



Bible Student's Notebook™

The Herald of His Grace

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

Volume 39
Issue 970

God's Sovereignty vs. Mankind's Supposed "Free Will"

Bible Student's Courses

Course 1: GOD / Unit 2 - The Sovereignty of God /
Lesson 3 - God's Sovereignty vs. Mankind's Supposed "Free Will"

by — Mark D. Vogt

Key Points:

Religion says that ultimately Satan will win the battle for the "souls" of humanity..... 8177
There is no battle - God is sovereign..... 8177

Given how little anybody knows about anything, we should be grateful that God is in total control..... 8182

God's sovereignty is *absolute* and without any real challenge in the universe. The religious system convinces people that there is a universe where there are two competing forces, good represented by God, and evil represented by Satan. This supposed universal conflict has these two forces competing for the "souls" of mankind that has been raging for thousands and thousands of years.



Satan), let alone billions of other sovereign "free wills" (*i.e.*, humanity).

"Free will" is the ability to make a decision unencumbered from any external or internal influences. The reality is that while man, and even Satan, may believe that they have a "free will," they don't. What they have is a will that God shapes to His good pleasure. This describes all of God's creatures: the inability to make a decision without any influences.

If one were to take seriously the claims of religion, one would conclude that ultimately Satan will win the battle for the "souls" of humanity. There will be a select few that will be ensconced forever in the loving arms of the Savior while the vast majority will be consigned eternally to conscious torment. The question should then be asked, who really will win the battle? Yet, is that the correct question?

Yet, God is not subject to those things to which creation is subject. Romans 11:29 tells us that the graces and callings of God are unregretted. Has anyone ever regretted a decision that they have made? "Boy, if I could just go

(see *WILL*, page 8182)

The better question would be, is there really a battle at all? The answer to that is a resounding, "No!" Remember the statement above? God is absolutely sovereign. As a reminder, God Himself states this categorically in Isaiah 46:9-10. His counsel will stand and all His desire He will do. This leaves no room for another sovereign "free will" in the universe (*i.e.*,

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Bible Student's Notebook™

Paul Our Guide – Christ Our Goal

ISSN: 1936-9360

Volume 39, No. 970 – May 15, 2023

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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God's Sovereignty - The Glory of God

Bible Student's Courses

Course 1: GOD / Unit 2 - The Sovereignty of God /

Lesson 4 - God's Sovereignty – The Glory of God

by — Mark D. Vogt

Key Points:

The sovereignty of God always has as one of its goals the glory of God Himself..... 8179
Our future glory will be because we reflect His glory. 8179

All that God does is glorious..... 8182
Part of God's glory in His plans is slowly revealing what He is doing, and why He is doing it..... 8182

The fact that God is sovereign in His universe should be acknowledged without question. The matter then for us should be one concerning the ramifications of His sovereignty, and how it affects God Himself, and how it affects humanity.

out of his whims or how he is feeling at the time, unlike his creatures. No! Psalms 115:3 says,

Indeed our Elohim is in the heavens; All that He desires, He does (CV).

With this lesson we will examine one of those ramifications. **The sovereignty of God always has as one of its goals the glory of God Himself. His glory is His because of Who He is. God is the only One in the universe that, by His essence and attributes, has innate glory.** In other words, He has *intrinsic* glory, and deserves *celebrated* glory because of Who He is. **Our future glory will be because we reflect His glory, and the glory of His Son, Christ Jesus our Lord. This will be a reflection of His splendor, magnificence and brilliant light.**

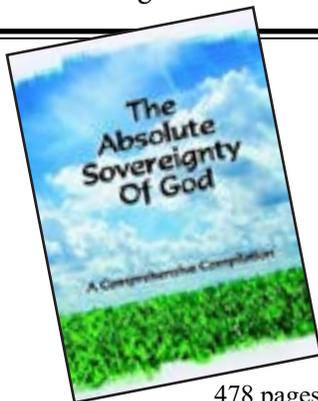
He deserves glory because that which He desires is His glory, because of Who He is, and because of His desire for our good. All of His plans and decisions are based on His essence of love and light. God will not deviate from this. Malachi 3:6 clearly states,

For I am the Lord, I change not (KJV).

God's sovereignty enables Him to do all that He desires, and all of His desires conform to His essence of love and light. He is not an arbitrary god who acts

This is not to say that He doesn't change His dealings with mankind over the course of the eons (ages), for He does change His dealings with the purpose of continually demonstrating His love, grace and mercy and to reveal Himself to humanity in ever-increasing measure.

