

Sunday, April 21, 2013—Grace Life School of Theology—*Grace History Project*—Lesson 100 *Bible Study for Bereans: April, 1936 through June, 1936*

### **Anti-Acts 2 and Anti-Acts 28 Period**

*Bible Study for Bereans (April, 1936)*

- In “The Great Commission, Part 3” Pastor Baker speaks of Peter’s early Acts ministry as being to Israel first. Therefore, for Baker the church did not begin at Pentecost.
  - “At least this is what Christ had taught them in dealing with the Syrophenician woman: “Let the children (Israel) first be filled” (Mark 7:27). “It is not meet to take the children’s bread and cast it to the-dogs (Gentiles)”. Not only had Jesus taught this, but every Old Testament prophet is in accord with it. The prophets spoke much of Gentile salvation, but none gave the slightest intimation that Gentiles would be blessed before Israel as a nation was first saved and blessed. It was only “after this” that all the Gentiles were to call upon the name of the Lord (Acts 15:16 and 17). Gentile salvation because of Israel’s blindness and fall instead of through Israel’s salvation and blessing, is a part of the Mystery which was committed to Paul (Romans 11:11 and 25).

The program of “filling the children first” began on the day of Pentecost. Peter said to Israel, “Ye are the children—unto you first God, having raised up His Son Jesus, sent Him to bless you” (Acts 3:25 and 26). Paul likewise began his ministry in this way: “children—it was necessary that the word of God should first have been spoken to you”. (Acts 13:26, 33 and 46). Paul then turned to the Gentiles, not because the Great Commission said to do so, but because Israel judged themselves unworthy of everlasting life. Peter had said on Pentecost: “the promise is unto you, and to your children, and to all that are afar off”. (Acts 2:39), but Daniel 9:7 makes it clear that Gentiles are not meant: “unto all Israel, that are near, and that are far off, through all the countries whither Thou has driven them.” This program of going into all the world with the Kingdom Gospel was begun, but never finished because it was interrupted by the ministry of Paul.”

- In addition, to these clear anti-Acts 2 statements, Pastor Baker also teaches that the sign program spoken of by Paul in I Corinthians 12-14 when “that which was perfect” was come at the close of the book of Acts.
  - “That which was perfect came after Israel was set aside at the close of the Acts, and the two distinctive orders for believing Jews and believing Gentiles (Acts 21:20 to 25) gave place to the one order during the Dispensation of the Mystery (Ephesians 3:9; Colossians 1:25 and 26).”
- Another important article found within the April, 1936 issue of the magazine is titled “Bullingerism or Ultradispensationalism” by J.C. O’Hair. In this article Pastor O’Hair addresses a “Dear Christian Friend” (April, 1, 1936) in an attempt to answer their question regarding how

much he agrees with the teachings of E.W. Bullinger. The following quote proves one of our main suppositions, i.e., that O’Hair was espousing, for a time, beliefs similar to those of Bullinger without actually having read all of Bullinger.

- “In answer to your inquiry as to just how far I agree with the teachings of Dr. E. W. Bullinger, first of all let me say that whether or not all that I teach is sound doctrine, according to the Word of God, rightly divided, I believed and taught what I now believe and teach some years before I ever heard of Dr. Bullinger or read any of his written messages. It has been since I have been charged with being a “Bullingerite” that I have carefully read the writings of Dr. Bullinger.”
- O’Hair writes that the reason he was branded an “ultradispensationalist” was because of his views on water baptism. In the following quote, O’Hair speaks of having taken his position on water baptism over fifteen years ago. Since this article was written in April, 1936 we have yet further proof here of the general accuracy of the time line we have been building.
  - “Now, my beloved brother, because of my belief and teaching concerning water baptism, which I have held for more than fifteen years, a number of Christian brethren who have been both unwilling and unable to take the Word of God and prove that my teaching is fallacy or unscriptural, have resorted to very ungracious, unjust and unspiritual tactics, by accusing me of teaching many things that I have never taught and have never believed. Most of these brethren have never read a line from the pen of Dr. Bullinger, but in a parrot-like, sheep-like fashion, they have joined with others to malign Dr. Bullinger, and to malign me and grossly misrepresent my teaching. I am willing to be called an “ultradispensationalist”, if brethren will not deliberately misrepresent. However, in my own mind I feel that I have always been ultra-conservative in any Bible doctrine that I have taught. Every student of the Word of God is a “dispensationalist”, and if he is to intelligently apply the dispensational truth for the understanding of the Bible, he must carry the dispensational teaching as far as the Holy Spirit has carried it in the Bible.”
- Once again O’Hair still sees Acts 28 as significant with respect to the question of when did Israel fall?
  - “Christ on the cross interceded for Israel; praying “Father forgive them, for they know not what they do”. The Father very graciously withheld for some years His Divine wrath. According to Acts 5:30 to 32, the Holy Spirit was sent to witness to Israel concerning the resurrected Christ. They resisted the Holy Spirit, blaspheming against Him. Thereby they committed the unpardonable sin until the children were cast into outer darkness, in accordance with Christ’s prediction in Matthew 8:7 to 12. Read Acts 7:51, Acts 13:45 and 46, Acts 18:5 and 6, Acts 28:25 to 28. There is a very radical change marked in the Bible by the quotation, in Acts 28:25 to 28, of the Divine judgment of God mentioned in Isaiah 6:6 to 9, “blindness upon Israel”. He who teaches that Israel was set aside at the time Christ uttered the words of Matthew 23:31 to 39 doth greatly err, not knowing the Scriptures.”

