

Acts 28 – The Great N.T. dispensational divide

Romans – promise, prophecy, the earthy kingdom setting

Romans – not a foundation for today's dispensation.

Romans, its dispensational setting. 02.

We are comparing Paul with Paul in a process to show whether or not he had received partial truths about the present dispensation of the grace of God prior to Acts 28. Is his late Acts period letter to the Romans the dispensational foundation upon which Ephesians and Colossians rests or are they dispensationally disparate?

We have noted that words and phrases like truth, revelation, apostle of the gentiles, my gospel, mystery, dispensation, grace, and justification by grace, of themselves prove nothing about Paul's ministry either side of Acts 28. These are words and phrases without context and to use them standing alone are tools for extinguishing things that differ. Context determines meaning. My gospel prior to Acts 28 might be completely different to my gospel afterwards.

The same must be said of commands, take for example Proverbs 28:9.

He who turns away his ear from hearing the law, even his prayer is a hateful thing. Pro 28:9 MKJV

Hearing here carries the sense of obeying so are we to obey the Law? We can certainly find moral instruction from the Law, but obedience for the church which is his body might be ungodliness; that is, wrong worship.

Proverbs 28 is a clarion call from Solomon to learn wisdom and instruction, but Proverbs knows nothing of the present calling, thus we learn its wisdom being applicable, but its dispensational aspects, such as obeying the Law are to be carefully considered. What about Romans then? Is it to be obeyed because Paul wrote it and it is in the New Testament? What if Proverbs and Romans were the same dispensation? Romans through Philemon could not possibly consider such a thought.

Redemptive truth is common for all programs, that fact that Abraham was justified by grace through faith does not make him a member of the church which is his body despite the fact righteousness imputed is found either side of Acts 28; righteousness reckoned is not a dispensational truth. He was reckoned righteous by faith, but was promised a Land, and looked for a city. Gen.15, Gals.3-4, Roms.4 and Hebs.11 are dispensationally inseparable. Look carefully at these familiar passages.

And he believed in the LORD; and he counted it to him for righteousness. And he said unto him, I am the LORD that brought thee out of Ur of the Chaldees, to give thee this land to inherit it. Gen 15:6-7 [:17-:21].

Even as Abraham believed God, and it was accounted to him for righteousness. Gal 3:6

For if the inheritance be of the law, it is no more of promise: but God gave it to Abraham by promise. Gal 3:18

And if ye be Christ's, then are ye Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise. Gal 3:29

For what saith the scripture? Abraham believed God, and it was counted unto him for righteousness. Rom 4:3

For the promise, that he should be the heir of the world, was not to Abraham, or to his seed, through the law, but through the righteousness of faith. Rom 4:13

By faith Noah, being warned of God of things not seen as yet, moved with fear, prepared an ark to the saving of his house; by the which he condemned the world, and became heir of the righteousness which is by faith. By faith Abraham, when he was called to go out into a place which he should after receive for an inheritance, obeyed; and he went out, not knowing whither he went. By faith he sojourned in the land of promise, as in a strange country, dwelling in tabernacles with Isaac and Jacob, the heirs with him of the

same promise: For he looked for a city which hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God. Heb 11:7-10.

If righteousness reckoned by faith coupled with a Land given by promise in Gen.15 is not the dispensational foundation of Ephesians and Colossians then neither is Galatians, Romans and Hebrews.

There is another issue which entraps many into believing Paul in Acts provides a foundation for Ephesians and Colossians and that is the hasty comparison of Paul with Peter along fundamental lines, not dispensational ones. The fact that Paul was the Apostle of the Gentiles before and after Acts 28 does not prove Paul had the dispensational truths of Ephesians and Colossians before Acts 28; again, these are just words without context. What dispensational truths did he teach among the Gentiles during Acts? The fact that Peter was an Apostle to the Circumcision does not prove that Peter was teaching totally different dispensational truth to Paul up until Acts 28. Claiming Peter was an Apostle to the circumcision are just words without context. What dispensational truths did Peter proclaim? It would be devastating for Romans through Philemon if Peter was on the same dispensational page as Paul during Acts.

