



# Bible Student's Notebook<sup>TM</sup>

## The Herald of His Grace

### Weekly

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

Volume 22  
Issue 534

# The Scriptures for the Circumcision

## Part 2 of 3

by — A.E. Knoch (1874-1965)

### THE ACTS

Were the opening words of the Book of Acts weighted as they should be it would revolutionize the creed and course of Christendom. It is a continuation of the proclamation of the kingdom; the creeds connect it with the inception of the church.

The accounts of our Lord's life did not complete the kingdom ministry. He chose commissioners or apostles to carry it on after His ascension. The Book of Acts is an account of the kingdom ministry as carried on by those chosen by the Lord, in the power of the holy spirit. It takes up the thread of what Jesus *began* to do and teach, and continues the same teachings and the same operations to the very end.

Christ heralded the kingdom to Israel. He accompanied His proclamation with signs and marvels in the land of Israel. The apostles enlarged the sphere of its proclamation as He instructed them, but the very same kingdom which the nation had refused was again proclaimed by the authority of the risen King.

Both Luke and Acts were written for Theophilus. Luke is called "*the former account of what Jesus began both to do and teach.*" Hence Acts may well be regarded as a sequel to Luke's account. It has the same sympathetic breadth, dealing with the human aspect of the kingdom. It also continues the ministries contained in the other accounts, as the close student will discern when he seeks to analyze the addresses it contains. The apostles' acts are based on the various commissions which our Lord gave them while



still with them. Only such commissions as the last kingdom commission (Matthew 28:19-20), which is not in exercise until Christ takes His great power and reigns (Revelation 11:17), are absent from their ministry.

For forty days He was with them and spoke of the things pertaining to the *kingdom*. As a result they wished to know whether the *kingdom* would be restored at that time. This question and the answer flashes its light upon the very heart of the book.

*It is not for you to know ...* (Acts 1:7).

They were to go on proclaiming the kingdom in ignorance of the effect of their ministry. If it had been God's will to restore the kingdom then, doubtless He would have encouraged their hearts by assuring them of the success of their proclamation. The inference is all too clear: the Book of Acts is an account of the *rejection* of the kingdom after it had already been refused and the King crucified. They were to receive power, not to rule, as when the kingdom is established, but to be *witnesses* in Jerusalem, Judea, Samaria and to the limits of the earth. This would, of course, include the other nations, but only as proselytes, like Cornelius (10:1-48) under the ministry of Peter, or as "*guests*" (Ephesians 2:12) and "*debtors*" (Romans 15:27) under the ministry of Paul.

Peter is the central figure in the first half of the book; Paul becomes more and more prominent in the latter half. He duplicates every sign or miracle which

(see *CIRCUMCISION*, page 4675) ↗

## Bible Student's Notebook™ Weekly

Paul Our Guide – Christ Our Goal

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This free weekly electronic publication is dedicated to:

- 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 mankind through the death, burial, and resurrection of Christ (I Timothy 2:3, 4; 4:10; Titus 2:11);
- the "preaching of Jesus Christ, according to the revelation of the mystery, which was kept secret in ages past" (Romans 16:25);
- true freedom and liberty apart from law (Galatians 5:1);
- the organic nature of the Body of Christ (I Corinthians 12);
- the distinct message and ministry of Paul, the apostle to the nations (Romans 11:13);
- 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 (Romans 6);
  - adult sonship position (Galatians 4).

We do not claim infallibility for the contents of this publication. Our readers are asked to be as the Bereans and search the Scriptures (Acts 17:10-11; I Thessalonians 5:21).

This publication is not connected with any "church," "denomination," "movement," "organization," "mission," "creed," "meeting," "school," "conference" or "fellowship."

