moment of death will seem the moment of rousing.**⁷

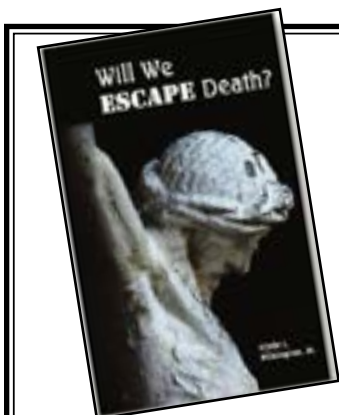
(to be continued)

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

TOPICS:

Major: Appearing; Death; Expectation; Glorification; Identification; Resurrection
Minor: Hope; Rapture; Tradition; Union

7. *Concordant Studies in the Book of Daniel*, p. 330, adapted and abridged.



Will We Escape Death?

by — Clyde L. Pilkington, Jr.

The plight of humanity is mortality and death. In every age the believer's hope has always been resurrection from the dead and the glory which lays beyond. It was Satan who first introduced the idea, “*Thou shalt not surely die.*” So, what makes anyone think that Satan was right – that we are actually not going to die? What makes someone expect that, of all of the people who have ever lived before them, they will somehow be the ones who will *escape* death? The answer, in one word: tradition.

62 pages

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