(see GLORY, page 8182)



478 pages

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

The Absolute Sovereignty of God (A Comprehensive Compilation)

This quintessential book victoriously celebrates and convincingly proclaims the absolute sovereignty of God. Sadly, religion has veiled the truth of the God of the Bible, making Him either an aloof deity, indifferent to the condition of the creation, or one who is at the worst cruel or at the least unloving and uncaring. Yet the loving Deity of Sacred Scripture always has had and will have sole and complete control over His entire creation. This ultimate collection of 100 works by 34 authors spans nearly 175 years. It is an extensive reference work that is essential for every library.

God's Sovereignty Is Always for Our Good

Bible Student's Courses

Course 1: GOD / Unit 2 - The Sovereignty of God /
Lesson 5 - God's Sovereignty Is Always for Our Good

by — Mark D. Vogt

Key Points:

Only God can do things that, while at times cause pain and confusion, nevertheless are for our benefit. 8181
There is no room in the universe for contrary wills. 8181

Everything that happens, including evil, will eventually result in good - good for us and for all humanity. 8181

It is hard for our feeble minds to comprehend that God's sovereignty is always for our good, either directly or indirectly.

Many can't see that most of what has happened to Israel in the past, or what will happen in the future, has any bearing or influence on our lives in this Dispensation of Grace. It is only by seeing the clear distinctions between that which God gave to Israel and that which He gave to the church which is His (Christ's) Body are we able to begin to appreciate the truths concerning either.

Theoretically speaking, if Israel had heeded their Messiah in the gospel period, or the apostles in the Acts period, and had believed what they were saying and then repented nationally, there never would have been the administration of grace where there is no dispensational distinction between Jew or Gen-

tile, and we would still be second class citizens behind the Jewish nation.

Now, if that was what had happened, that would still be a glorious position, but we would not be in the far greater position that we now hold as celestial citizens positioned far above all heavens as members of His Body of which Christ is the head.

It must be realized that the rejection by Israel of all attempts to sway them from their unbelief was God's intention at that time. Although, it was God's will that all Israel would be saved, it was not His intention to do so during that period of time. There is a difference between God's "will" and His "intention," and that distinction will be addressed in a future lesson.

This is an example of Israel's relative rejection of God's sovereignty (His "will" but not His "intention"), indi-



The Sovereignty of God

by — George Addair

The trend of the centuries has consistently been that of the exaltation of man and the abasement of God. Many feel that the Creator has delegated His rule and authority to the use or abuse of the creature. They have reduced God and His Divine office to the extent that multitudes of people now have only a superficial conception of Him.

57 pages

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

rectly affecting the Gentiles and more specifically the Church which is His Body, for its good.

God can do things that, while at times can cause pain and confusion, nevertheless are for the benefit of the believer. In fact, this applies to believer and unbeliever alike, although the unbeliever has very little recognition of what is going on.

For us, who love God, who are the called according to His purpose, there is an awareness that He is working all together for good (Romans 8:28, BSV).

God's sovereignty is not being used as a bludgeoning weapon to "whip" believers and unbelievers alike into shape. If this were the case, then God has done a very poor job of it. In practical terms, God has to be totally sovereign in order to bring about His plan and purpose whether it be His "will" or "intention," and in the end it is *all* His will.

There is no room in the universe for contrary wills. Yes, humans and celestial creatures (even Satan himself) think that they have "free will," but they don't. For example, the small child may decide to run out onto the busy street, but the responsible parent won't allow this to happen. The child's will is restrained by the parent's overriding will. At other times the child may want to do something that is not good for them in the short term (something that will not do damage to the child but nevertheless will cause some pain or



A Cloud of Witnesses

by — J.W. (John Wesley)
Hanson (1823-1901)

324 pages (See [order form](#) under "Hanson.")

This work contains passages from distinguished authors concerning the truth of Universal Salvation.

distress), but will be allowed by the parent in order to "teach" the child a lesson that hopefully they will remember. It was the responsible parent's "will" that was exercised in the first example and the parent's "intention" in the second example, both done in pursuit of what was best for their child.

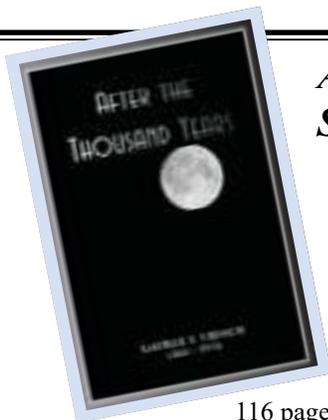
Ephesians 1:11 tells us that *"the One Who is operating all in accord with the counsel of His will" is God Himself.* If it is the evil in this world, if it is the sin, or if it is the utter confusion that seems to surround us, rest assured, it is God's "intention" and it will eventually result in good – good for us and for all of humanity.

