



# Bible Student's Notebook™

## *The Herald of His Joy!*

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

Volume 46

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

Issue 1128

## Who Is a Jew?

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

by — Steve Martin

### LINEAGE, LAW, CONTROVERSY – AND THE END OF THE QUESTION

The debate over who the “Jews” are is one of long standing, and often deeply contentious.

It is not merely an academic discussion. It touches history, theology, identity, and even modern geopolitics. Many have taken strong positions on either side – some arguing for strict genealogical continuity, others questioning whether those commonly identified as Jews today are truly the descendants of Abraham.

Even Scripture itself introduces tension into the discussion. In Revelation, we read of “*those who say they are Jews, and are not*” (2:9; 3:9). That statement alone should caution us against simplistic assumptions.

And so, the question remains:

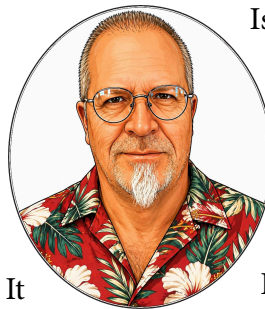
Who are the Jews?

Is it a matter of bloodline?

Of religion?

Of covenant standing?

Or something else entirely?



Israel is not merely a religious group – it is a nation, formed through a specific line of descent. The promises begin with Abraham, pass through Isaac (not Ishmael), and then through Jacob (not Esau). Jacob – renamed Israel – becomes the father of the twelve tribes. From that point forward, identity is tightly bound to:

- Genealogy
- Tribal affiliation
- Covenantal inheritance

Each tribe maintained its identity through the father's line. Land was distributed by tribe. Priesthood was restricted to the tribe of Levi, and more specifically to the family of Aaron. Even the hope of the Kingdom was tied to the line of David, of the tribe of Judah.

To be an Israelite was not something one chose. It was something one was born into.

This is why genealogies occupy such a prominent place in the Hebrew Scriptures – they were not incidental; they were essential.

[\(continued on page 9449\)](#)

### THE BIBLICAL FOUNDATION: A PEOPLE BY DESCENT

In the Hebrew Scriptures, the answer appears clear and structured.

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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

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## THE SHIFT: IDENTITY PRESERVED THROUGH THE MOTHER

Yet history disrupted what Scripture had established.

The Babylonian Exile scattered the people. Later, the Destruction of the Second Temple further dismantled national and religious structures. Records were lost, priestly lines became difficult to verify, and intermarriage increased.

In this context, rabbinic Judaism introduced a critical adjustment:

Jewish identity would now be determined by the mother.

This was not a theological declaration so much as a practical safeguard:

- Maternity is certain; paternity can be disputed
- It preserved identity in times of instability
- It created a clear boundary for community continuity

Thus, a new standard emerged:

- If your mother is Jewish, you are Jewish

- If not, you must convert to enter the community

This definition remains influential to this day.

## THE MODERN LAYER: DNA AND ANCESTRY

In recent decades science has added yet another dimension.

Through genetic testing offered by companies like 23andMe and AncestryDNA, individuals can now identify connections to historical Jewish populations – Ashkenazi, Sephardic or Mizrahi.

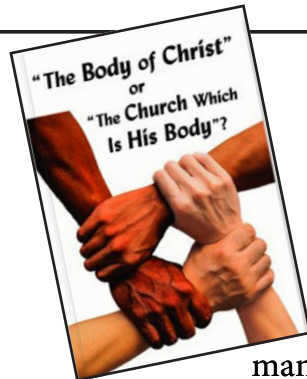
These tests can reveal:

- Shared ancestry patterns
- Population migrations
- Genetic clustering over time

But they cannot define identity.

There is no singular “Jewish gene.” Jewish populations are genetically diverse, shaped by centuries of migration, intermarriage and dispersion. Thus:

- A person may have Jewish DNA but not be considered Jewish



## ***“The Body of Christ” or “The Church Which Is His Body”? A Compilation on the “One Body” of the Current Administration***

In the Pentecost Administration, during the Acts period, there were many ecclesias, in the plural – “all the ecclesias” (Romans 16:4, 16; I Corinthians 7:17; 14:33; II Corinthians 8:18; 11:28, CV). Each of these ecclesias were, in and of themselves “the body of Christ” – an integrated “one body,” while today in the Secret Administration there is but one single ecclesia, in the singular – “the Ecclesia which is His Body” (Ephesians 1:22-23, CV). This ecclesia is universal and not local. This ecclesia of the Secret Administration has no bearing whatsoever on locality, and is of necessity, the only “One Body” universal (Ephesians 4:4). This “One Body” of Ephesians and Colossians (Ephesians 2:16; 4:4; Colossians 3:15) is the Post-Acts “church,” of which Christ alone is Head (Ephesians 1:22-23; 4:15; 5:23; Colossians 1:24; 2:19). This is the only Ecclesia of the Secret Administration. This short compilation has works from three authors: Tom L. Ballinger, G.J. Pauptit (1889-1962), and Clyde L. Pilkington, Jr. 49 pages.

