THE DISPENSATIONAL FRONTIER

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SUBJECTS CONSIDERED

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The New Covenant was made with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah (Jer.31:31).

The Mystery or Secret was hidden from the ages and from past generations (Eph.3:9; Col.1:25,26).

We believe both of these statements, and keep them in their true and distinct places in the plan of the ages, in other words we seek to obey the injunction "Rightly to divide the Word of Truth" (2 Tim.2:15).

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Acts 28: 23-31

The Analogy of a Frontier

It is but reasonable to expect that any system of doctrine or interpretation that differs from or challenges orthodoxy, will be subjected to a fair amount of criticism, and this should be welcomed, for if our pursuit be the TRUTH, the faults discovered even by an enemy should be acknowledged and the quest continued. We believe that many whose interest has been quickened, but who have received a set-back by some of the specious arguments advanced against us, would value a careful and constructive presentation of the reasons why Acts 28 should be considered a dispensational boundary. This we hope to provide in the following pages.

Supposing Acts 28 to be a "frontier" what should we reasonably expect to justify the claim? The word "frontier" is a geographical term denoting the extreme limits and boundary of a country. Up to that limit the laws and customs, language and currency of one country will obtain, and immediately beyond that frontier other laws, customs, languages and currency will obtain, and if we are justified in the use of the term in speaking of Acts 28, it will be incumbent upon us to show that certain features that are characteristic of the dispensation covering Acts 1–28 run from one end of the book to the other, and that immediately beyond the confines of this chapter a new set of features are in force. However, before we demonstrate these essential characteristics it will be necessary to deal with a related objection and to show that it has no bearing upon the question as to whether Acts 28 be the dispensational frontier or not. The objection we have in mind runs something like this:

> "Whether we are in the 'Acts' or in the 'Prison Epistles' there is but One Saviour, One Redeemer, One God and Father. We read the same Bible, and resurrection is the constant factor in our hope whatever differences there

may be in the way in which that hope is described. These features are fundamental and are of much more importance than the differences so often enlarged upon, and their due recognition reveals that we are all one family of faith, on whichever side of Acts 28 we may find ourselves".

It is difficult to be fair when attempting to summarise the many objections made by others, but we believe the spirit of these objections will be evident from this presentation. Let us rewrite this objection in geographical and racial terms and see how far we can then endorse the argument contained in them:

"Whether we live in 'England' or in 'France' all have one Creator, and whether we be English or French we must eat and drink in order to preserve life, and however our customs and laws may differ, we are all mortal and can only hope to live again if there be a resurrection of the dead. The due recognition of these essential features that are common to both, reveals that we are *all human beings* on whichever side of the channel we may live".

Sin and death, redemption and hope, eating, sleeping and working belong to neither Englishmen nor Frenchmen exclusively, but *these basic likenesses* do not in any sense nullify the most evident differences in laws, customs, languages and currency. Any reader who maintained that the idea was absurd that there were any dispensational differences on either side of the channel, would soon be made to recognise his mistake. If he drove a car, he would be obliged to change over from the left hand side of the road to the right, and if he persisted in disbelieving "this dispensational nonsense" he would probably end up in disaster. However much he may maintain that "money" was all one needed, whether on this side of the channel or the other he would be compelled to resort to the exchanges and convert English money into French currency in order to live. Dispensational truth *is not concerned* with fundamentals like sin and death, but with differences in calling, in sphere of blessing, and in the outworking of the purpose of the ages. The objection which we have summarised is not valid. We do not say that those who live on the other side of a frontier are not *human beings*, we only say that they are different *nations*. The fundamental facts of sin and redemption are as true on the Ephesians side

of the Acts of the Apostles as they were before, and the national demands for food and raiment belong to the French people on one side of the frontier as they belong to the Belgian and the Spanish on the other. The differences between the calling of the Acts period and the Ephesian period are differences of dispensation, sphere of glory, constitution, and the like. If our analogy of a frontier be valid, then we shall find that certain features which are true in the opening chapters of the Acts, persist and are actively present in the closing chapters. These features being consistently maintained throughout the whole period and then ceasing, will justify our use of the figure of a land or people with a frontier drawn at Acts 28. If upon crossing that frontier we discover radical changes, outstanding omissions, and the introduction of entirely new features, then the analogy will be maintained, and a new law, country and people will be a fit figure of the new state of affairs and Acts 28 will be most evidently the dividing line and a dispensational frontier.

Among the many features that are so marked with these distinctions are the following taken from the Pentecostal section of the book of the Acts.

(1) The appeal to the law and the prophets.
(2) The restoration of the kingdom again to Israel.
(3) The gifts of the Spirit.
(4) The place given to Israel, "Unto you first".

We have not only to demonstrate that these four items persist to the end of the Acts, we have to demonstrate that at Acts 28 these items cease, and are replaced by other new and hitherto unrevealed teachings. To these matters therefore we now address ourselves, seeking to substantiate every assertion by a positive declaration from the Word of Truth, a position which leaves no room for mere human speculation, and which must disarm all true criticism.

The Appeal to Moses, the Prophets and the Psalms

Before opening this examination, let us make one thing crystal clear. Our published writings extend over a period of more than forty years, and the consistent testimony of our works is that "All Scripture is given by inspiration of God".

The first tenet of four that constitutes the basis of *The Berean Forward Movement* is the Inspiration of all Scripture and if one publication be asked for, that makes this attitude of heart clear to all, we point to the booklet entitled *True from the Beginning*, and *God's Word Written*. Our contention is not concerned with the *inspiration* of the Old Testament but with its *use* and employment, fulfilment and application. We have NOT entitled this section "Is Moses the author of the Pentateuch?" or "Are there two Isaiahs?" but "The APPEAL to Moses, the Prophets and the Psalms". Acts 1:3 makes no actual mention of Moses and the prophets, but every student knows that the reference "Being seen of them forty days, and speaking of the things pertaining to the kingdom of God" is a reference back to Luke 24, where the forty days are accounted for, the risen Lord both seen and handled, and demonstrated by "many infallible proofs" (Acts 1:3 and Luke 24:39-43) and the opening up of the Old Testament Scriptures emphasised. Here is the Risen Lord's own appeal to the law and the prophets:

> "Ought not Christ to have suffered these things, and to have entered into His glory? And beginning at MOSES and all the PROPHETS, He expounded unto them in all the Scriptures the things concerning Himself" (Luke 24:26,27).
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> "These are the words which I spake unto you, while I was yet with you, that all things must be fulfilled, which were written in the law of MOSES and in the PROPHETS, and in the PSALMS concerning Me" (Luke 24:44).

