



# Bible Student's Notebook™

## The Herald of His Joy!

Showcasing all humanity finished in Christ Jesus. Colossians 1:28

There is still much light to break forth from the Scriptures. A.E. Knoch (1874-1965)

Volume 45  
Issue IIII

# Synagogues of the Jews During the Acts Period

[Click here to listen to this article](#)

by — Ivan L Burgener (1932-2025)

## INTRODUCTION

Did you ever wonder what message Paul preached in a typical Jewish synagogue? For my part, I had become so focused on Paul's ministry as God's Apostle of the Nations that I had failed to give proper attention to his ministry to Jews. On the day of his conversion we are told that:

*... He is a chosen vessel unto me, to bear My name before the Nations, and kings, and the children of Israel (Acts 9:15).*

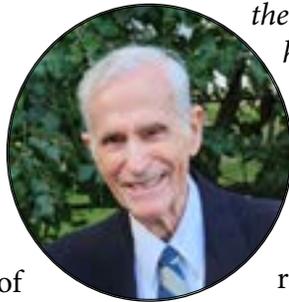
His visiting synagogues was paramount in every city. For example, we read of him visiting them in ... Salamis ... Antioch in Pisidia ... Iconium ... Thessalonica ... Berea ... Corinth ... and so on.

What did Paul preach there?

## PAUL TO THE JEWS IN ANTIOCH

Yet we need not guess at the content or focus of his ministry to the Jews in these synagogues. We have an inspired example, namely his first recorded message in the synagogue in Antioch in Pisidia, as outlined in Acts 13:14-52.

*They came to Antioch in Pisidia, and went into the synagogue on the sabbath day, and sat down. And after the reading of the law and the prophets the rulers of the synagogue sent unto*



*them, saying, "Ye men and brethren, if ye have any word of exhortation for the people, say on" (Acts 13:14-15).*

Being Nations and strangers to synagogue practice, many of us may fail to realize that Paul had seated himself in the place reserved for visiting rabbis so as to be called upon to speak, if invited to. An invitation was duly received ...

*Paul stood up, and beckoning with his hand said, "Men of Israel, and ye that fear God, give audience. The God of this people of Israel chose our fathers, and exalted the people when they dwelt as strangers in the land of Egypt, and with an high arm brought He them out of it" (Acts 13:16-17).*

What an entree! Paul started where God had begun to make good His 400-year-old promise to Abraham. In Genesis 15:13-14 God had said to Abraham,

*Know of a surety that thy seed shall be a stranger in a land that is not theirs, and shall serve them; and they shall afflict them four hundred years; And also that nation, whom they shall serve,*

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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 joy (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 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 (Ephesians 2:6);
  - adult sonship position (Ephesians 1:5).

This publication is the product of humble efforts of saints 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).

*We're just presenters, not persuaders. – Steve Martin*

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

### **Bible Student's Press™**

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*will I judge: and afterward shall they come out with great substance.*

*of Kish, a man of the tribe of Benjamin, by the space of forty years (Acts 13:18-21).*

Acts 13:16-17 deals with *The Exodus*. But what has he overlooked?

How interesting that Paul started with a forty-year period (in the wilderness) and concluded with a forty-year period (the reign of Saul). Yet he swiftly passed over the centuries from their wilderness wanderings to the removal of King Saul!

- Paul had skipped over their flight from Pharaoh's army and the crossing of the Red Sea where their enemies drowned.
- He also skipped telling anything of their year-long encampment at Mt. Sinai, during which time Moses' seven escapades up and down the mount had concluded in Israel signing on to a covenant written by the hand of God.
- Paul did not "rub their noses" in their breaking that Covenant within 40 days.
- He also skipped completely over all of the negotiations which concluded in their refusal to make the thirteen-day journey directly to the Promised Land.

*And when He had removed him, He raised up unto them David to be their king; to whom also He gave testimony, and said, "I have found David the son of Jesse, a man after Mine own heart, which shall fulfil all My will." Of this man's seed hath God according to His promise raised unto Israel a Savior, Jesus: when John had first preached before His coming the baptism of repentance to all the people of Israel. And as John fulfilled his course, he said, "Whom think ye that I am? I am not He. But, behold, there cometh one after me, Whose shoes of His feet I am not worthy to loose" (Acts 13:22-25).*

He went directly to their wilderness journey and their many provocations of God therein.