- Another may be “Jewish” without any detectable Jewish ancestry

DNA can trace where one's ancestors may have come from – but it cannot determine covenant status, religious standing, or identity before God.

### THE TRAGEDY OF MISDEFINITION

History has also shown the grave danger of reducing identity to ancestry alone.

During the Holocaust, under Adolf Hitler, Jewish identity was defined through the Nuremberg Laws based on one's grandparents.

It did not matter:

- What one believed
- Whether one practiced Judaism
- Whether one had converted to Christianity

Ancestry alone determined classification.

This rigid, racial definition stripped identity of all nuance and reduced it to a biological category. The result was catastrophic, as millions were persecuted and murdered under a system that allowed no escape from one's lineage.

It stands as a sobering warning of what happens when identity is reduced to a single dimension.

### THE ONGOING DEBATE

Today, the question remains unsettled and, for many, deeply emotional.

Some argue that many modern Jews – particularly those in the Middle East – may not be the true physical descendants of Abraham. Others maintain that historical continuity, preserved through tradition, community, and shared identity, is sufficient.

Still others point to biblical warnings, such as those in Revelation, to suggest that not all who claim Jewish identity are legitimate.

### A PRESENT-DAY REALITY IN ISRAEL

This debate is not merely theoretical – it plays out in real life within the modern nation of Israel.

Under the Law of Return, individuals may immigrate and receive citizenship if they have even one Jewish grandparent. This reflects a broad, ancestry-based definition shaped in part by the realities of persecution in Europe.

However, religious recognition within Israel is governed by the Chief Rabbinate of Israel, which follows the traditional standard of maternal descent or conversion.

This creates a striking situation:

A person may be:

- A full citizen of Israel
- Raised within Jewish culture
- Identified as Jewish socially

... and yet not be recognized as Jewish in matters such as marriage or burial.

Some are required to produce extensive documenta-



## *Present-Day Israel* (A Compilation)

Is the present-day nation known as “Israel” really the restoration of God's favored nation? A collection of works by four authors, including: Clyde L. Pilkington, Jr. and Tom L. Ballinger. 59 pages.



tion tracing their maternal lineage. Others, unable to do so, face the difficult choice of undergoing conversion or living in a kind of identity tension.

Thus, even in the land most associated with Jewish identity, the question “Who is a Jew?” remains unresolved in practical terms.

### **A PAULINE PERSPECTIVE: A QUESTION THAT NO LONGER MATTERS**

Yet when we come to the writings of Paul the Apostle, the entire framework shifts.

For Paul, the issue is not resolved – it is rendered irrelevant.

Through the prophet Hosea, God had already prophetically declared Israel to be “*Lo-ammi*” – not My people (Hosea 1:9). This prophetic condition became a dispensational pronouncement at the close of the Acts period, where Paul declares in Acts 28:25-28 that salvation is being sent to the nations.

During the Acts period, Israel still held a position of priority – “*to the Jew first*” (Romans 1:16; 2:10). Gentiles were brought into participation with Israel’s blessings, being “*grafted among them*” (Romans 11:17) and “*made partakers of their spiritual things*” (Romans 15:27).

But that was a transitional period.

Yet, after the Acts period, with the revelation of the Secret Administration (Ephesians 3:9), there came the unveiling of a new order – one in which Israel’s national distinction is set aside.

### **THE END OF DISTINCTION**

Paul declares that the “*middle wall of partition*” between Jew and Gentile has been dismantled (Ephesians 2:14).

This was not a minor adjustment – it was a complete restructuring.

In place of the old distinctions, God is now:

Creating “*the two, in Himself, into one new humanity, making peace*” (Ephesians 2:15).

This new humanity is not:

- Israel extended
- Nor the nations elevated

It is something entirely new – unrelated to previous categories of identity.