Do not be discouraged, for in all of this that we experience it will obtain for us a *far greater glory* in the future (Romans 8:31-39; II Corinthians 4:17-18). **BSN**

TOPICS:

Major: God; Sovereignty

Minor: Free Will; Intention, God's; Will of God



After the Thousand Years: The Glorious Reign of Christ as Son of Man in the Dispensation of the Fullness of Times

by — George F. Trench (1841-1915)

116 pages

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

In Revelation 20 the closing period of the Millennium is foretold as one of general insurrection against Christ as King, thus revealing the true condition of the population of the world, taken as a whole, throughout the thousand years. A Kingdom such as this cannot be the KINGDOM described in the epistles of Paul. According to I Corinthians 15:24, our Lord will not reign forever, but will deliver up His mediatorial KINGDOM to God at its end, that God will henceforth be "All in all." If the reign of Christ in its perfection cannot be millennial, and shall not be eternal, it follows that between the end of the one, the millennial, and the beginning of the other, the eternal state, must of necessity intervene that "dispensation of the fullness of times" (Ephesians 1:10), that KINGDOM of the Son of God's love, that KINGDOM that cannot be shaken, which it is Christ's to enjoy as Heir of all things, and Head of the new creation. George F. Trench was an associate of Dr. E.W. Bullinger.

WILL (continued from page 8177)

back in time I wouldn't make that same decision again." The truth is that you would make that same decision because the circumstances would be the same and it was God Himself Who surrounded you with that same set of circumstances. God brings things into our lives that "bend" our will to His will, and most people have no clue that this is happening and would vehemently deny that this was the case if they were asked.

Can anyone imagine how much more terrible and chaotic the world would be if we really had our own "free will"? Yet, the chaos that has happened in the past, is going on now, and will go on in the future is ALL of God's doing, and His doing it has a definite purpose.

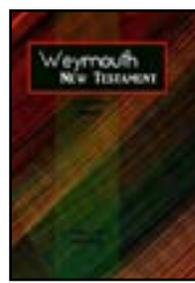
We are all so incredibly ignorant of the factors affecting our lives: ignorant of any foreknowledge, ignorant of past history, and ignorant of the forces acting in the universe. We should all be unashamedly grateful that God doesn't leave us to our own whims, devices, desires and decisions.

Given how little anybody knows about anything, we should be profoundly attuned to this truth and be grateful that God is in total control, and that this

GLORY (continued from page 8179)

He is God and all that He does is glorious and it reflects upon Himself that He is the great God of the universe. The problem with mankind is that we don't know the end from the beginning (Isaiah 46:10), and our ways are not His ways, our designs are not His designs, His ways are loftier than our ways (Isaiah 54:8-9). In other words, we cannot know God or even know about Him unless He tells us, either by a physical demonstration (the starry universe or a visible miracle as in the Old Testament times) or by His written Word.

Even by His written Word things are not plain and easy to be understood. The Lord Jesus Christ spoke in many parables while He was here on Earth representing His Father. Most people think that a parable is a language device to teach some truth – and it is – yet Christ clearly stated that parables were spoken to *hide* and obscure the particular truth in question from certain people (Matthew 13:13, 34-35).



Weymouth New Testament in Modern Speech – The Resultant Greek Testament in English

(Reprint of the 1903 Edition)

by — Richard Francis Weymouth

225 pages. See [order form](#) under "Bibles."

control is for our benefit and His glory. This is a win-win situation that, while painful and uncomfortable at times, will ultimately in the future usher in a time of unparalleled joy and comfort. God knows exactly what He is doing and what He is doing is profoundly good.

It is unimaginable how badly humanity would foul up things if we had "free will." Free will would be a dangerous thing in the hands of a humanity that doesn't know what is in their best interests in the short or long run. God has *everything* covered. Rest in that. **BSN**

TOPICS:

Major: God; Sovereignty

Minor: Free Will

God intends to hide truth and reveal it only to those whom He chooses. Proverbs 25:2 says,

It is the glory of God to conceal a thing; but the honor of kings to search out a matter (KJV).

Notice that it is to God's glory to hide things. Why does He hide things? It is because He doesn't want everyone to know certain things at times, and it is to His plan and glory that He does this. Once again, we don't know all the details of God's plans, nor do we know the full timing of His plans.

Part of God's glory in His plans is slowly revealing what He is doing, and why He is doing it. Trust God and believe that He will take care of EVERYTHING. To God be the glory. **BSN**

TOPICS:

Major: Glory; God; Sovereignty

Minor: Faith; Revelation; Truth



Editor's Desk

Bible Student's Courses

Just over a year ago, in the "Editor's Desk" of *Bible Student's Notebook* 917, we laid forth the need of a concise, progressive curriculum.

I shared with our readers correspondence that I had received from a brother who has spent the past few decades teaching the Scriptures. Here is what he had written:

I feel as though I am getting a quilt-like mosaic of learning, without the connective tissue to lend a more cohesive understanding. I suppose what I am looking for is an A-Z curriculum that builds in understanding and comprehension.