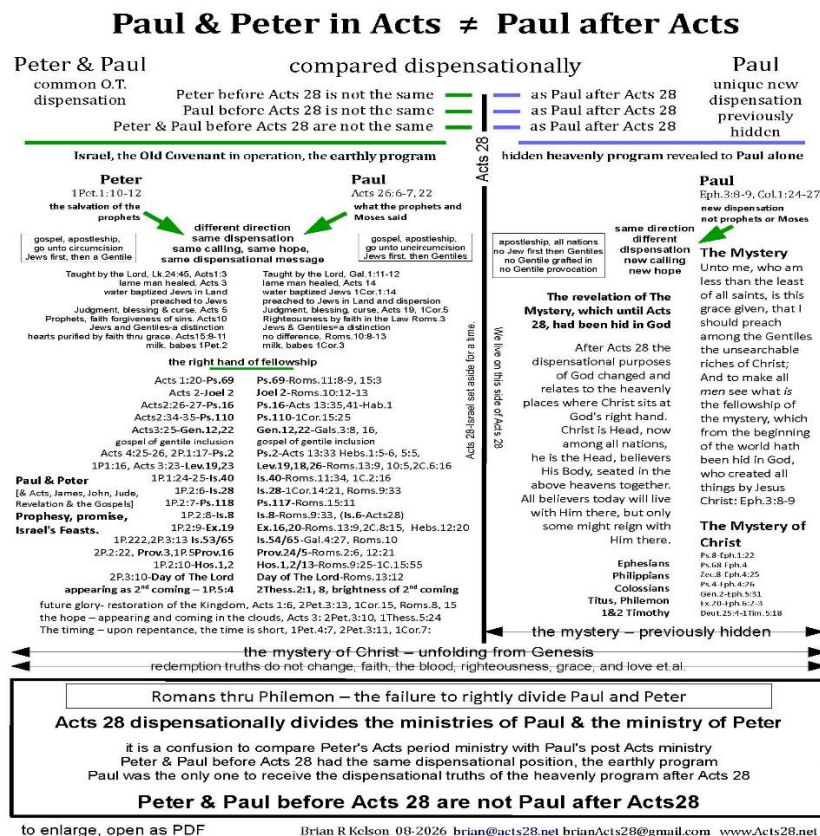
This misleading comparison is especially promoted by the Romans through Philemon ideology. An accurate dispensational comparison of the two apostles should be compiled as follows;

Compare Peter with Paul up until Acts 28.

Compare Peter with Paul after Acts 28.

Compare Paul in Acts with Paul after Acts 28.

The following chart might be helpful to show the dispensational comparisons that ought to be done, rather than the hasty superficial ones that abound. It is available on the charts link on acts28 dot net.



So, Peter and Paul were on the same dispensational page up until Acts 28, but Peter and Paul up until Acts 28 are not on the same dispensational page as Paul after Acts 28.

Peter and Paul are quoting the same prophecies, writing about the same imminent end times things, the day is at hand, Roms.13:12, harmonizes perfectly with the end of all things is near, 1Pet.4:7. These scriptures further show this

The Lord is not slow concerning His promise, as some count slowness, but is long-suffering toward us, not purposing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance. But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night, in which the heavens will pass away with a rushing noise, and the elements will melt with fervent heat. And the earth and the works in it will be burned up. Then, all these things being about to be dissolved, what sort ought you to be in holy behavior and godliness, looking for and rushing the coming of the Day of God, on account of which the heavens, being on fire, will melt away, and the elements will melt, burning with heat? But according to His promise, we look for new heavens and a new earth in which righteousness dwells. 2Pe 3:9-13. MKJV

But of the times and the seasons, brothers, you have no need that I write to you. For you yourselves know accurately that the day of the Lord comes like a thief in the night. For when they shall say, Peace and safety! Then sudden destruction comes on them, as travail upon a woman with child. And they shall not escape. But you, brothers, are not in darkness, that the Day should overtake you like a thief. 1Th 5:1-4 I know a man who belongs to the Messiah. Fourteen years ago—whether in his body or outside of his body, I do not know, but God knows—that man was snatched away to the third heaven. I know that this man—whether in his body or outside of his body, I do not know, but God knows— was snatched away to Paradise and heard things that cannot be expressed in words, things that no human being has a right even to mention. 2Co 12:2-4 ISV.

The Third heaven is the new heaven; the person Paul is writing about was not snatched up but snatched away to the third heaven we live under the second heaven now. The fact is, Peter and Paul are looking forward to the same second coming events. Does the fact that Peter was the Apostle to the circumcision and Paul was sent out among the Gentiles alter the same hope they expected?

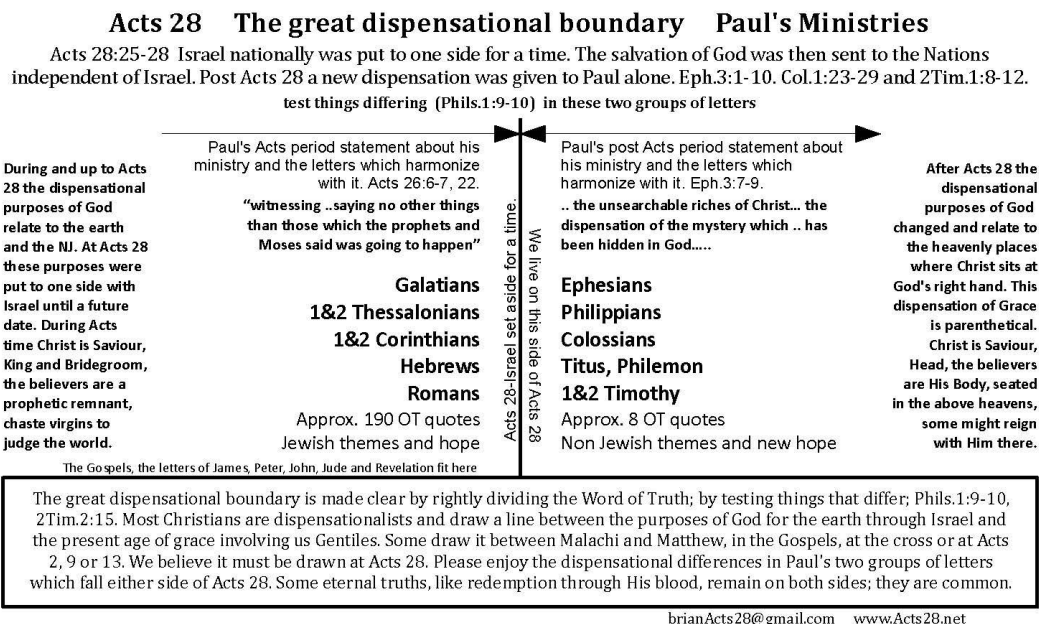
Direction of ministry does not mean a dispensational difference.