Paul deftly brought them to what Christ said, as recorded in Luke 16:16 where we read,

*And about the time of forty years suffered He their manners in the wilderness. And when He had destroyed seven nations in the land of Canaan, He divided their land to them by lot. And after that He gave unto them judges about the space of four hundred and fifty years, until Samuel the prophet. And afterward they desired a king: and God gave unto them Saul the son*

*The law and the prophets were until John: since that time the Kingdom of God is preached, and every man presseth into it.*

The message from God through John was updated by the Messiah Himself, Jesus of Nazareth, and it ran headlong into stiff opposition, as many verses in the Gospels confirm. Yet Paul continued:



## ***Paul's Priestly Ministry*** (A Compilation)

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

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

*Men and brethren, children of the stock of Abraham, and whosoever among you feareth God, to you is the word of this salvation sent. For they that dwell at Jerusalem, and their rulers, because they knew Him not, nor yet the voices of the prophets which are read every sabbath day, they have fulfilled them in condemning Him. And though they found no cause of death in Him, yet desired they Pilate that He should be slain. And when they had fulfilled all that was written of Him, they took Him down from the tree, and laid Him in a sepulchre. But God raised Him from the dead: And He was seen many days of them which came up with Him from Galilee to Jerusalem, who are His witnesses unto the people (Acts 13:26-31).*

Paul applied this message to both himself and to his synagogue audience.

*We declare unto you glad tidings, how that the promise which was made unto the fathers [to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob] God hath fulfilled the same unto us their children, in that He hath raised up Jesus again [in resurrection]; as it is also written in the second psalm, “Thou art My Son, this day have I begotten Thee.” And as concerning that He raised Him up from the dead, now no more to return to corruption, He said on this wise, “I will give you the sure mercies of David.” Wherefore He saith also in another psalm, “Thou shalt not suffer thine Holy One to see corruption.” For David, after he had served his own generation by the will of God, fell on sleep, and*

*was laid unto his fathers, and saw corruption” (Acts 13:32-36).*

On the same point, Peter said in Acts 2:29:

*Let me freely speak unto you of the Patriarch David, that he is both dead and buried, and his sepulchre is with us unto this day.*

But here, to the Jews in Antioch, Paul continued:

*But He, Whom God raised again, saw no corruption. Be it known unto you therefore, men and brethren, that through this Man is preached unto you the forgiveness of sins: and by Him all that believe are justified from all things, from which ye could not be justified by the law of Moses (Acts 13:37-39).*

What in the world is all this but the New Covenant as promised to the Jews in Jeremiah 31:31-34? There the Lord said,

*I will forgive their iniquity, and I will remember their sin no more.*

The full covenant is:

*“Behold, the days come,” saith the Lord, “that I will make a New Covenant with the House of Israel, and with the House of Judah: not according to the covenant that I made with their fathers in the day that I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt; which My covenant they brake, although I was an husband unto them,” saith the*



## ***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.

Lord: “but this shall be the covenant that I will make with the House of Israel; After those days,” saith the Lord, “I will put My law in their inward parts, and write it in their hearts; and will be their God, and they shall be My people. And they shall teach no more every man his neighbor, and every man his brother, saying, ‘Know the Lord:’ for they shall all know Me, from the least of them unto the greatest of them,” saith the Lord: “for I will forgive their iniquity, and I will remember their sin no more.”

Prophesied by Jeremiah indeed, but ably ministered by Paul, and others, during the Acts Period. According to II Corinthians 3:6, we read that God had made the Apostles

... able ministers of the New Covenant; not of the letter, but of the spirit ...

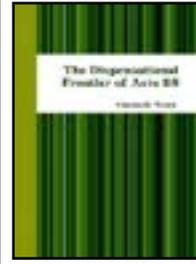
But in the synagogue in Antioch Paul continued,

Beware therefore, lest that come upon you, which is spoken of in the prophets; “Behold, ye despisers, and wonder, and perish: for I work a work in your days, a work which ye shall in no wise believe, though a man declare it unto you” (Acts 13:40-41).

### THE REACTION TO PAUL’S SPEECH

And with these words, which are a quotation from Habakkuk 1:5, Paul concluded his speech. And what was the reaction to it?

And when the Jews were gone out of the synagogue, the Nations besought that these words



### **The Dispensational Frontier of Acts 28**

by — Charles H. Welch (1880-1967)

A survey of the significance of Acts 28 to dispensational truth.

might be preached to them the next Sabbath. Now when the congregation was broken up, many of the Jews and religious proselytes followed Paul and Barnabas: who, speaking to them, persuaded them to continue in the grace of God (Acts 13:42-43).

