

Sunday, December 30, 2012—Grace Life School of Theology—*Grace History Project*—Lesson 86 Early Mid-Acts Leaders of the 1920s: J.C. O’Hair, Part 2

O’Hairism, Cont.

- Of all the writings penned by Mr. O’Hair, *The Unsearchable Riches of Christ* written in 1941 is widely regarded as his most influential and important work. Since it was written during the time period covered by the chronology established by O’Hair in *The Accuser of the Brethren* we appear safe in concluding that the views expressed in 1941 are in fact the same views that were being expounded upon in the early 1920s. *The Unsearchable Riches of Christ* contains both a Forward written by Charles F. Baker and an Introduction written by J.C. O’Hair. In the forward Mr. Baker highlights the beliefs that O’Hair held in common with the Fundamentalists of his day.
 - “Mr. O’Hair clearly expresses those areas of belief which he held in common with all Bible believing Evangelical Christians. He taught the plenary inspiration of the Bible, progressive revelation confined to the limits of the Book, the eternal Deity of the Lord Jesus Christ and His sinless and perfect life, as well as His death for our sins and His bodily resurrection. He championed salvation by grace through faith, apart from human works, the one Church of this dispensation, the Body of Christ, of which all believers are members, and a separated life of service.” (Baker, Forward to *Unsearchable*)
- Baker goes on to enumerate the points on which O’Hair disagreed with his fellow Christians. In the introduction Mr. O’Hair states the following about where his Christian brethren had gone astray with respect to the truth.
 - “We agree with every intelligent spiritual student of the Bible that we are today living in the dispensation of the grace of God, and that during this present economy and age, God has one and only one Church, and that Church is the Body of Christ. . .

We heartily disagree with other servants of the Lord who teach that the Old Testament began with the first chapter of Genesis; and that the New Testament began with the first chapter of Matthew; and that the “dispensation of the grace of God” began with Peter, in the second chapter of Acts.

These false assumptions have led to a faulty “dispensationalism” which we are seeking to expose and correct in these lessons, by presenting a consistent “dispensationalism” that will clear up many of the seeming contradictions and discrepancies which are to be found in the dispensational teachings generally accepted and propagated by the majority of “grace” preachers who are Premillenarians.

We submit here several verses of Scripture—(Heb. 8-9, 13; II Cor. 3:14-15; Gal. 2:7-9; Eph. 3:1-3, 9)

Here we learn that the Divine Covenant, or Testament by which Israel was governed from the day God led that nation out of Egypt, was made old after Christ died on the cross.

The Lord Jesus had not died on the cross when the events covered in the first chapter of Matthew took place. When did God lead Israel out of Egypt? When Moses was eighty years old. That was about 2500 years after God put Adam out of Eden. Therefore, from the sin of Adam to the giving of the law at Sinai, there was no Old Testament or Covenant. Therefore, there is not one line of the Old Testament in Genesis.

The Covenant made old by the death of Christ on the cross, was entered into about 430 years after God made a covenant with Abram. Galatians 3:16-19. The Abrahamic Covenant was not made “old” by the death of Christ on the cross. It is still alive and in force.

The gospel of the circumcision was committed to Peter after Christ arose from the dead. Galatians 2:7

“The dispensation of the grace of God” was not committed to the Twelve by the Lord Jesus Christ on or before the day of Pentecost; but to Paul, by revelation some years later.

Because of the utter confusion, due to the lack of knowledge concerning the difference between the Lord’s program given to Peter and the Eleven, and the program which He gave by special revelation to Paul, few, if any, of the Premillennial “grace” preachers, who teach these errors, are making any effort to obey Ephesians 3:9. “And to make all men see what is the fellowship of the mystery, which from the beginning of the world hath been hid in God.” The Lord Jesus Christ wants this order obeyed.

In these lessons we are not only showing why this order is not obeyed; but we are endeavoring to present constructive Bible messages building up from the foundation of the capstone of Divine truth.

(quotes Col. 1:23-26; 4:3-4)

Paul had a new and different ministry. He had to fill up or complete—1) That which is behind the afflictions of Christ. 2) The Word of God with the Mystery. The capstone of truth.