This exposition of the Old Testament Scriptures most evidently led the apostles to ask the question recorded in Acts 1:6, and accounts for the presence of the word "therefore":

> "When they THEREFORE (i.e. as a result of the Lord's teaching) were come together, they asked Him, saying, Lord, wilt Thou at this time restore again the kingdom to Israel?"

We will not pause to deal with this question here, that will come in due sequence; we are considering the appeal to the Old Testament Scriptures which is evidently fundamental to the teaching of the Acts period, and we must keep in mind that this question about the earthly kingdom arose out of forty days instruction during which the Saviour opened up

in all the Scriptures "the things pertaining to the kingdom of God".

The Psalms form the basis of Peter's advice as described in Acts 1:15,16,20,21 and have the testimony of the Lord as their warrant (John 13:18,19). His answer to the question concerning what had happened on the day of Pentecost was to quote the prophet Joel (Acts 2:16-21), and the "prophet" David (Acts 2:29-31). The typical teaching of the miracle of healing recorded in Acts 3:1-11, reflects "the times of restoration of all things, which God hath spoken by the mouth of all His holy prophets since the world began" (Acts 3:19-21 R.V.). Moses, Samuel, and all the prophets are referred to as "foretelling these days" (Acts 3:22-24) and Stephen's speech is a resume and an application of Old Testament teaching (Acts 7). Paul followed the same pattern in his address at Antioch (Acts 13:15-37) in which he quoted Moses, the Prophets and the Psalms, and in Acts 17:2 we learn that his manner was to reason out of the Scriptures, summing up his teaching up to that point, saying:

> "I continue unto this day, witnessing both to small and great, saying none other things than those which the prophets and Moses did say should come" (Acts 26:22).

At Acts 28:23 we have traversed nearly the whole of the Acts, and find that the Apostle makes his appeal to the law and the prophets as completely as ever:

> "Persuading them concerning Jesus, both out of the law of Moses, and out of the prophets from morning till evening" (Acts 28:23).

While the reader may agree that the law and the prophets are quoted and appealed to throughout the Acts, he may not realise the significance of the fact until he begins to make comparisons. During the Acts period the apostle Paul wrote seven epistles, Romans, 1 and 2 Thessalonians, 1 and 2 Corinthians, Galatians and Hebrews; it will therefore contribute to our understanding if we note how the Old Testament is employed in the epistles of this period. The Old Testament is quoted 121 times in these epistles and of this number 35 are found in Hebrews. This statement may provoke the rejoinder "Hebrews, as its title suggests, deals with the people of the Old Testament and has so much to say about their

past history, the tabernacle and the priesthood, that it may be considered somewhat unfair to allow the great number of Old Testament references to have any weight in this argument". Conceding this for the moment, let us turn our attention to the one epistle of Paul which by common consent is fundamental so far as the gospel and its ministry are concerned, namely the epistle to the Romans. That epistle contains 51 references to Law, Prophets and Psalms, a number which if taken by itself is eloquent in its assurance that the same appeal characterised by the Acts is true of the epistles of the period. When however we come to compare this evidence with the testimony of the Prison Epistles, *written the other side of the frontier of Acts 28*, the evidence is overwhelming. Seven epistles come from the pen of Paul which were written after Acts 28, namely Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians, Philemon, 1 and 2 Timothy and Titus. In these epistles there are just seven references, only one reference on the average to an epistle. When this is put over against the 51 references of Romans, we are sure the case for Acts 28 being a frontier is sound.

We can take this matter further however. There is not a single quotation of the Old Testament in either Philippians, Colossians, Philemon or Titus; one reference being found in 1 Timothy, one reference in 2 Timothy and 5 references in Ephesians. Again, the statement of these facts may bring the retort – "Ephesians, your great epistle of the Mystery, requires 5 quotations from the Old Testament!" so we must give heed and consider what the quotations are and what their significance may be. In order that we may be as free from bias as possible, we took the number of quotations from Turpie's monumental work, entitled *The Old Testament and the New* but draw the reader's attention to the fact that Turpie gives only *four* references in Ephesians, but that *we have added* the reference to Psalm 8 that is embedded in Ephesians 1:22. The quotations in Ephesians, with the exception of the words from Psalm 8 in chapter 1, are all found in *the practical section*, namely Ephesians 4-6. The fact that Paul quotes one of the ten commandments in Ephesians 6:2,3, cannot be cited as proof that his doctrine is founded upon the law of Moses, any more than the reference to the relationship of man and wife in the beginning, can be made to "prove" that the Mystery is found in or founded on the

book of Genesis (Eph.5:31). Ephesians 4:8 is cited from Psalm 68:18, but that Christ ascended is the testimony of the Gospels and the Acts as well as other Scriptures, and so the Apostle here is but enlarging upon a known fact. The truth is that *not one essential revelation* of the Mystery as given in Ephesians, Philippians or Colossians is based upon the Old Testament Scriptures, simply because this mystery (or secret) was not a subject of revelation until it was communicated to Paul as the Prisoner of the Lord for the Gentiles. Instead of *quoting* Scripture, Paul, when he dealt with the Mystery, *wrote* Scripture by revelation of God. The appeal to the Old Testament is characteristic of the territory represented by the Acts period, but is a negligible quantity in the epistles written after Acts 28. The claim made therefore that Acts 28 is a dispensational frontier is at least strongly supported by this single piece of evidence. We have other evidence, to which we now turn, and as we assemble all our proofs, we believe our estimate of Acts 28 will be inescapable.

The Earthly Kingdom restored again to Israel

Two facts may be stated in sequence, but they may have no logical connection. For example, here are two facts: (1) I am writing, at my desk; (2) The weather is dull. Now some may see a connection between my writing and "dull" weather, but there is no logical connection between the two statements. This is not the case with the two items we have enumerated. The question concerning the restoration again of the kingdom to Israel arose out of the forty days' opening of the Scriptures, and this is not only indicated by the use of the word "therefore" in Acts 1:6, but necessitated by what is said in Luke 24:45:

> "Then OPENED He their understanding, that they might UNDERSTAND the Scriptures".

Even we, with all our confessed limitations, even we would feel that something was amiss, if after forty days' exposition of the Scriptures, the first question our hearers put to us was completely wide of the mark. How then is it possible in view of the specific statement of Luke 24:45 that the Lord opened their understanding, even to suggest that the question of Acts 1:6 originated in Jewish bias? There are some, having seen

this, who refer the reader to verses 46 and 47 of Luke 24, as though it were possible *at that time* to divorce the preaching of repentance and remission either from the gospel of the kingdom or from the person and work of Christ. Let us examine this question with some measure of reverent care.