It would seem that Paul’s words had a great impact on the people. They not only discussed it amongst themselves, but also they must have told others about it, for we read:

And the **next Sabbath day** came almost the whole city together to hear the Word of God (Acts 13:44).

However, the reaction of the Jewish leadership was somewhat different.

But when **the Jews** saw the multitudes, they were filled with envy, and spoke against those things which were spoken by Paul, contradicting and blaspheming. Then Paul and Barnabas waxed bold, and said, “**It was necessary that the Word of God should FIRST have been spoken to you: but seeing ye put it from you, and judge yourselves unworthy of age-lasting life, lo, we turn to the Nations**” (Acts 13:45-46).



### **“None Other Things”**

by — Charles H. Welch (1880-1967)

This is a study of Acts 26:22, “Saying none other things than those which the prophets and Moses did say should come.” It demonstrates that Paul had two ministries and that the end of his first ministry and the beginning of his second was Acts 28.

We have mentioned Paul's commission before. The Lord told Ananias that Paul was,

... *A chosen vessel unto Me, to bear My name before the Nations, and kings, and the children of Israel* (Acts 9:15).

The words of the Lord's commission, that Paul was God's chosen vessel to bear His name to ... Nations ... kings ... and the children of Israel ... suggested that Nations would be in first place. But from what we read in Acts, and from Paul's activities and writings ...

Israel clearly enjoyed priority throughout the entire book of Acts!

Only after the Jews had rejected his message in the synagogues was Paul free to extend God's blessings to Nations. Paul respected that *dispensational priority* and always went to *the Jews first*. This Jew-first policy continued throughout the Acts Period, and can be seen even in his epistle to the Romans, written during the Acts period.

However, as we shall see, the "Jews first" position did not continue beyond the book of Acts.

## THE EPISTLE TO THE ROMANS

Turning to Romans we read,

*For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek* (Romans 1:16).

And this exactly describes what Paul was doing during the Acts Period.

I cannot forget my own awakening to this fact. I had been reading Romans:

*I long to see you, that I may impart unto you some spiritual gift, to the end ye may be established; that is, that I may be comforted together with you by the mutual faith both of you and me. Now I would not have you ignorant, brethren, that oftentimes I purposed to come unto you ...* (Romans 1:11-13).

And again in Romans 15:32,

*That I may come unto you with joy by the will of God, and may with you be refreshed.*

How disappointed I was to read in Acts 28, that within a few days of his arrival in Rome, he did not call for a meeting of the "Christian" church, as I had hoped and expected! Instead, he called for **the Jewish leaders of the synagogues** of Rome (Acts 28:17). He spent days with them, going over *his able ministry of the New Covenant* (II Corinthians 3:6) teaching them from the Law and the Prophets (Acts 28:23).

This was just as he had done in every synagogue during the Acts Period, including the one in Antioch in Pisidia.

Right up to the end of Acts, God was making good His promise *to the Jews* by offering them *the New Covenant*, but what would happen if they refused?



## *A New Administration at the Close of Acts*

by — Adlai Loudy (1893-1984)

God is conducting His affairs with mankind in an orderly series of dispensations and administrations. This study is a comparison of the Pentecostal and Readjustment Administrations, "in that era," with the Secret Administration, which is "now," revealing many irreconcilable differences which cannot be mixed without perverting the plain, unmistakable teaching of the Scriptures and causing untold confusion and spiritual loss.

## BACK TO ANTIOCH IN PISIDIA

After telling the Jews there that he had to speak the Word of God to them *first*, but now they were turning to the Nations in that city (Acts 13:46), Paul stated,

*For so hath the Lord commanded us, saying, "I have set thee to be a light of the Nations, that thou shouldest be for salvation unto the ends of the Earth." And when the Nations heard this, they were glad, and glorified the Word of the Lord: and as many as were ordained to age-abiding life believed. And the Word of the Lord was published throughout all the region. But the Jews stirred up the devout and honorable women, and the chief men of the city, and raised persecution against Paul and Barnabas, and expelled them out of their coasts. But they shook off the dust of their feet against them, and came unto Iconium. And the disciples were filled with joy, and with holy spirit (Acts 13:47-52)*

However, in the synagogues of the cities Paul was offering the New Covenant to Jews scattered "outside" the land, just as Peter had done to Jews "within" the land.

### THE NEW COVENANT

Just as Peter did all he could to bring Israel to repentance (*cf.* Acts 3:19-21). and that his ministry was that of offering the New Covenant, with its message of forgiveness, *within the promised land*, we find the Apostle Paul, throughout his Acts ministry, including all of his epistles written during that period, offering the same New Covenant to the hosts of Israel scattered throughout the Gentile world.