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### ABBREVIATION KEY

<i>Scripture Version</i>	Concordance (Knoch)
(Unless otherwise noted all Scripture quotations are taken from the <i>Bible Student's Version</i> ).	CL: A Critical Lexicon and Concordance (Bullinger)
CV: Concordant Literal Version	CWS: Complete Word Study Dictionary (Zodhiates)
DAR: Darby Translation	FoS: Figures of Speech (Bullinger)
DT: Dabhar Translation	SEC: Strong's Exhaustive Concordance
FF: Ferrar Fenton Bible	TGL: Thayer's Greek-English Lexicon
KJV: King James Version	UR: Unsearchable Riches
RE: Rotterdam's Emphasized Bible	VED: Vine's Expository Dictionary
WT: Weymouth Translation	YAC: Young's Analytical Concordance
YLT: Young's Literal Translation	
<i>Reference Sources</i>	<i>Reference Notations</i>
AA: Analytical Analysis (Welch)	cf. – compare
BDB: Brown-Driver-Briggs Hebrew Lexicon	e.g. – for example
CB: Companion Bible Notes & Appendixes (Bullinger)	et al. – and others
CC: Concordant Commentary (Knoch)	etc. – et cetera (and so on)
CKC: Concordant Keyword	ff. – and the following
	i.e., – that is

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CIRCUMCISION (continued from front page)

Peter performed, yet his ministry in the book of Acts is consistently confined to the kingdom, as it was to be proclaimed among the nations. *It is only at the very close that he turns from the apostate nation and quotes Isaiah's prediction against them* (Acts 28:28).

## HEBREWS

When the nation of Israel rejects the repeated proclamation and is thrust aside to give place to the present grace, *as dispensed in Paul's later epistles*, what becomes of the individuals in the nation who received the message of our Lord and His disciples? Some, we know, like Paul, were incorporated in the new Body, in which all physical distinctions vanish. However, the great bulk of the believers among the Circumcision never became members of Christ's Body and still clung to the kingdom. What is to be done with them now that the Kingdom is in abeyance?

The epistle to the Hebrews answers this question. That they are the believers of the Book of Acts is evident from many allusions. That they are Hebrews is manifest, not only from the title (which may not be inspired) but from the opening words as well as the tenor of the whole epistle:

*God spake ... unto the fathers by the prophets.*

Apart from the fact that this cannot refer to any nation except the Hebrews, we are assured in Romans (9:5) that the possession of the fathers is one of their peculiar privileges.

The epistle to the Hebrews read in this light – as written to Hebrews whose faith was sorely tried by the postponement of the kingdom – will yield rich and satisfactory results. They are led step by step to see that this is no new thing. Israel has always failed as a nation through lack of faith. Nor is their position a new one. There has always been a remnant who were true to Jehovah who died in faith not having received the promises. They are added to this great class. They are like the sons of Israel when Moses led them out of the land of Egypt. Only those who believed entered the land. So they are exhorted to faith like the worthies of old.

To appeal to this epistle for truth for *the present time*

can lead only to the dimming or denial of the transcendent grace in which we share. If those who had the faith of the kingdom apostatize, what can there be but judgment? However, those today who believe God can get nothing but grace.

## THE EPISTLE OF JAMES

How can we mistake the plain directions on James' envelope?

*... to the twelve tribes in the dispersion ...*

The "twelve tribes." What Twelve Tribes? Four times do we read of Twelve Tribes. Twice we are assured that the Twelve Apostles will sit on Twelve Thrones "**judging the Twelve Tribes of Israel**" (Matthew 19:28; Luke 22:30). Is there any other nation which could possibly be intended? The names of *the Twelve Tribes of the sons of Israel* are on the portals of the New Jerusalem.

Should we not pray to God to give us grace to acknowledge that He never speaks of any other twelve tribes but those of His chosen nation? This letter is *not* addressed to any other tribe of any other nation.

However, it is not addressed to the whole nation for it is limited to those in "*the dispersion.*" Who are they? Some of the nation dwelt in the land that Jehovah had given them. Others dwelt in foreign countries. These were given the special title of the *diaspora*, or "*the dispersion.*"

Our Lord told the Jews,

*Ye shall seek Me, and shall not find Me, and where I am ye cannot come.*

He spoke of His return to the Father, but they asked themselves,

*is He about to go to the Greek dispersion and to teach the Greeks?* (John 7:35).