### **GENEALOGY SET ASIDE**

In this new administration, even the most prized credentials lose their value.

Paul himself – who could boast of impeccable lineage, tribal identity, and adherence to the law – counts it all as loss: “... *but dung*” (Philippians 3:4-8).

In preparation for this new administration, Paul had already previously warned believers to avoid:

- “*Jewish myths*” (Titus 1:14)
- “*Endless genealogies, which minister questions*” (I Timothy 1:4)

The very markers that once defined belonging now serve only to distract from the greater reality.

### **THE FINAL WORD**

So where does this leave the question, “Who are the Jews?”

The debate may continue.  
Arguments may persist.  
Evidence may be gathered and contested.

But from the standpoint of the present administration, the question itself has lost its relevance.

The descendants of Abraham – whoever they may be – are now counted among the nations.

There is:

- No present spiritual advantage in being a Jew

[\*\(see JEW, page 9453\)\*](#)



## Reader's Question Box #87

### “The New Humanity”

by — Clyde L. Pilkington, Jr.

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

“Behold, I make all things new” (Revelation 21:5).

**Q:** If the “Body of Christ” is not an acceptable term for ALL saved humanity after the consummation – is there an acceptable term the Bible uses for that group so I can start thinking with that term in mind? – RL

**A:** The term that you’re searching for may be the beautiful one, “the New Humanity” (Ephesians 2:15; 4:24, CV), which is a grand part of the coming of an entirely “New Creation” (II Corinthians 5:17; Galatians 6:15).

The “New Humanity” orients us to God’s grand plan to be “All in all.” Here are some brief excerpts concerning this term.

#### Vladimir Gelesnoff (1877-1921)

Human kinship at last receives adequate expression. The Son of God laid the foundation of a worldwide fraternity. The one Father claims all men for His sons in Christ. A new humanity is founded around the cross which enfolds all men in its embrace.

— *Unsearchable Riches*, Vol. 10 (1919)



#### A.E. Knoch (1874-1965)

Christ takes the place of Adam as the Head of the new race.

— *Unsearchable Riches*, Vol. 21 (1930)

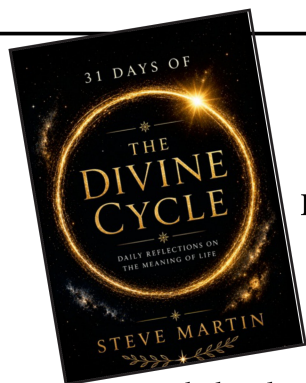
The doctrine of the new humanity is of paramount importance in this administration, but it has been lost to us in the confusion of translation and interpretation. The new “man” has been generally explained as a new “nature” or else confounded with the “body” of Christ. ...

The mode of application of the benefits of Christ's sacrifice are evident from the fact that He heads a new humanity (Ephesians 2:15; 4:24).

— *Unsearchable Riches*, Vol. 22 (1931)

Humanity was once a unit in Adam, and it will eventually become one again in God's Son.

— *Unsearchable Riches*, Vol. 48 (1957)



## 31 Days of the Divine Cycle

by — Steve Martin

Life can feel confusing, unfinished, and sometimes unfair. Dreams change. Plans fail. We wonder if we missed our chance or took the wrong path. But what if life is not a test to pass or a race to win? In these 31 daily reflections, Steve Martin invites you to explore life as a Divine Cycle – a journey shaped by purpose, contrast, growth and love. Every joy, every struggle, and every season has meaning. You are

not behind. You are not forgotten. Your story is unfolding exactly as it should. Take the journey. One day at a time. 84 pages.

The new humanity (Ephesians 2:15) is an entirely distinct figure from that of “the body.” It refers to the race, giving Christ the place lost by Adam.

— *Unsearchable Riches*, Vol. 86 (1995)

### George L. Rogers (1869-1947)

The new humanity lies in the obedience of the One. As Adam’s disobedience controls the conduct and destiny of the race, so also the historic act of the last Adam controls the race’s career, judges its sin, and perfects it in righteousness. ... The old is perishing; Christ is making all things new. He will present to God the Father a delivered and new humanity which lives in God and in which God Himself shall permanently dwell.

— *Unsearchable Riches*, Vol. 22 (1931)

### R.B. Macnab (-1939)

He is the Head of a new race, “a new creation,” “a new humanity” (II Corinthians 5:16-17; Ephesians 2:15; 4:22-24; Colossians 3:10). The cross stands between the two humanities (Galatians 2:20; 6:14-15). The old humanity was crucified in the last Adam. That was the end of “flesh of sin” virtually, judicially. Those now in Christ are a new creation, a new humanity (II Corinthians 5:17).