As I read this, I was reminded that there are so *many* gaps in the believer's education. I am often amazed, when I talk at length with many who share some of our basic understandings, at how little they really know, even among those who are actually teachers of the Scriptures.

For 34 years we have been publishing the *Bible Student's Notebook*, resulting in nearly 8,200 pages of significant study material thus far. In the past few years, we have published 39 ground-breaking compilation books on key scriptural themes. Through *Bible Student's Press* we have published and republished 560 titles/formats. We have hundreds of hours of videos, audios and *Daily Email Goodies* recordings.

Yet, with all of these available resources, it is quite an intimidating undertaking to try to navigate one's way through it all to acquire the necessary comprehension to transition from old religious paradigms toward a true biblical framework of understanding. This situation has been a long, ongoing burden of my heart.

We certainly have had no lack of material available for a comprehensive educational curriculum that would systematically build cohesive understanding in the saints – it has just desperately needed organizing. We'd need to create a detailed list of subjects, and then begin to arrange them in some logical order of progression.

I was honest in that first Editor's Desk, that producing such a project of progressive study guides would be a daunting undertaking, and that we already had so much work going on here that it seemed that we could *barely* keep up with the basic tasks that were



84 pages

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

According to the purpose of the One Who is operating all in accord with the counsel of His will (1:11).

God is the captain of the ship of the universe; all of His creatures are its passengers. He is guiding the vessel across the ocean of time from the port that is called "*All in God*" to the haven that is termed "*God in all*."

The Deity of God

by – John Henry Essex (1907-1991)

Nottingham, England

Creation cannot help itself that all of its achievements are futile because of the slavery of corruption, but we take immense comfort from the fact that, in spite of all of its present "groaning and travailing," it was subjected to vanity in expectation of the eventual realization of that glorious freedom which is now already being enjoyed by the children of God.

It is in the prison epistle of Paul to the Ephesians that we find the most absolute expression of the Deity of God in relation to the points we have been considering. Here we find the phrase which puts all other Scriptures into their perspective:

daily laid before us. The point was that if such a curriculum would ever materialize, it will be because helpers arose, and/or that we completely readjust our priorities and repurpose our direction and schedule.

The response to that editorial was heartfelt. Numerous answered back that they knew that they needed just such a curriculum. A few communicated their enthusiasm, even sharing their valuable ideas with us. Most notably were James Fine from Tennessee, Mark Peters from South Dakota, and Johann Grobler from South Africa. These all provided valued encouragement that such a project might be possible after all.

Yet, even more significantly, we had two co-laborers who were so enthusiastic and gracious, conveying that they were willing to spearhead the project. Steve Martin expressed interest in the conceptual/technical side, while Mark Vogt voiced his interest in curriculum development itself.

After months of encouragement from the two, they both came here to Windber in February to brainstorm concerning the project. A plan was developed, and Mark Vogt has already begun developing the initial courses. This project simply will be called, *Bible Student's Courses*. We have started running these introductory lessons here in the *Bible Student's Notebook*, beginning with issue 964.

Often stuck in old-school thinking when it comes to technology, I had envisioned traditional correspondence courses, with printed material traveling back

and forth through the mail. However, thanks to Steve Martin's vision, this will primarily be online courses, which he will oversee. The concept is that these will be multi-media presentations, with on-line lesson text supported by audios and videos, along with article and book resources. Therefore, our co-labouring staff are currently as follows:

- Mark Vogt: Director of Curriculum
- André Sneidar: Executive Editor of Curriculum
- Steve Martin: Administrator of Online Operations
- Mark Peters: Manager of Curriculum Testing
- Johann Grobler: Coordinator of Curriculum Resources

Continued input from our readers concerning this project is welcomed and encouraged.

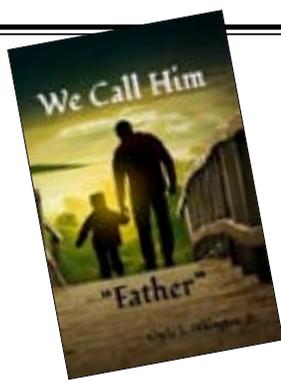
Humbly, yours,



Clyde L. Pilkington, Jr.
The Pilkington Abbey
Paint, PA

TOPICS:

Major: Bible Student's Courses; Curriculum; Editor's Desk
Minor: Study



242 pages

We Call Him "Father"

by — Clyde L. Pilkington, Jr.

One God and Father of all, Who is over all and through all and in all
(Ephesians 4:6, *Concordant Version*)

Jesus Christ came to reveal God's true identity and nature as "Father." This was an advanced revelation concerning God, super-abounding that of any previous one. With radical boldness Christ called Him "Father," and Paul pressed this glorious truth to its grand ultimate, that God was the "Father of all."

See [order form](#) under "Clyde Pilkington." 29 chapters, 18 appendixes.