This Greek dispersion is spoken of in Acts 6:1; 9:29; 11:20, being there translated "*Grecians.*" They were Jews affecting the speech and culture of the Greeks among whom they lived. They retained this name even after they returned to the land of their fathers, for their ►

customs and speech were quite distinct from the Jews of the land, so that some of the dispersion to whom James wrote lived in Greece. In fact, they were dispersed all over the known world. However, their race marks could not be eradicated, no matter where they were. They held to the sacred rite given to them by their father Abraham.

To them the sonship, the glory, the covenants, the law, the liturgy, the promises all belong (Romans 9:4).

Shall we steal this letter from them, or shall we leave it for them, enjoy the rare wisdom it contains, and glorify God for its perfect adaptation to them at the time when they will so sorely need its teachings?

“James” is the same name as Jacob. Perhaps we have erred in suggesting it was written to the *Twelve Tribes of Israel*. Rather, it was written to the *Twelve Tribes of Jacob* – the supplanter. His descendants are seen in this epistle in the same character in which he excelled before divine grace had taught him his own crookedness and helplessness and changed his name to Israel – *a Prince of El*.

Besides, James writes in the character of a *slave*. As such he addresses them because they, too, are viewed as in the sphere of service. All is considered in this light. Justification is not viewed from the Divine standpoint, but from the human; not from grace, but from works; not from the unconditional covenant with Abraham (Genesis 17) to which Paul refers (Romans 4:13), but to the trial of his faith (Genesis 22) when his faith was perfected by his works (James 2:22).

We find, then, that James wrote to the Twelve Tribes *outside* of the land. His own name, Jacob, is the key to their spiritual condition, and the entire epistle is tinted with this. It is the lowest of the letters. He never calls them saints, but “sinners” (James 4:8). They are under law (4:11). They are friends of the world (4:4). They have forsaken the land for gain (4:13). They heap up treasures for the last days. Judgment awaits them from the hand of Jehovah of Hosts (5:4).

Does not this fit the Jew in the impending tribulation, when they forsake the land for Babylon and wax wealthy by their wicked speculations?

Our translators, in their endeavor to conceal its true character from us, translate *sunagoogee* as “assembly” (James 2:2), though they never so render it elsewhere in its more than fifty occurrences. It was written to the Twelve Tribes, and they worshipped in a *synagogue*.

## PETER’S EPISTLES

Turning now to Peter’s first epistle we find the address as follows:

*Peter, an apostle of Jesus Christ, to the chosen expatriates of the dispersion of Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, the province of Asia, and Bythinia, according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, for obedience and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ.*

The *King James Version* translates [the word for “ex-



83 pp., PB

See order form.

## *Studies in Ecclesiastes: The Words and Works of God and Man*

by — Vladimir Gelesnoff (1877-1921)

Many current versions of the Bible often translate the same Hebrew word in various ways. In this way a veil of mystery has been thrown over many a passage, and a certain amount of human opinion and guesswork has been imported into God’s truth. The Book of Ecclesiastes has severely suffered from inconsistency in translation – no sacred book has ever been so much misunderstood in its whole aim and spirit. Our aim should always be to adjust our thoughts to the facts, and never to adjust the facts to our thoughts.

Applying this principle to the matter in hand, our prime concern is to ascertain what the book of Ecclesiastes has to say about itself. The book aims at achieving a threefold object: (1) Recognition of God as God; (2) Reception of His revelation; (3) Regulation of life in view of a future rectification or judgment.

*patriates*"] here as "strangers," but "*pilgrims*" in 2:11 (where it uses "*strangers*" for another word) and Hebrews 11:13, the only other occurrences. It is a form of the word "public," and refers to a foreigner living among an alien people.

Our word in the Concordant Version, "*expatriates*," is very close to the meaning intended. [The Greek word is *parepidem*, BESIDE-ON-PUBLIC-er, meaning "one who is among an alien populace, who lives in a foreign land."]<sup>1</sup>

Peter limits his letter even more than James. The whole tone of his introduction is distinctly more spiritual. Jacob was Israel's physical name; Peter is Simon's spiritual name. He writes to the "*elect*" of Israel; James to all in the Twelve Tribes.