- In addition, O’Hair outlines areas of agreement and disagreement that he has with EWB.
  - “Dr. Bullinger taught that the Church, as the Body of Christ, is never mentioned in feminine gender in the Bible and that Israel is. He was unable to see how the church of this dispensation could be both the Body and Bride of Christ. Therefore, he believed that a special remnant of Israel will be the Bride. Is this teaching a spiritual crime?

He taught that the hope of the Church, during the “Acts” period, was a different hope from the blessed hope of the Body of Christ, expressed in Titus 2:13. On account of this difference he believed that “till He come”, in connection with the Lord’s Supper (I Corinthians 11:26) referred to the “Acts” hope; and not to the blessed hope. And therefore, he taught that the Lord’s Supper ceased with the close of Acts. With this teaching I most heartily disagree.

Dr. Bullinger taught that, Christ’s soul and spirit separated at death; and that the same is the experience of every believer at death. His teaching was that the soul is not conscious in the intermediate state. But Dr. Bullinger most vehemently denied that he believed in annihilation for the unsaved. He positively denied the “theory” of future retribution which his critics claimed that he taught. I quote these words from Dr. Bullinger’s Magazine: “The term annihilation is non-scriptural and the statement that the doctrine is held by the writer is both false and malicious.”

- The following lines are the clearest to date on the dispensational thinking of Pastor O’Hair as of April, 1936.
  - “I earnestly and honestly tested the Scriptures in the matter of the Body of Christ beginning after the close of Acts. In my humble judgment, it is a more difficult task to prove that the Body of Christ began with the close of Acts than on the day of Pentecost. It is difficult, even impossible, for me to see either at the present time. Very much depends upon whether or not the prophets foretold the Body of Christ. If they did not, then Acts 15:14 to 18 does not refer to that Body. Ephesians 3:8 and 9, Colossians 1:24 to 27 seem to prove the prophets were ignorant of the Body of Christ. But to teach that any part of the mystery was not revealed to Paul and by Paul in Corinthians, Galatians and Romans, written during the “Acts” period, in my judgment, is not sound exegesis. On the other hand, any endeavor to prove that many phases of the mystery, including “the dispensation of the mystery”, were not, for some Divine reason, withheld from Paul’s prison Epistles, after the “Acts” period, will prove futile. With the close of the Book of Acts a most radical change took place in the spiritual program of the Body of Christ and this climax divided Paul’s pre-prison and prison Epistles. Why did Acts close before Paul’s Acts closed? There are three baptisms in the “Book of Acts” period and only one in the “Body”, according to Ephesians. The program concerning signs and sign gifts changed after the close of Acts. After Israel was set aside there was a new administration; but the same Body, the same grace gospel but a changed program.

I do not hold or teach what is termed “ultradispensationalism” or the extreme views of Dr. E. W. Bullinger and others. I accept for the Body of Christ any teaching found in the synoptic Gospels that is compatible with the dispensation of the Grace of God committed to Paul for the Gentiles. Ephesians 3:1 and 2. I do not at all agree with the “ultradispensationalists” as to the place of John’s Gospel and his Epistles, I believe that the truth in John’s Record, which differs so radically from the synoptic Records, is the message of grace based upon the rejected, crucified and resurrected Christ. I believe that John’s grace message fits into Paul’s grace message. I heartily believe in the doctrine of Paul’s pre-prison Epistles for Gentile believers but not in the practice as to signs, judgments and ceremonies.

I cannot eliminate the Lord’s Supper from this dispensation of grace, because of the words “the blood of the new covenant”, as some brethren do; for the simple reason that I would have to eliminate, by the same exegesis, all the spiritual benefits mentioned in the Book of Hebrews, which is based upon the value of the blood of the new covenant. This includes the believer’s uttermost salvation through the work of Christ as intercessor, priest and advocate. To my mind, there is no place to stop, if we begin to take away from members of the Body of Christ everything that pertains to God’s covenants, especially, the covenant that He made with Abram as an uncircumcised Gentile. I have been falsely accused of this teaching, to which I am unalterably opposed.