> "Lord, wilt Thou at this time restore again the kingdom to Israel?"

The Lord had opened up the Scriptures "concerning" Himself and given them understanding and as a consequence the apostles look to Him, as the Restorer of the kingdom. This we judge is not a matter in dispute, and so pass on to the remainder of the question. The question is entirely a matter of time "when". The apostles did not and could not ask "Will the kingdom *ever be* restored again to Israel?" Neither did they envisage something entirely new. To them "Israel" could only mean the twelve tribes so named. The kingdom up to that time had no ecclesiastical meaning, it could not by any possibility have meant "the church" as understood and revealed in the epistles. They assumed that a literal earthly kingdom was to be "restored". By no system of legitimate interpretation can these words "restore again" be made to refer to "The Church" as it is found in the epistles. The substantive form of the word translated "restore again" is found in Acts 3:21-24, "The times of restoration of all things, which God hath spoken by the mouth of all His holy prophets since the world began ... all the prophets ... foretold of these days". The Saviour Himself assured His hearers that "Elias truly shall first come, and RESTORE all things" (Matt.17:11). It was therefore a legitimate question for the apostles to ask, for the prophets had "foretold these days". "To restore again" either in English or Greek, precludes the idea of something entirely new, it always implies something which has been lost or lapsed in the past being brought back to a former state, as such a passage makes clear "I will restore thy judges *as at the first*" (Isa.1:26). When the chief butler said to Pharaoh "Me he restored unto mine office" (Gen.41:13), he most certainly did not mean that he had been given the place vacated by the baker. *He became a butler again.* Whatever the apostles intended by their question, one thing is certain they referred to something that had lapsed and which they looked forward to being restored. That something they named "the kingdom" and it was to be restored to none else

than to "Israel". The angel Gabriel cannot be accused of bias, but at the annunciation he said of Christ:

> "The Lord God shall give Him *the throne of His father David* and He shall reign over the house of Jacob for ever" (Luke 1: 32,33).

No spiritualising of the names "David" or "Jacob" is permissible, neither can the words "throne" or "reign" refer to anything else than a kingdom on earth as the "Lord's prayer" teaches (Matt.6:10). It is surely not necessary to quote from the Gospels and the Acts the many passages that speak of the Saviour as "King" and of the kingdom over which He came to reign. However true it may be that as the New Testament unfolds, the scope of the term kingdom is seen to grow, no warrant can ever be found for making "Israel" and "Jacob" mean other than the twelve tribes. If there is any one writer in the New Testament who might possibly be expected to spiritualise the references to this kingdom it is Paul in his capacity of Apostle to the Gentiles. Yet even *after* he had concluded one ministry, and was looking forward to his Prison ministry, he said:

> "And now I stand and am judged for the hope of the promise made of God unto our fathers: Unto which promise *our twelve tribes* instantly serving God day and night, *hope to come*" (Acts 26: 6, 7).

The Hope of Israel

This "hope of Israel" extends from Acts 1:6 to Acts 28: 20, to the very frontiers of the dispensation, and then it abruptly ends. Nothing in the Prison Epistles demands the use of the word "restore" *for all is new*. While the word "Israel" appears twelve times in the epistle to the Romans, it is mentioned in Ephesians, only to be set aside (Eph.2:12), and in Philippians only of Paul himself who was by birth an Israelite (Phil.3:5). Consequently we can say that after Acts 28, Israel the nation as a factor disappears from the page of Scripture until the book of the Revelation is reached and the present parenthetical Dispensation of the Mystery is closed. Abraham who is spoken of by Paul in his early epistles, *twenty-nine times*, is not mentioned once. We are fully

justified in considering Acts 28 to be a dispensational frontier, it being the dividing line between the earthly kingdom and Scriptures that pertain to Israel, and the revelation of the Mystery which is directed to the Gentiles, and concerns the heavenly aspect of the kingdom unfolded in the later prison epistles of Paul.

Israel were the people of God at the birth of Christ (Matt. 2:6), Israel were the people of God at the crucifixion (Acts 4:27), Israel were a disobedient and gainsaying people, but still a "people" throughout the period of the Acts (Rom. 10:21). Israel were still a people when Paul reached Rome (Acts 28:17). The hope of Israel reaches to the twenty-eighth chapter of the Acts, and after that is heard no more until seen in the Prophetic visions of the book of the Revelation. A few years after Acts 28, Jerusalem was destroyed, the temple rased to the ground, and Israel scattered. What greater evidence can we need to prove that at Acts 28 we reach a crisis? Detailed proof that the Saviour's earthly ministry was limited to, and directed to Israel will not be called for by the reader, one or two passages will suffice for the present.

> "Now I say that Jesus Christ was a minister of the circumcision for the truth of God, to CONFIRM the promises made unto the FATHERS" (Rom.15:8).

To *confirm* promises *already* made is entirely different from introducing a secret *hid from* the ages and generations, and as it is expressed by the Apostle it makes clear the fact that the Church of the One Body was not in view up to the time of writing the epistle to the Romans.

> "To the Jew first" (Rom.1:16). "Ye are the children of the prophets and of the covenant which God made with our fathers ... unto YOU FIRST ..." (Acts 3:25,26).

Paul recognises the prior place of Israel even as Peter did, but there is no such priority in the Church of the one Body (Col.3:11). When the Apostle actually reached Rome his first concern was to see the leaders of his own people, Israel. He does not hesitate to use such terms as "men and brethren", "customs of our fathers", "my nation", which cannot be interpreted as of any but literal Israel. The particular passage

however that we now desire to consider is Acts 28:20, where Paul says "For the hope of Israel I am bound with this chain". Romans 15 which we have already partly quoted speaks of the "hope" entertained by believing Gentiles towards the close of Paul's public ministry. After writing 1 Thessalonians 4, and 1 Corinthians 15, and other passages relative to the hope of the Church during the Acts, the Apostle gives as his *last word* on the subject before his first ministry ceased (Acts 20:22-25), in the last epistle of the period, the epistle to the Romans:

> "There shall be a root of Jesse, and He that shall rise to reign over the Gentiles; in Him shall the Gentiles HOPE (*elpizo*); now the God of that HOPE (*elpis*) fill you with all joy and peace in believing" (Rom.15:12,13).