There are two dispersions spoken of in the Scriptures. Our Lord spoke of those who had left the land, doubtless for mercenary reasons, for the religious Jew had no right to leave the land and allotment which Jehovah had given to him. Of such were Paul's parents, Jews of Tarsus. We cannot help contrasting his father with Peter's, who was in God's appointed place.

The other dispersion was of an opposite character. Unfaithfulness *led* many away from Jehovah's land: but later faithfulness *drove* many away from their patrimony.<sup>2</sup>

Stephen's martyrdom proved a crisis for many in Israel. Those in Jerusalem, except the apostles, were driven throughout Judea and Samaria (Acts 8:1-4). Some

went as far as Venice, Cyprus and Antioch, preaching the Word to none but the Jews only. Later some spoke to the Hellenists also (Acts 10:19-20).

The reason that there was no outcry against this procedure, as when Peter preached to Cornelius, lies in the fact that these Hellenists, or "Grecians," though they did not follow the customs as the true Jews did, were of the Circumcision and the stock of Israel and not aliens of the other nations, not Greeks.

Peter undoubtedly writes to this second dispersion. It is only as we, in spirit, acquaint ourselves with their experiences that we can appreciate this epistle. A letter written to us is easy to understand. The references to our own life and affairs are a part of us and we cannot miss their point. A letter written to another is more difficult to apprehend. Our comprehension is limited by our acquaintance with the recipient and his private circumstances.

To illustrate: Their allotment, or "inheritance" in the land has been spoiled and defiled and has faded quite away so far as their enjoyment of it is concerned. They have been chased from it; but they have a living expectation, through the resurrection of Jesus Christ, of obtaining a better allotment, kept in heaven for them.

Who cannot see, in the opening strain of Peter's letter, a distinct allusion to the exodus, when the nation, having been chosen in the patriarchs, with the foreknowledge of their deliverance and destiny, a separate or sanctified people in Goshen, sprinkle the blood of the lamb in obedience to Jehovah's command? In spirit Israel has come to precisely the same crisis once more. They are in the midst of the wil- ►

1. *Concordant Keyword Concordance*, page 97.  
2. [Editor]: "possessions and property that someone gets from their father after he dies."

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derness. The inheritance lies ahead to cheer them in their manifold trials.

They are redeemed, not with corruptible things as silver and gold (Exodus 30:11-16), not with the “atone-ment money,” but with the precious blood of Christ, as of a Lamb without blemish and without spot. They are the regeneration of which our Lord spoke (Matthew 19:28; 1 Peter 1:23).

Even if the address on Peter’s first epistle had been obliterated and it had been sent to the dead letter office, there is abundant internal evidence to ensure its proper delivery and to keep us from “appropriating” it to ourselves. People smile when we speak of the legal penalty attached to the stealing of mail matter. If this is the case with our letters, which are of so little importance, is it not tremendously serious when we dare to tamper with God’s?

Surely we cannot forget His words to Moses at the foot of Sinai:

*Thus shalt thou say to the **house of Jacob**, and tell the **sons of Israel**:*

*“Ye have seen what I did unto the Egyptians and how I bare you on eagles’ wings, and brought you to Myself; now, therefore, if you will hear My voice, indeed, and keep My covenant, then ye shall be a peculiar treasure unto Me above all the peoples; for all the earth is Mine: and ye shall be unto Me a kingdom of priests, and a holy nation.”*

*These are the words which thou shalt speak unto the **sons of Israel**.*

Internal evidence shows that Peter wrote to,

*A chosen **generation**, a royal **priesthood**, a holy **nation**, a **people** secured for Himself.*

A people which once were “not a people” but now are “the people of God,” which “had not obtained mercy” but “now have obtained mercy” (Exodus 19:5-6; Hosea 1:9-10; 2:23; 1 Peter 2:9-10).