I believe that the “Body” of Romans is the “Body” of Ephesians and Colossians. I believe that the Gospel of the Grace of God, in Romans, is the Gospel of the Grace of God in Ephesians and Colossians. But I do not believe that God’s order continued to be “to the Jew first” after the close of the Book of Acts. I believe that Israel was set aside as a nation, after Acts 28, and that they ceased then to have priority rights. As the Jews required a sign, signs ceased at the close of Acts. And as water baptism that Christ might be made manifest to Israel, I believe that water baptism ceased at the close of Acts with the sign gifts. I believe that Acts 19:1 to 5 is the last recorded case of water baptism and in that chapter signs and water are inseparably connected; the water having been required for Holy Spirit baptism. . . I hope I have made myself sufficiently clear in this letter to answer the questions which have been put to me. I close by saying that I am positive that more than ninety-seven per cent of the ministers today are utterly failing to obey Ephesians 3:9, which I quote: “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.” And I also affirm that no man who is clinging to water baptism is making any effort to obey these instructions. Neither can he hold on to water baptism and please God in His presentation of this “mystery” truth.”

*Bible Study for Bereans (May, 1936)*

- The May, 1936 edition of the magazine did not contain any significant advancement over what we have already seen. Interested parties are encouraged to consult the electronic copy provided by the Berean Bible Society on their website.

*Bible Study for Bereans (June, 1936)*

- The June installment contains two important articles that merit our consideration. The first article of interest by O'Hair is titled "Dispensational "Nows" When Did Christ Reveal the Mystery of Colossians 1:26?" In this essay, O'Hair states, among other things, that the middle wall of partition was broken down before Paul reached Rome in Acts 28. In addition, O'Hair expounds upon the timing of the revelation of the mystery. He states that it was made known before Paul reached Rome in Acts 28 but that it was not fully written down until Paul was imprisoned.
  - "Again the question, does the "NOW" of Colossians 1:26 prove that the day of the revelation of the mystery was about the time in Paul's life and ministry when he wrote Colossians from the Roman prison? Careful students of the Word must acknowledge that there was no Divine written record, in which the mystery was clearly defined, until Colossians, Ephesians, Philippians and II Timothy were written, several years after Paul pronounced God's judgment upon Israel, as recorded in Acts 28:25 to 28. Neither should any such student deny that the mystery was mentioned by Paul in I Corinthians 2:7 and 8 and Romans 16:25 and 26, both written before the date of Acts 28:28. In God's infallible Records of the teachings of Paul, before he reached Rome, we have a very small part of his ministry. As to just what he taught orally, concerning the mystery, in addition to the record in the Book of Acts and in his epistles written during the "Acts" period, we cannot even guess with any degree of accuracy. Moreover, no spiritual believer will accept guessing and speculating, rather than sound Scriptural exegesis, as proof of Scriptural facts and Divine truth. . .

Inasmuch as some "guessing" Bible teachers have imagined that they have supported their speculations by some Scriptural exegesis with the use of the word "NOW" to prove that the Apostle Paul received the revelation of the Mystery after the close of the period covered by the Book of Acts, we want to use some other "NOWS" to disprove their theory. We quote several:

"For Christ is not entered into the holy places made with hands, which are the figures of the true; but into heaven itself, NOW to appear in the presence of God for us." Hebrews 9:24.

"But NOW in Christ Jesus ye who sometimes were far off are made nigh by the blood of Christ." Ephesians 2:13. . .

In the first verse quoted, "NOW to appear in the presence of God for us." The Epistle to the Hebrews was written at least twenty years after Christ sat down in heaven, in accordance with Hebrews 1:3—Hebrews 10:10 to 14—Hebrews 12:1 to 3. Christ had been interceding for saints, in accordance with Hebrews 7:25, for more than twenty years after He sat down. Christ had been appearing in heaven itself in God's presence since the day of Pentecost when Paul (or some other apostle) wrote Hebrews 9:24. Therefore the

“NOW” of Hebrews. 9:24 did not begin with the day Hebrews was written, but years before.

“But NOW in Christ Jesus”. Ephesians 2:13. But when? But “NOW”? Certainly not the date when Paul wrote Ephesians, which was more than thirty years after Christ died on the cross and was seated in the heavenlies. What is proved by the immediate context? “Ye are (were) saved by grace”. Ephesians 2:8. What Gentile was not saved by grace in Paul’s ministry beginning with Acts 13:39? “By Him all that believe are justified by all things.” Where is the grace message more clearly presented than in Galatians 1:11 to 17 and Galatians 2:21, and especially in Romans 3:26 to Romans 5:20? It was grace all the way. It was about 47 A.D. when Paul returned to Antioch with the report and result recorded in Acts 14:27; “And when they were come, and had gathered the church together, they rehearsed all that God had done with them, and how He had OPENED THE DOOR OF FAITH UNTO THE GENTILES.” Most, if not all, of the believers to whom Paul addressed his Epistle to the Ephesians were brought nigh to God by the blood of Christ, not later than 58 A.D. So the “NOW” of Ephesians 2:13 did not refer to the “NOW” date of the Epistle. . .