All mankind will eventually be “in Christ” (Ephesians 1:10)!

— *Unsearchable Riches*, Vol. 27 (1936)

### John H. Essex (1907-1991)

The “new creation,” of which the “new humanity” in Christ is a part, is not a development of the old. It would not be a “creation” if it were. ...

The ecclesia is the advance installment of this “new humanity,” and is God’s achievement at the present time (Ephesians 2:10). Eventually all humanity will be *seen* to be God’s achievement, for He will personally wipe away all tears from their eyes, and will tabernacle with them (Revelation 21:3-4). And the celestials, too, having learned of His grace through the [present] ecclesia ... will also become His [manifest] achievement ...

In such an atmosphere as this does God find His true dwelling place in spirit; first in His Son, then in the ecclesia, and ultimately in all, for at the consummation He must be “All in all.”

— *Unsearchable Riches*, Vol. 69 (1978)

**BSN**

#### TOPICS:

**Major:** All Things New; New Creation; New Humanity

**Minor:** Figures of Speech

### JEW ([continued from page 9451](#))

- No covenant standing secured by lineage
- No identity grounded in ancestry

Because God is not presently dealing with humanity on that basis.

## THE NEW HUMANITY

The defining reality today is not genealogy, but creation.

Not Jew or Gentile;  
Not circumcision or uncircumcision;  
Not lineage, law or heritage – But:

Christ.

Where there is neither Greek nor Jew ... but Christ, all, and in all (Colossians 3:11).

The question “Who is a Jew?” belonged to another administration.

Today, the only question that remains is:

Who is in Christ?

And the answer has nothing to do with where one came from ... but everything to do with what God has done. **BSN**

#### TOPICS:

**Major:** Ancestry; Genealogy; Israel; Jew

**Minor:** Covenant; New Humanity; Right Division; Secret Administration

# Only One Never Wonders:

A poem by — Robert Kosharek

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

Declaring the end from the beginning,

*“My counsel shall stand, and I  
will do all my pleasure.”*

– Isaiah 46:10

*“Him who worketh all things after  
the counsel of His Own will.”*

– Ephesians 1:11

He doesn't wonder, He doesn't wait,  
He's never stymied nor plays catch up.  
He doesn't hope, He doesn't formulate or  
strategize.

He doesn't have a contingent plan,

nor has He ever relinquished ownership.

He is the sovereign Creator  
and Owner of the Universe.

He not only has foreknowledge of all events;  
He planned them.

Because He is love, He shall do right;  
He shall reconcile the entire Universe to  
Himself!

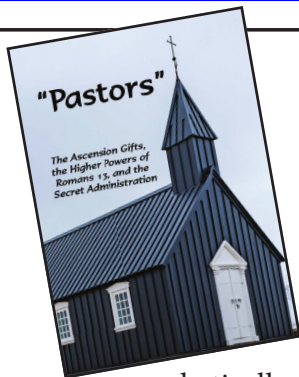
*“The Earth shall be filled with the  
knowledge of the glory of the  
LORD, as the waters cover the sea.”*

– Habakkuk 2:14

[Scripture Inspired Meditations](#)

**ALL OF GOD'S PURPOSES OF REDEMPTION, JUSTIFI-  
CATION AND GLORIFICATION – ALL WERE PURPOSED IN  
THE GOODNESS OF GOD, AND THEREFORE CANNOT FAIL.**

– E.W. BULLINGER (1837-1913)



## ***“Pastors” – The Ascension Gifts, the Higher Powers of Romans 13, and the Secret Administration***

by — Clyde L. Pilkington, Jr.

The modern role of “pastor” is not founded on Scripture, but instead is an institutional fabrication of Protestantism. The Ascension Gifts of Ephesians 4 were prophetically a part of Israel's Old Testament promises. The “higher powers” of Romans 13 were not a reference to civil authorities, but rather the spiritual rulers over the Acts-Period churches. Since Acts 28 (the dispensational boundary line) the “powers that be” have been withdrawn. Under the current Secret Administration all of these “gifts” are inoperative. The One Body has no flesh-and-blood rulers. We are to be submissive only to our Head: the Lord Jesus Christ. To Him alone do we owe our allegiance. 76 pages. 3rd Edition!