Such a multitude of marks of identification should

surely keep us straight. We are *not* a “generation,” or a “priesthood,” or a “nation” or a “peculiar people.”

Let us suppose that Moses did as we do today and “applied” all of this to the Ammorite, the Moabite, the Canaanite and the Egyptians! Such crimes may go unpunished only in a day of grace, not at the foot of Sinai.

Though the “church which is His body” is largely taken out from among the nations [in the plural], it cannot be a nation [in the singular] in any sense of the word. Though we have access into God’s presence which no high priest in Israel ever knew, yet we approach [Him] ourselves, not for others. We are not priests in any way. Priesthood pertains only to the “sons of Israel.” Though we come from the peoples and may be called a people, we are not, and we cannot rob Israel of the peculiar place accorded by Jehovah.

Many will take refuge in the statement,

*which in time past were not a people, but are now the people of God.*

Surely, some will protest, *this must* refer to the Gentiles! However, it is a quotation from Hosea. The whole first chapter should be read to get the connection. Israel and Judah are the subjects before the prophet. The prophet’s children are named as repre-



### **Christ Triumphant**

by — Thomas Allin (1838–1909)

327 pp, PB  
(See order form.)

Originally published in 1890, this book answers the question of questions: Can evil triumph finally over good? If we answer affirmatively with the popular creed, we are practically falling into Dualism. Men strive to save the popular creed by various modifications: by diminishing the number of the lost, by softening their torments, or by asserting their annihilation. What are all of these but so many unstated confessions that men everywhere feel it impossible to maintain the creed still generally professed?

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representative of the nation.

Then said He,

“Call his name Lo-ammi, for ye are not My people, and I will not be your God. Yet the sons of Israel shall be as the sand of the sea, which cannot be measured nor numbered; and it shall come to pass that in the place where it was said unto them, ‘Ye are not My people’, it shall be said unto them ‘the sons of the living God.’”

Then shall the **sons of Israel** and the **sons of Judah** be gathered together.

Can this refer to the nations? While the nations were always “Lo Ammi,” this refers to the time when Israel, too, was so far estranged from Him that He repudiated them. However the promise of becoming His people again does not refer to the nations but to His apostate people, *Israel*.

Then what of the quotation in the ninth chapter of Romans? While it certainly *seems* as though this passage is applied to the nations there, the subject of the chapter is God’s sovereignty. The quotations which are introduced are [presented] by the connection “*according as*.” That is, they are not cited as *fulfilled*, but as *illustrative*.

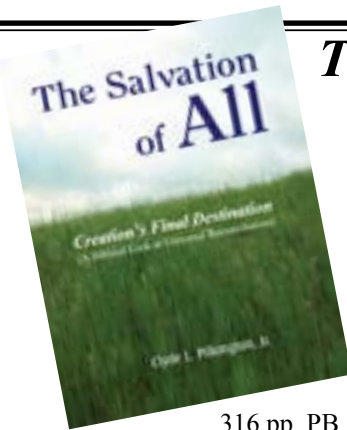
In Peter the quotation is introduced very differently: “*Ye are,*” “*once ye were.*” That is, Peter gives a Scripture and its fulfillment; Paul illustrates his theme by a passage in *harmony* with his argument.

The statement immediately preceding this quotation – “*Even us, whom He hath called, not of the Jews only, but also of the Gentiles*” – *seems* to us to be evident from the next verse that this is only on account of our bias, and that he has no idea of changing it from its plain intent in Hosea. He continues, “*Yet Isaiah is crying concerning Israel*” – which, if read with the emphasis on *Israel*, as indicated in the Greek, will give us the proper impression that Hosea, too, has been speaking of Israel, and the apostle takes it for granted that we are acquainted with that fact, as we certainly ought to be.

This ought to be enough to send this epistle to the Circumcision, to whom it properly belongs. However, if this is not sufficient, :12 ought to make it plain whom Peter had in mind. If he was writing all of this to the nations, why in the next verse does he exhort them, “*Having your behavior good among the nations*”?

(edited)

(to be continued)



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