All of this to demonstrate that establishing Acts 28 as the dispensational boundary is incredibly important in understanding Paul either side thereof. Paul must be compared with Paul either side of Acts 28 and Peter can only be compared with Paul prior to Acts 28 since Peter's writings know nothing of the present program.

There are two completely different programs evidenced in Paul. The first program is the earthly one of promise and prophecy, the same program Peter preached. The New Jerusalem, New Heaven [the 3rd] and the new earth and the apocalypse; the 2nd coming of Christ in the clouds to Mt Zion with the last Trumpet, Angels, a shout, fire, judgment, earthquakes, darkness, resurrections and vengeance.

The second program, revealed after Acts 28, is about all spiritual blessings in the heavenly places, an inheritance there, the church which is his body the fulness of Christ who fills all in all, the creation of the one new man, Jew and Gentile without advantage or disadvantage, the dwelling place of God by the Spirit, gifts to adjust the believers, and the hope of Appearing with Christ when he appears at the right hand gloriously. Peter wrote nothing of this second program. Thus, we remind ourselves of those letters written by Paul which set themselves either side of Acts 28 by content which is context. Repetition is good for us

all.



Miles Coverdale, in the prologue to his 1535 Bible, wisely observed, **"It shall greatly help ye to understand the Scriptures if thou mark not only what is spoken or written, but of whom, and to whom, with what words, AT WHAT TIME, where, to what intent, with what CIRCUMSTANCES, considering what goeth before and what followeth after."**

If indeed, Romans was written before the great N.T. dispensational divide then Romans has a context and what we read in Romans should have that earthy program context or framework to guide our understanding.

The context of Romans is not just internal, it must be understood in the Acts period, when Paul walked orderly and kept the Law, Acts 21:24. It was written when the Apostles dispensed divine justice and blessing and when the Corinthians were warned to take Passover/Communion worthily or suffer sickness and death, 1Cor.11. It was written when James called the sick to be anointed with oil, seek prayer from the elders and then sins would be forgiven. Still in James, it was a time when faults were to be confessed with prayer for healing, and those who converted anyone among them who erred from the truth would turn back a sinner from death, James 5:13-20, [Gals.6:1].

We retrace our steps and review the introduction to the letter and Paul's gospel to those who were already "saved"; the called-out ones in Rome. This gives the overall theme that threads through it.

by whom we have received grace and apostleship, to obedience to the faith among all nations, for His name; among whom you also are the called-out ones of Jesus Christ: to all those who are in Rome, beloved of God, called to be saints. Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ. Rom 1:5-7

For I long to see you, so that I may impart to you some spiritual gift, to you for the establishing of you. Rom 1:11

So, as much as is in me lies, I am ready to preach the gospel to you who are at Rome also. For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ, for it is the power of God unto salvation to everyone who believes, to the

Jew first and also to the Greek. For in it the righteousness of God is revealed from faith to faith, as it is written, "The just shall live by faith." Rom 1:15-17.

This opening proclamation provides helpful guidance about this letter. It is not the gospel to the unsaved. It is to bolster obedience to the faith. It is accompanied by a spiritual gift the Apostle was capable of bestowing on those who already had gifts. It was designed to establish them, not bring them to initial repentance. It was written to preach how the just were to live in that time.

With this in mind we should be considering every theme and quotation Paul uses in Romans. For example, are the following gospel facts for the “unsaved” or warnings to the “saved”?

For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord. Rom 6:23. Therefore, brothers, we are not debtors to the flesh, to live according to the flesh. For if you live according to the flesh, you shall die. But if you through the Spirit mortify the deeds of the body, you shall live. Rom 8:12-13, [Gals.6:8].

The Acts period was certainly not the dispensation of the grace of God and because of the Exodus nature of the Gospels and Acts we note more carefully the phrase “obedience of faith”, or obedience to the faith that was so important in Paul’s apostleship and his gospel to the Romans.

Obedience, coupled with walking according to the Spirit, were important factors in Paul’s ministry among the Gentiles and so what was his gospel, his teaching to the Romans which was in harmony with the Acts period and its dispensational framework? This we hope to see as we labor through this monumental letter.

We search and see.

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all charts and structures on acts28.net/charts