When was the middle-wall of partition broken down? Some teachers seem to think that the breaking-down of the middle wall of partition did not occur until God set Israel aside with Acts 28:25 to 28. But let us read Romans 3:22, “there is no difference”; Galatians 3:28, “there is neither Jew nor Greek”; II Corinthians 3:13, “that which is abolished (the law)”; and Galatians 2:18 and 19. The middle-wall of partition was known to be out of the way before Paul reached Rome. . .

Therefore, it is unwise to endeavor to prove by the “NOW” of Colossians 1:26 that the Body of Colossians 1:25 began after Paul’s Roman imprisonment, especially since the “NOW” of Philippians 1:5 proves the very opposite. “For your fellowship in the Gospel from the first day until NOW.” Paul was in Philippi about 52 A.D. Acts 16:11 to 32. He wrote to “all the saints in Christ Jesus which are at Philippi”. (Philippians 1:1) Paul preached Christ Jesus unto all the saints who had enjoyed fellowship with him from the first day. The “NOW” of Philippians 1:5 is proof positive that the saints in 64 or 65 A.D. had not changed from an “Acts” Church to a “Body” Church which began after Acts closed. Therefore the “NOW” of Philippians 1:5, (64 or 65 A.D.) proves that the “NOW” of Colossians 1:26 and Ephesians 3:5 began years before Colossians and Ephesians were written. . .

Let us acknowledge that the believer’s position and possessions in Christ, in connection with the mystery, are never clearly set forth in Paul’s pre-prison epistles, and that in no written message before Acts 28 can we find the glorious truth as to the One New Man and the relationship of Head and Body-members as it is revealed in Ephesians. But let us not be stubbornly dogmatic in our assertion that the revelation did not come to Paul from Christ until after Acts 28, and show the weakness of our dogmatism in an attempt to prove it by the “NOWS” of Colossians 1:26 and Ephesians 2:5.”

- A second article of great importance is Charles F. Baker's "The Saviour Out of Heaven." In this essay Pastor Baker refutes the teaching of EWB and Welch that the I Corinthians 15 and I Thessalonians 4 do not refer to the rapture of the church. Once again this article demonstrates clearly that Mr. Baker had read the writings on EWB and Welch on this subject.
  - "Some teach that the Body of Christ began after God set Israel aside in Acts 28:28, and therefore the hope of resurrection in I Corinthians 15:51, 52; I Thessalonians 4:13 to 17 (given before Acts 28) is not for the Body of Christ. They say our hope is found in Philippians 3:11, 14, 20, 21 and Colossians 3:4, and claim that these passages teach that our Lord is not coming out of heaven as in I Thessalonians 4, but that we will be called up on high, to meet Christ, not in the air, but in heaven. This theory seems to be contradicted, however, by the very scripture they use. Philippians 3:20 reads: "For our citizenship is in Heaven, from whence (ek ou—out of which, i.e., out of heaven) also we look for (or eagerly await—same word used in Romans 8:19, 23, 25; I Corinthians 1:7; Hebrews 9:28) the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ." It is exactly what the Thessalonians were doing: they were "waiting, for His Son from (ek—out of) heaven" (I Thessalonians 1:10). Christ is now in heaven; we are to wait for Him out of heaven. He must descend from heaven as in I Thessalonians 4:16 before Philippians 3:20, 21 can be realized. The day in which the Corinthians and Thessalonians event is to be realized is called "the day of our Lord Jesus Christ" (I Corinthians 1:8), and the one in which the Philippians hope is to be realized is called "the day of Jesus Christ" and the "day of Christ" (Philippians 1:6; Philippians 2:16). If these are two separate events, then language seems useless in making the distinction. We must, of course, recognize the distinction between His two comings or parousias; for there will first be a parousia or coming "for His saints" (I Thessalonians 4:15; II Thessalonians 2:1) in which the Church takes part; and then there will be the parousia "with His saints" (I Thessalonians 3:13). The former is called a Mystery (I Corinthians 15:51); the latter is the subject of prophecy and not a mystery, being the Second Coming of Christ back to the earth. Our hope is not to die and go to be with Christ in heaven, but to be caught up with Him when He next comes out of heaven, and to ever be with Him wherever He is."

### Works Cited

*Bible Study for Bereans*. April, 1936.

*Bible Study for Bereans*, May, 1936.

*Bible Study for Bereans*, June, 1936.