Here the hope of the church is based upon the prophecy of Isaiah 11, and is focussed upon the millennial kingdom. With the statements of Paul regarding the unique character of the Mystery in Ephesians 3 and Colossians 1 before us, it is impossible to believe that "the one hope" of that unique calling should be millennial in character and based upon Isaiah chapter 11. If we add to this the opening testimony of Acts 1:6, and the further testimony of Acts 26:6,7, we shall have indubitable evidence that there is *one hope extending throughout the whole period* covered by the Acts of the Apostles, endorsed by Paul in his epistles, and clinched by his reference in Acts 28:20, and that is "The hope of Israel". For the sake of truth let us quote the two passages mentioned above:

> "When they therefore were come together, they asked of Him, saying, Lord wilt Thou at this time restore the kingdom to Israel?"
>
> "And now I stand and am judged for the hope of the promise made of God unto OUR FATHERS; unto which promise our TWELVE TRIBES instantly serving God day and night hope to come. For which hope's sake, King Agrippa, I am accused of the Jews".

If the evidence of these four crucial passages Acts 1:6, 26:6,7, Romans 15:12,13 and Acts 28:20 is not sufficient to prove to our critics that the hope that covers this whole period of the Acts, together with the churches that were

called into being while the Acts was in making, is one and the same, nothing we can add can be expected to bring conviction, but we cannot let the matter pass without registering our concern at the blindness and obstinacy of any believer who could so react to these statements of Holy Writ. If Acts 28 be not a dispensational boundary, there will be no change in the hope of the believer who comes under the teaching of Ephesians, "the one hope" of *that* calling will still be "the hope of Israel" which we sincerely trust every reader will say "IS ABSURD", for so it is, and consequently we have provided yet another proof that Acts 28 is of critical dispensational importance.

Before we give an analysis of Acts 28:23-31, there are several important items that claim attention. We return to Acts 1:6 and note that the real point of the Apostles' enquiry, is not "will the kingdom *ever be* restored to Israel?" or "will the kingdom be transferred *to the church*?" it was the question of *time*, "at this time". As believing Jews, they would have entertained no doubt about the literal nature of the kingdom, and as a company just recently instructed by the Risen Christ out of the Law, the Prophets and the Psalms, they would have had no room for doubt at all. There is intentional vagueness in the answer of the Lord, but a vagueness that pertained to one feature only "at this time". Whether the kingdom would be restored to Israel at that time, or whether Israel would persist in their non-repentance and so pass out into the *Lo-ammi* condition spoken of by Hosea could not be revealed to them.

> "It is not for you to know the times or the seasons, which the Father hath put in His own power" (Acts 1:7).

This possibility of a "gap" or a deferment is of extreme importance and involves the examination of several passages of Scripture. First let us note the parable of the marriage of the king's son, given in Matthew 22. It will be seen that those who refused to come at the first invitation, were not cut off, but pardoned for their rudeness, and a second and fuller invitation was sent to them:

> "Tell them which are bidden (or them that have been bidden) Behold, I have prepared My dinner: My oxen and My fatlings are killed, and all things are ready: come unto the marriage" (Matt.22:4).

The fact that the sequel to this second refusal ends with the burning of their city, shows us that A.D.70 is in view, a view repeated in the words of Matthew 23:38:

"Behold, your house is left unto you desolate".

Here in this parable we have indicated the original preaching of the gospel of the kingdom as seen in operation throughout the earthly ministry of the Son of God, and then the sending of a second message to the self-same people, but with the added fact that Christ could then be preached as having died and risen, "all things" being indeed "ready". This second invitation was given at Pentecost and remained open until the hope of Israel was set aside at Acts 28, to be followed in a few years by the literal "burning of their city". Associated with this failure is another related feature, found by comparing Acts 28 with Matthew 13. Both passages quote Isaiah 6:9,10 and both quotations agree in every word, even where they make a slight departure from the Septuagint. The quotation in Matthew 13 is introduced by the words "and in them is *fulfilled* the prophecy of Isaiah", whereas the Apostle says "*Well spake* the Holy Ghost by Isaiah the prophet unto our fathers". First we observe that the strongest term is used in Matthew 13 for "fulfil", namely *anapleroo*, consequently Israel had so far manifested that hardness and blindness as to have reached the place where their conversion and healing had become impossible – yet this same passage is repeated in Acts 28. The reason for this repetition is obvious.

An objection based upon Matthew 13 regarding the fulfilment of Isaiah 6 in Acts 28 is a dangerous weapon and likely to act as a boomerang, for if it be maintained that the doom pronounced by Isaiah was fulfilled at the time when the Lord quoted this passage, and that no extension of time under the mercy of God can be admitted, then those who thus teach must not resent the accusation that must be laid against them that in their view Paul himself must be criticised and accused of falsely applying a Scripture that was already fulfilled and done with.

De Jure and De Facto

The parable already considered shows that *a second opportunity* was given to the rejectors of their Messiah and in line with this the Gospels record the prayer of the Saviour from the cross, "Father forgive them" which it would be blasphemy to say went unanswered. The long-suffering of God continued throughout the whole period covered by the Acts of the Apostles, but the attitude of the Jewish leaders at Rome showed that national repentance was still a long way off, and so the judgment that had been *de jure* in Matthew 13 became *de facto* in Acts 28. Once again we see that Acts 28 is a passage of climax. The sequel to the pronouncement of Matthew 13:14,15 is that a new expression becomes necessary. No longer does the Lord speak of the "kingdom of heaven" but He speaks of those unrevealed aspects of that kingdom which He calls "The mysteries of the kingdom of heaven" and these mysteries include Satanic opposition. Immediately following the final application of Isaiah 6:9,10 to Israel, the apostle Paul makes known the hitherto unrevealed dispensation of "THE MYSTERY" (Eph.3:1-13 R.V.). It is essential to know that the word "mystery" in the Greek does not mean something that is puzzling; our English word "Secret" is the equivalent.

To show the lengths that men of God will go when once they are in full cry after what "they call heresy" consider the following extract:

> "In his haste to answer me, Mr. C. H. Welch has overlooked that Acts 26:17 is part of a recital by the Apostle Paul of an event which took place, not at Cæsarea (25:13) but on the road to Damascus (26:12); which event is first recorded in Acts 9. even before the Apostle Peter unlocked the Kingdom to the Gentiles! This means going back further than any disciple of Dr.Bullinger has yet done".