Paul was in prison for the mystery. He wanted all Christians to pray for an open door where this glorious Divine truth might be presented. This is still the Lord’s will concerning every Christian. These messages are written with the desire, hope and prayer that you may be led to obey the Lord in this matter.” (O’Hair, Introduction to *Unsearchable*)

- During the same time period covered by *The Accuser of the Brethren* (1920/21-1944/45) the Worldwide Grace Testimony mission was founded in 1939. “In 1939 Mr. O’Hair called an organizational meeting at North Shore Church for the purpose of supporting . . . missionaries who had or would take a stand for the Grace Message. The name chosen for the new mission board was *Worldwide Grace Testimony*, a missionary society for the furtherance of the Pauline gospel.” (Reich, 7-8)
- At some point subsequent to the formation of the Worldwide Grace Testimony, but before *The Accuser of the Brethren* (1944/1945) was written, Mr. O’Hair penned *Pentecostalism, Bullingerism, and The World Wide Grace Testimony*. This is perhaps the work where one first observes the awareness and articulation of a clear mid-Acts view with respect to the beginning of the body of Christ.
 - “*The World Wide Grace Testimony* teaches that the dispensation of the grace of God did not begin with Peter and Pentecost, but with the Apostle Paul after Israel had rejected Christ in resurrection, as well as in incarnation; but they teach that this was before Paul wrote the Epistle to the Romans, therefore before the close of the Acts period. . . The World Wide Grace Testimony emphasizes the fact that there is a difference between grace in a dispensation and “the dispensation of the grace of God” given to Paul by revelation (Eph. 3:1-4). They differ in their dispensationalism from other Fundamentalists who say that “the dispensation of the grace of God” began with Peter and the Eleven on the day of Pentecost and with Dr. Bullinger who taught that it did not begin until the close of Acts. They agree with the Fundamentalist leader, referred to as “the archbishop of fundamentalism,” that it began after Israel rejected Christ in resurrection. Every Premillenarian is a dispensationalist and they all believe Romans 11:30, Romans 11:11, and Romans 11:15, that the gospel of the grace of God was sent to the Gentiles by Paul when and because of Israel’s unbelief and fall, when and because Israel was cast away. They differ as to the date of Israel’s fall. The World Wide Grace Testimony believes that Acts 3:16 to 26, Acts 5:29 to 32, Luke 23:34, Acts 13:29 to 36, and Acts 13:45 and 46 prove that the fall of Israel did not take place until after the ministry of Peter and the Eleven to Israel and the household of Cornelius, recorded in the first eleven chapters of Acts, that during the years covered by those eleven chapters, the Twelve were using the keys of the kingdom of heaven. Certainly Acts 10:28 and Acts 11:1-19 prove that the Twelve had not received the dispensation mentioned by Paul in Ephesians 3:1-4.” (O’Hair, *Pentecostalism, Bullingerism, and The World Wide Grace Testimony*)
- The *Grace History Project* believes that this might be the first clear articulation of the mid-Acts position in print (further study and evidence might cause us to modify this statement in the future). While the quotation above does not explicitly use the term mid-Acts as a descriptor, the idea is present. O’Hair identifies the beliefs of the World Wide Grace Testimony as falling between the standard Acts 2 position and the extreme Acts 28 position articulated by Bullinger. Observers of the history of dispensationalism such as R.A. Huebner have noted the J.C. O’Hair was the founder of the Acts 13 version of the mid-Acts position. Huebner writes,

- “Subsequently (after Welch and EWB in the context), J.C. O’Hair (independently of E.W. Bullinger, he claims) took an Acts 13 position. From this, the Acts 9 position sprang, C.R. Stam apparently being the father of this variation.” (Huebner, 87)

O’Hair Spreads Mid-Acts Truth

- That J.C. O’Hair was the early standard bearer from mid-Acts Pauline dispensationalism in the United States is beyond dispute. His radio and print ministry reached many with the gospel of the grace of God and truth of the word of God rightly divided. According to C.R. Stam in *The Controversy*, he came to understand the truths of “the mystery,” with it “one body” and “one baptism” in 1926 through the ministry of a New York investment consultant. This person later gave Pastor Stam a book written by O’Hair containing two messages, *Jesus Christ a Minister of the Circumcision* and *The Twelve Apostles and Paul*. (Stam, 21)
- Pastor Richard Jordan, the last person to occupy the pulpit at the North Shore Church, has stated, “No other single individual had more to do with spreading across America the truth of the distinctive message and ministry of Paul—what we now call ‘Mid-Acts Dispensationalism.’” (Leland)
- “It was in 1932 that O’Hair’s eight year old daily neighborhood radio program became nationally broadcast, and when he died in 1958, O’Hair shared the record for one of the two longest continuous radio programs on the air. The other one was Amos and Andy!” (Leland)
- North Shore Church organized a men’s grace fellowship that was attended by up to 400 men each month. “Three or four times a year they would buy a full-page in the Chicago Tribune for \$28,000—a lot of money back then—and O’Hair would write a gospel message,” says Jordan. “We’ve got copies of them in our Heritage Room at the church.” (Leland)

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