## CONCLUSION

The many who think that the present ecclesia began at Pentecost, or sometime in the middle of Acts when Paul came on the scene, are persuaded that the competing messages throughout the book of Acts were the Gospel of the Kingdom to Israel giving way to the Gospel of Grace to the world. However, I suggest that the competing messages were: The Old Covenant as declared by Moses versus The New Covenant as declared by Peter in Acts 1-12 and by Paul in Acts 13-28.

The finale of this situation was Paul's confrontation with the synagogue leadership of Rome in Acts 28. When Israel stubbornly rejected Paul's *final* presentation of the New Covenant, God's salvation went to Nations (Acts 28:28), not *through* Israel, but independently of them and *in spite of* them. Israel's priority is never mentioned again after Acts 28:28.

### POST SCRIPT

During most of the Acts Period Israel suffered from *partial* blindness, as Romans 11:25 states.

*For I would not, brethren, that ye should be ignorant of this mystery, lest ye should be wise in your own conceits; that **blindness in part is happened to Israel**, until the fulness of the Nations be come in.*

By the end of Acts, due to the hardness of their heart, Israel were so blind and deaf (Acts 28:25-27) that, as we have stated, God's salvation was sent to the Nations independently of Israel. Even so, God's promise to them still stands and will be fulfilled at some future date.



## *The Acts Dispensation*

by — Otis Q. Sellers (1901-1992)

A study of the unique dispensation that covered the Acts Period.



## 2026 Annual Bible Conference

Friday, March 20–Sunday, March 22, 2026

### **Location** (Pittsburgh, PA area)

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**Schedule:** [Click here](#) for meeting agenda

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6:00 PM - Dinner and Fellowship

#### Saturday

6:00 Free continental breakfast (hotel)

9:00 - 11:00 Teaching Sessions

11:30 - 1:30 Lunch

1:30 - 4:15 Teaching Sessions

6:00 Dinner and Fellowship

#### Sunday

6:00 Free continental breakfast (hotel)

9:00 - 11:45 Testimonies and Teaching Sessions

11:45 - Closing and goodbye

**PLEASE RSVP your attendance** (seating is limited – even if you made room reservations)

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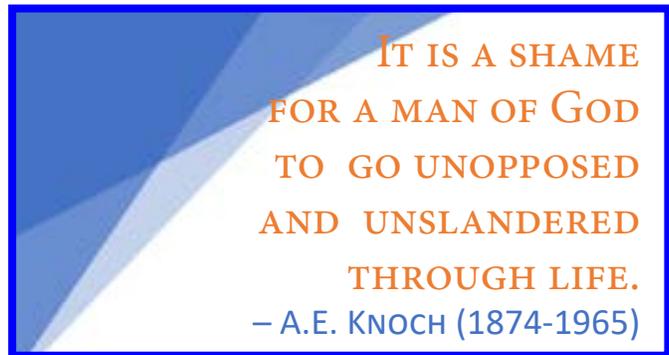
*And so all Israel shall be saved: as it is written, "There shall come out of Sion the Deliverer, and shall turn away ungodliness from Jacob: For this is My covenant unto them, when I shall take away their sins" (Romans 11:26-27). **BSN***

#### **TOPICS:**

**Major:** Acts; Acts Period; Covenant; Israel; New Covenant;

Paul; Paul's Priestly Ministry; Synagogues;

**Minor:** Kingdom; Paul's Early Epistles



## *The Myth of Easter*

*"The Christian Mythology" Series*

by — Clyde L. Pilkington, Jr.

There are many myths in Christendom. They have managed to master their own form of mythology. Easter is an example of such a religious fable.

If Easter is the celebration of the historical fact of our Lord Jesus Christ's resurrection, then why does its date change every year? Historical dates do not fluctuate; but Easter Sunday can fall anywhere between March 22 and April 25. Have you ever wondered why?

It is one of the glaring clues that something is seriously wrong with Christendom. The Western Christian religion can't seem to get anything right when it comes to even the simplest of Scriptural truths.

Have you ever really considered if there is any scriptural basis of Good Friday or Easter Sunrise Services that are so commonly observed by the religious community? Additionally, have you ever considered what Easter Rabbits and Easter Eggs have to do with the resurrection of Christ or teachings of God's Word?

Although millions of people are of the opinion that Easter and all of its customs are Christian and originated as a result of Christ's resurrection, it is a historical fact that the observance of Easter long antedates Christianity by centuries.