Let the reader read the whole of Acts 9, and note every word there uttered to Paul by the Lord on the way to Damascus:

> "I am Jesus Whom thou persecutest: it is hard for thee to kick against the pricks".

"Arise, and go into the city, and it shall be told thee what thou must do" (Acts 9:5,6).

These words comprise ALL that the Lord is recorded as saying to Paul in Acts 9. Yet dear reader you are to consider that these words were "uttered even before the Apostle Peter unlocked the kingdom to the Gentiles!" Can you not see in this an evident perversion of judgment? What is there in this record of Acts 9 that suggests the crisis of Acts 28, or of the mystery that supervenes, or of a future revelation and commission to the apostle Paul? In verses 15,16 we have the words of the Lord *to Ananias*, which words found their fulfilment in Acts 13-26, but not a hint is given in Acts 9 of a subsequent visit by the Lord or about a subsequent commission, for the simple reason that that second commission hinges upon Israel's failure, and is the ministry of the Mystery. The very silence in Acts 9, and the breaking of that silence when Paul had become a prisoner in Acts 26 is an eloquent testimony that we are facing a dispensational crisis. The same reason why the Lord did not answer the question "wilt Thou AT THIS TIME restore", is the reason why all reference to this second commission is omitted in Acts 9. Only after Paul needed to be delivered from the "Gentiles" as well as from the people of Israel do the words apply "Unto whom now I send thee". Where in Acts 9 did Paul need to be delivered from the Gentiles?

The Gifts of the Spirit

Pentecost cannot be thought of since the great day recorded in Acts 2, apart from spiritual gifts, and by spiritual gifts we mean not the gifts in grace bestowed to believers in all dispensations, but those miraculous gifts that were such a feature in the church during the period covered by the Acts. We can say, for we have demonstrated it, that the appeal to the Old Testament Scriptures is a characteristic of the period covering Acts 1-28, and we can say with equal assurance, that the hope of Israel which occurs in the first chapter persists unto the last chapter of the Acts. We have but to turn to Acts 28:1-9 to see that the gifts specified in Mark 16 and which were an abundant possession of the church in Corinth, are a characteristic of the whole Acts period. Pentecostal

gifts on the day of Pentecost were confined largely to the gift of tongues, enabling untaught men to speak the Word of God in the tongue in which their several hearers were born, with which must be coupled the gift of prophesying (Acts 2: 1-11,17,18). Unspecified "wonders and signs were done by the apostles" according to Acts 2:43, and the gift of miraculous healing is manifest in the healing of the lame man, as recorded in Acts 3. The rulers of the people, who were violently antagonistic to the apostles' witness, confessed "Indeed a notable miracle hath been done by them is manifest ... we cannot deny it" (Acts 4:16). The apostles, after being threatened by the council and let go, prayed "And now, Lord, behold their threatenings: and grant unto Thy servants, that with all boldness they may speak Thy word, by stretching forth Thine hand to heal; and that signs and wonders may be done by the name of Thy holy child Jesus" (Acts 4:29, 30), which prayer was followed by a special visitation of the Holy Spirit (Acts 4:31). Peter not only had the gift of healing, he caused both Ananias and Sapphira to be stricken with death, which dread miracle was followed once again by "signs and wonders" by the hands of the apostles (Acts 5:1-13). And so the story unfolds. Stephen "full of faith and power, did great wonders and miracles among the people" (Acts 6:8); Philip likewise did miracles which included the casting out of unclean spirits, and the healing of those taken with palsy and who were lame (Acts 8:5-7) and the gift of the Holy Ghost was conferred upon believers by the laying on of the hands of the apostles. A man named AEneas who had kept his bed for eight years, sick of the palsy, was healed by Peter, who also raised to life a woman named Dorcas who had died and had been laid out in her chamber (Acts 9:32-41).

Enough has been brought forward to prove beyond dispute that the early church from Pentecost onwards was mightily endowed with supernatural gifts. Has any reader of this article spoken a foreign language without learning or effort? Has any reader healed a man lame from his birth? Has any reader stricken a man with immediate death? Has any reader raised either a man or a woman from the dead? If not, can any believer honestly and before God believe that there has been no break in the dispensational character of God's dealings since the day of Pentecost? These spiritual gifts, said Mark in his gospel, "SHALL follow them that believe" (Mark 16:17)

so that any one claiming to belong to the Pentecostal church, and who has not these gifts, HAS NO EVIDENCE that he is a believer at all! We are not permitted to speak of spiritual gifts in such general terms that they cease to be specifically miraculous:

> "In My name shall they cast out devils; they shall speak with new tongues: They shall take up serpents; and if they drink any deadly thing, it shall not hurt them; they shall lay hands on the sick, and they shall recover" (Mark 16:17,18).

"These signs" DID follow, but they DO NOT follow now, and for this there can be but one of two reasons, either:

(1) The church has lost the power by reason of poverty of faith, or

(2) A new dispensation has come in, in which evidential miraculous gifts have no place.

Seeing that the teaching of Ephesians, Philippians and Colossians is on the highest spiritual plane discoverable in the Scriptures, and that the apostle Paul himself sends a prescription because of Timothy's "often infirmities" the charge of poverty of faith cannot be maintained. One question however must still be put and answered. If Acts 28 be the dispensational frontier, we must expect these miraculous gifts to be in full exercise up to the end of the record. Let us therefore turn to Acts 28 with this in view. We learn from the opening verses, that a viper fastened on the hand of Paul, who shook the beast into the fire *and felt no harm*. That he ought to have "swollen, or fallen down dead suddenly" is evident from the attitude of the islanders (Acts 28:3-6). Here was one item specified in Mark 16 that persisted to the end of the Acts. This miracle led to another, and a case of dysentery (a bloody flux) was instantly healed (Acts 28:8). No further proof is needed to demonstrate that Acts 28 is a dispensational frontier, except it be to note the complete absence of miracle in the Prison Epistles. A handkerchief or an apron brought from the body of the Apostle were sufficient to accomplish a miraculous cure in the Acts period (Acts 19:11,12), yet after the dispensational frontier is passed, this same apostle mourns that one valued fellow-servant was sick unto death (Phil.2:26), another was left at Miletum sick (2 Tim.4:20) and Timothy was urged to take a

little wine for his stomach's sake and his "often infirmities" (1 Tim.5:23). The signs of Mark 16 did *not* follow them that believed after Acts 28. We believe that any fair minded reader will already have received sufficient evidence to give him seriously to think regarding the claim that Acts 28 constitutes a dispensational frontier. We have, however, one further item of truth to bring forward to complete the weight of evidence, and that is the place that Israel occupies in the period of the Acts as compared with their place in the prison epistles.

The Place given to Israel, "Unto You First"

If we go back into the period immediately before the day of Pentecost and to that portion of the Gospels that cover the earthly ministry of the Saviour, we shall discover that there Israel was not "first" but "alone". "He came to His own". "These twelve (i.e. the apostles, verses 2 to 4) Jesus sent forth, and commanded them saying, GO NOT into the way of the Gentiles, and into any city of the Samaritans enter ye not: but GO RATHER to the lost sheep of the house of Israel" (Matt.10:5,6). With such an explicit command before one, how can a believer maintain that the Gentile has a place in the kingdom ministry of the gospel according to Matthew? Now, lest we might think that this prohibition was but local and transient, we discover it still in force even after the revelation of the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven:

> "I am NOT SENT but unto the lost sheep of the house of Israel" (Matt.15:24).

Here again, the "faith" of the Gentile who declares that the Gospel of Matthew is truth for the church is challenged. The Saviour said "I am not sent" – shall we adopt the attitude of Peter and say "Be it far from Thee Lord"? If we do, we too will savour of the things of man.

The apostles were bidden to tarry in the city of Jerusalem until they were endued with power from on high, and to adopt the language of the parable "Tell them that had been bidden ... come" (Matt.22:4). "Beginning at Jerusalem" (Luke 24:47) was the order. Here, the order to GO NOT to the Gentiles is altered to GO FIRST to the Jew. And this is how Peter expresses the condition in the days immediately

following Pentecost:

> "Unto YOU FIRST God, having raised up His Son Jesus, SENT Him to bless you, in turning away every one of you from his iniquities" (Acts 3:26).

Let the reader search Acts 2 and 3, and note those addressed. They were "Jews", "Men of Judæa", "Men of Israel", "Men and brethren", "All the house of Israel", "Ye and your rulers", "Repent ye ... He shall send Jesus Christ, which before was preached UNTO YOU", "Ye are the children of the prophets, and of the covenant which God made unto our fathers". God, is "The God of our fathers".

If we keep to the inspired record, we shall have to admit NO GENTILE took any part in the day of Pentecost, and Peter's own confessed attitude, "Ye know how that it is an unlawful thing for a man that is a JEW to keep company, or come unto one of another nation", uttered some time after Pentecost makes it clear that *he* would not have tolerated a Gentile at the feast of Pentecost. In the same way we read that those who were scattered abroad upon the persecution that arose about Stephen, preached the Word, TO NONE BUT UNTO THE JEWS ONLY (Acts 11:19). The fact that when the apostles and brethren that were in Judæa heard that the Gentiles had also received the word of God, they challenged Peter for going in to men uncircumcised and eating with them (Acts 11:3), shows that the exclusion of the Gentile up to Acts 10 was not the personal prejudice of a bigoted few, but the conscientious attitude of the whole apostolate and brethren of the day. An indication that the exclusive pre-eminence of Israel was waning is revealed in Paul's address at Antioch.

> "Men and brethren, children of the stock of Abraham, and *whosoever among you* feareth God, TO YOU is the word of this salvation sent" (Acts 13:26).

If we turn to the epistles of Paul written during the period covered by the Acts, we shall find that Israel or the Jew is given the first place. "To the Jew first" (Rom.1:16) cannot be explained away as being merely a statement of chronological sequence, for in chapter 2:9,10 the phrase occurs again with significant meaning. After the Apostle has insisted

that in connection with the basic matters of sin and salvation "there is no difference" (Rom.3:22, 10:12) he devotes a large section of the eleventh chapter to show most clearly that there existed *a great difference* between the Jew and the Gentile believer, using the figure of the olive tree for Israel, and the figure of a wild olive grafted contrary to nature for the Gentile believers. Here, in the last and most fundamental of Paul's epistles written during the Acts period, the Jew is most certainly FIRST. This priority extends to the frontier of Acts 28. Even though when writing to the church at Rome the Apostle had expressed his longing to see them, being debtor alike to Jew and to Greek, nevertheless, when he did reach Rome, it was the chief of the Jews that he called together, devoting a whole day persuading them concerning Jesus, both out of the law of Moses, and out of the prophets, from morning till evening (Acts 28:23), and not until these representatives of Israel acted in a similar way to the way in which their brethren in Judæa had acted, does Isaiah 6:9,10 appear for the last time in Scripture and immediately following this prophecy of crisis, the Apostle declares that the salvation of God was SENT UNTO the Gentiles (Acts 28:28). The moment we traverse the frontier of Acts 28, Israel, the Jew, their fathers and their covenants, their promises and their hope drop out of view. The territory covered by the Prison Epistles deals with a Mystery or Secret, never before revealed or made known, with a company in which the priority of the Jew cannot exist, with a promise never made to Abraham, Isaac or Jacob, with a sphere "in heavenly places" hitherto unconnected with the inheritance of any believer whatsoever.

We have in the pursuit of these four items, established that the Acts of the Apostles is to be considered one territory, that the frontier line is drawn at Acts 28, and that the Prison ministry of Paul is what he claims it to be, the dispensation of the Mystery (Eph.3:9 R.V., Col.1:25,26).

A frontier naturally has two sides, one facing and ending one territory, the other facing and commencing another. There is also between these two sides a strip which is neutral. This feature is demonstrable in Acts 28:23-31. On the Pentecostal side of Acts 28, the teaching of the Apostle was directed to the "chief of the Jews", it is "they" who appointed

the time of meeting (Acts 28:17-23), the place being Paul's lodgings. Here the subject was that aspect of the kingdom of God that concerned "Jesus" and which could be supported by and developed from the law of Moses, and the prophets, where he found enough material to occupy the whole day "from morning till evening". On the other side of the frontier, the one that faced the dispensation of the Mystery, Paul preached the kingdom of God, and taught those things which concerned "The Lord Jesus Christ", not "Jesus" be it noted, but this teaching could not be expounded out of the law and prophets, *for it was never revealed to any one until it was entrusted to Paul, the prisoner of Jesus Christ for the Gentiles* (Eph.3:1-13). On the Pentecostal side of the frontier, Paul had been met by continual opposition and persecution. This attitude is marked in the opening of his ministry in Acts 13:45 where we find that the Jews being filled with envy spake against the things spoken by Paul, contradicting and blaspheming, so that at that earliest testimony, he had turned *locally* to the Gentiles (Acts 13:46,47). On the other side of the frontier, no such opposition is discoverable. The Jewish people, as a nation before God, passed off the scene, the closing words "no man forbidding him" (Acts 28:31) being a direct reference to the opposition of the Jew, the word translated "forbidding" *akolutos* being found without the negative in 1 Thessalonians 2:16 *koluo*: "Forbidding us to speak to the Gentiles":

> "So they would fill up the measure of their sins to the last drop! But the wrath is on them to the bitter end" (1 Thess.2:16, Moffatt).

Here, in Acts 28 that "bitter end" was reached, and Israel's nineteen centuries of exile began.

When Isaiah 6:9,10 was quoted by the Lord, He declared that it was then "fulfilled" (Matt.13:14) using the strong form of the word. When Paul quoted the same passage in Acts 28:25-27, he does not use the word "fulfilled". The judgment pronounced in Matthew 13, was *de jure*, in Acts 28 it became *de facto*. Between the pronouncement of doom and its fall, there intervened the prayer of the cross, the long suffering of God, the forecast of this suspended judgment and opportunity to repent being given in the twofold invitation of Matthew 22:2,4, and even then, at Acts 28, the fall of

Jerusalem foreshadowed in Matthew 22:7 and the destruction of the temple spoken of in Matthew 23:38, did not take place until A.D.70, some five or six years after the all day conference with the Jews in Rome. If God could threaten the overthrow of Nineveh within forty days, and yet "repent" upon the "repentance" of the Ninevites, is it to be denied that He would react in the same way, had Israel repented when called upon so to do during the period covered by the Acts? The words "they agreed not" and "they departed" have reference to Israel's "Lo-ammi" condition, and have particular reference to their covenant relationship with the Lord. *Apoluo* "to send away" also means to "divorce" a wife as can be seen in Matthew 1:19; 5:31,32 where the first occurrence of the verb comes in the New Testament. *Sumphoneo* "to agree" is connected with marriage relationship (1 Cor.7:5). This dismissal of Israel spoken of both in the law and the prophets, was foreshadowed in Acts 13:40, "Beware therefore, lest that come upon you, which is spoken of in the prophets" and symbolised in the miracle that is recorded in Acts 13: 8-11, where a Jew is blinded and a Gentile believed. At Acts 13, where Paul's ministry commences, one Jew was blinded, one Gentile and his house believed, and a warning was given to beware lest a judgment threatened in the prophets should fall upon them. In Acts 28 the nation is blinded, the Gentiles are the objects of salvation, the doom of Isaiah 6 falls.

The salvation of God, consequent upon Israel's blindness, is the third specific "sending" that we find in the Acts, and keeps pace with dispensational development, for a dispensation commences when the chosen messenger is "sent" and not before.

The Three "Sendings" of the Acts

The First sending. Jerusalem.	To Israel only.	Acts 3:26 "Unto you first". Acts 13:46 "First ... to you".
The Second sending. Antioch.	To Jew and Gentile.	Acts 13:26 "To you is the word of this salvation sent".
The Third sending. Rome.	To the Gentile only.	Acts 28:28 "The salvation of God is sent unto the Gentiles".

For "two whole years" while Paul's imprisonment at Rome lasted, he received all that came in unto him, preaching and teaching the truth especially designed to fill the great parenthesis of Israel's blindness. During that imprisonment, he wrote Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians and Philemon, the comparative study of which, gives us all that Scripture reveals of the wondrous revelation of the Mystery. The verb "to send" employed in Acts 28:28, is *apestale* and is in the aorist passive of *apostello*, the word that gives us the substantive "apostle". It is a sad reflection on human nature, even when it has come under the influence of redeeming love, to note, that those who have supported the translation of the aorist as being *timeless*, and so represented it many times by the word "is", suddenly find cause to raise an objection to our teaching, because Acts 28:28 should be translated "was sent". This of course is no new discovery, readers who use either Rotherham, Darby, Cunnington, Weymouth or Moffatt, have been aware of the fact long before this outcry was made, and the correction is also made in the margin of *The Companion Bible*, and so is recognised by all who are labelled "Bullingerites" (what a sign of poverty of argument this labelling is! The writer of these lines follows the spirit of Dr. Bullinger most when he differs most from that man of God). Seeing that in 1909 the editor of *The Berean Expositor* joined forces with Dr. Bullinger at the commencement of his work on *The Companion Bible*, this "discovery" at Acts 28:28 by our critics is somewhat naive.

The fact that the salvation of God "was sent" could be discovered by any intelligent reader of the Acts of the Apostles, for in his defence before Agrippa, the Apostle not only says so, but tells when the commission was given to him. The essential feature is, that while the Apostle knew that he was to receive a second commission and a second visit from the Lord, no hint was given him or recorded in the Scriptures until the rejection of Israel was imminent, and the Mystery ripe for revelation. One has but to read the twentieth chapter of the Acts to see that one ministry was ending and another was in prospect. All the Apostle knew at that juncture was that this new ministry was associated with "prison" and that he would see the face of the Ephesians no more. At Acts 26 he at last knew what the new commission was and declared before Agrippa that the long promised appearance of the

Lord had now taken place.

The Word "Now" of Acts 26

Here are his words:

> "He said, I am Jesus Whom thou persecutest. But rise, and stand upon thy feet: for *I have appeared* unto thee for this purpose, to make thee a minister and a witness BOTH of *these things* which thou hast seen, and of *those things* in the which *I will appear* unto thee; delivering thee from the people, and from the Gentiles, UNTO WHOM NOW I SEND THEE" (Acts 26:15-17).

When therefore the Apostle said at the dismissal of Israel "the salvation of God *was sent* unto the Gentiles" he referred to this commission which at the time of his standing before Agrippa was "NOW", and the use of the past in Acts 28:28 alters not by one hair's breadth the insistence we have made on Acts 28 as the dispensational frontier.

The "Lo-Ammi" Condition of Israel

Coincident with the growing conviction that these evidences for the "Frontier" position of Acts 28 induce, is the prophecy of Hosea, which makes it clear that at some time in their history, Israel must go into a state indicated by the word *lo-ammi* "not My people", a condition that could only be resolved by the full restoration of Israel as a nation and people; in other words, the restoring again of the kingdom to Israel, as expressed in Acts 1:6. There is no other point of time in the record of the New Testament that fits all the requirements of Hosea's prophecy *before* Acts 28, and inasmuch as a few years after Acts 28 Jerusalem was destroyed, there can be no other point of time *after* it that will fulfil all Scriptural requirements. Let those who deny that Israel became *lo-ammi* at Acts 28, tell us when that event happened. Let us examine this prophecy of Hosea and see what the conditions of this *lo-ammi* position are.

The Hebrew words *lo-ammi* mean "not My people" and is the symbolic name given to one of the prophet Hosea's children. "Call his name Lo-ammi", the reason and purport

of this name being "For ye are not My People and I will not be your God" (Hos.1:9). The verse that follows makes it clear that however long the rejection may last it will not be for ever, for it looks forward to the day of Israel's restoration and to the fulfilment of the promise made to Abraham that his seed should be as the sand of the sea for multitude. The second chapter ends on this high note of restoration. Israel is to be betrothed in righteousness for ever, the *lo-ammi* condition is to be reversed, the Lord will say "Thou art My People", and they will say, "Thou art my God" (Hos.2: 18-23). From the days of Hosea, until the scattering of Israel at the end of the Acts, no such condition has been recorded that fulfils all that Hosea has predicted. Under the New Covenant Jeremiah declares:

> "Behold the days come, saith the Lord, that I will sow" (see the name Jezreel in Hos.2:18 where this sowing and this covenant include both Israel and the beast of the field) ... I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel, and with the house of Judah" (Jer. 31:27-37).

In the third chapter of Hosea, the prophet throws further light on this *lo-ammi* condition, after telling his wife that she would "abide" as a sequestered woman (see Deut.21:13), he proceeds:

> "The children of Israel shall abide many days without a KING, and without a PRINCE, and without a SACRIFICE, and without an IMAGE, and without an EPHOD, and without TERAPHIM".

During the last nineteen hundred years, since the rejection of their true KING, Israel have had no territory and no king, yet by reason of their dispersal in many lands, no Ruler has been able to claim their allegiance. Since the destruction of the temple at Jerusalem that took place in A.D.70, soon after Acts 28, the Priestly office in Israel has become a cypher. Yet, on the other hand Israel through all these dark years have never again lapsed into idolatry. The introduction of the teraphim over against the ephod, supports the idea that these were ancestral tablets, no one being permitted to officiate as a Priest in Israel who could not produce his genealogy (Neh. 7:64) and as these genealogical records which were stored in the temple perished in the destruction of the city soon after Acts 28, the position of the Priest in Israel lost all significance.

We are assured however that after this period of sequestration and suspension, Israel shall seek the Lord and David their king "in the latter days" (Hos.3:5), which latter days by all the signs around us are drawing very near. The actual length of Israel's blindness is unrecorded, Paul speaks of it as a "mystery" (Rom.11:25) and this period of the mystery of Israel's blindness is parallel with the period and character of that phase of the kingdom of heaven, called "The mysteries of the kingdom of heaven", both aspects terminating at the same moment, Israel's restoration.

In this challenge we have sought to establish the idea that a frontier lies between the hope of Israel at the end of the Acts and its realisation in the yet future, the dispensation of the Mystery being a parenthesis, unrecorded in the law and the prophets, and is to be likened to a newly-discovered country, hitherto uncharted and unknown. Its calling, constitution and hope must necessarily differ much from that in which Israel is dominant, and the reader will search in vain for the names of Abraham, Isaac or Jacob in these Prison Epistles. The New Covenant which had an incipient beginning in the period of the Acts, has no place in the dispensation of the Mystery. The ordinance of baptism in water, gives place to the one baptism of the Unity of the Spirit, and the memorial supper that remembered the blood of the "New Covenant" finds no place in a calling where the chief human contracting party of that covenant is in disgrace and banishment. The prophet Hosea foretold that Israel would become *lo-ammi* "Not My people", and that there would come a day when God would not be their God. It is inconceivable that the upheaval caused by Israel's defection, should make no difference to the believing Gentile, for up to the end of the Acts "salvation" was of the Jews (John 4:22), the Gentile having a place dispensationally only as a wild olive graft contrary to nature into the true olive tree, from which some of the natural branches had been broken off, and into which God was able to graft them in again. The church of the Mystery and membership of the One Body have no possible association with the olive tree of Israel. For the reason why this figure of the wild olive was introduced into Romans 11, and much else on the subject of Israel's place and foreseen blindness, the reader should consult the book *Just and the Justifier* (published by *The Berean Publishing Trust*).

We conclude this survey of the position of Acts 28 by exhibiting the structure of the section. This can and should be tested by the reader line by line. If any item is wrongly placed, if there appears the slightest evidence that the Scriptures have been forced into bearing false witness, then this structure must be rejected. If however it is seen to be an honest exhibition of what is actually found in Acts 28:23-31, we hope that the reader will accept it and its obvious conclusions.

The Structure of Acts 28:23-31

A a 23 Chief of the Jews. Paul's lodging. The day
b Paul "expounded" the Kingdom of God
c Persuading concerning "Jesus"
d Out of the law and prophets
e From morning to evening
B f 24,25 They agreed not among themselves
g They departed
C h 25 The word of the *Holy Ghost*
i 26 Go unto *this people*
j 26 Hear ... not understand
D k 27 Isaiah 6:10. The Crisis
C h 28 The salvation of *God*
i Sent unto the *Gentiles*
j They will hear it
B g 29 The Jews departed
f Great reasoning among themselves
A a 30 All come to Paul's hired house. The two years
b 31 Paul "preaches" the Kingdom of God
c Teaches concerning "the Lord Jesus Christ"
d With all confidence. *No reference to Old Testament*
e No man forbidding him

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Grapes of Eshcol

We conclude with a few of the outstanding features that lie the other side of the frontier in the epistle to the Ephesians, features that are unique:

"All spiritual blessings" (1:3)
"In heavenly places" (1:3)
"*Before* the foundation of the world" (1:4)
"Accepted in the Beloved" (1:6)
"The fulness of Him that filleth all in all" (1:23)
"Made to sit together in heavenly places" (2:6)
"The middle wall broken down" (2:14)
"Of the twain one man created" (2:15)
"The both reconciled to God in one body" (2:16)
"The mystery made known to Paul" (3:3)

"And Caleb stilled the people before Moses, and said, Let us go up at once, and possess it; for we are well able to overcome it ... but all the congregation bade stone them with stones" (Num.13: 30; 14:10).

What is your attitude? do you take the line of Caleb or of those who refuse the testimony of the grapes of Eshcol? May the Lord give every reader that true Berean spirit that searches to see whether the things taught are so, and if they are, to accept them in "full assurance of faith".

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