

# NONE OTHER THINGS

## A study of Acts 26:22

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### PREFACE

In 1938 Mr. C.H.Welch wrote a series of Bible studies for the Berean Expositor on Acts 26:22, '**saying none other things than those which the prophets and Moses did say should come**'. These words were spoken by the apostle Paul to Agrippa, and they are of great dispensational importance, so much so that we have decided to reprint them.

There are nine of these articles in Volumes 28 and 29 of *The Berean Expositor*, under the heading : -

NONE OTHER THINGS.

## NONE OTHER THINGS

`Saying none other things than those which the prophets and Moses did say should come' (Acts 26:22).

No. 1

**Paul's defence must be understood as literally true.**

When the apostle declares, in Colossians 1:26, that the Mystery which had been hid from ages and from generations, has now been made manifest, his words are a commentary upon the essential nature of a `mystery' or `secret'. We shall search in vain the pages of the prison epistles (Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians, 2 Timothy, Philemon) for any references to the law and the prophets, in so far as the distinctive revelation of the Mystery is concerned.

Speaking of his conversion and commission on the road to Damascus, the apostle tells us that the Lord said to him:

`... 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 26:16,17).

The word `both' here cannot be set aside; it indicates two ministries. We read of `*these* things' and `*those* things'; of the `*things which thou hast seen*', and the `*things in the which I will appear unto thee*'. Here obviously we have two ministries. Further, while the apostle soon found that his own `people', Israel, were opposed to him, he also found, during the early part of his ministry, that the Gentiles, especially the Roman soldiers,

were often his protectors. Proceeding from this statement, the apostle leads on to the verse cited at the head of this study.

We must remember, in reading this passage, that Paul is a bondman, that he has appealed unto Caesar, and that the only reason for this special hearing before Agrippa, is that Festus, the new Roman Governor, is in a predicament -for, he says: 'It seemeth to me unreasonable to send a prisoner, and not withal to signify the crimes laid against him' (Acts 25:27). Paul, therefore, has to offer a defence, and, knowing that the Jewish religion, with its temple worship and sacred books, is a religion sanctioned by Roman authority, his defence is that he has not gone outside the teaching of the law and the prophets, and so has committed no crime against the laws of Rome.

With regard to his first ministry which he had fulfilled, the apostle says:

'... I was not disobedient unto the heavenly vision: but shewed first unto them of Damascus, and at Jerusalem, and throughout all the coasts of Judaea, and then to the Gentiles, that they should repent and turn to God, and do works meet for repentance' (Acts 26:19,20).

This is reminiscent of the apostle's words to the Thessalonians:

'... Ye turned to God from idols to serve the living and true God; and to wait for His Son from heaven' (1 Thess. 1:9,10).

Returning to Acts 26, we read:

'For these causes the Jews caught me in the temple, and went about to kill me' (verse 21).

The Jews did not accuse Paul of denying the teaching of the law and the prophets. They unjustly charged him with

desecrating the temple by taking a Gentile into it (Acts 21:28); but the fact that they found him in the temple, and that he had gone there to refute the charge made against him that he taught the Jews who were among the Gentiles to forsake Moses (Acts 21:21), would be evidence that his teaching was in harmony with Old Testament Scriptures.

`Having therefore obtained help of God, 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).

It has been suggested that we must not press these words too far, and that all that Paul intended to convey was that he was not an irresponsible iconoclast\*. When a man of ordinary honesty is making a statement before a judge we expect his statement to be true, and without double meaning. If such can be said of the ordinary man, how much more should we expect the apostle of truth to speak with great plainness of speech. If we were to find, in face of this statement, that his early epistles contained teaching that neither the prophets nor Moses had said should come, then it would be difficult to offer any defence. We intend to examine the apostle's early ministry, as found in the epistles written before Acts 28, in order to discover whether or not his statement before Agrippa was literally true.

His own extension of the statement is given in Acts 26:23 :

`That Christ should suffer, and that He should be the first that should rise from the dead, and should shew light unto the people, and to the Gentiles'.

This refers particularly to the gospel which Paul had preached. A little earlier we read:

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\*Breaker of images or idols.

`And now I stand and am judged for the hope of the promise made of God unto our fathers' (Acts 26:6).

This refers to the character of the hope which was in operation during the Acts period, and which is to be found in the epistles of that time.

While we are dealing with the question of Paul's defence, let us turn back to the preceding chapter and read his statement before Festus:

`... Neither against the law of the Jews, neither against the temple, nor yet against Caesar, have I offended anything at all' (Acts 25:8)

Before Felix, in the previous chapter, the apostle had said:

`This I confess unto thee, that after the way which they call heresy, so worship I the God of my fathers, believing all things which are written in the law and in the prophets: and have hope toward God, which they themselves also allow, that there shall be a resurrection of the dead, both of the just and unjust' (Acts 24:14,15).

On the surface it appears that the apostle intended to convey quite literally that up to the time of his imprisonment in Caesarea his ministry had been but the legitimate expansion of Old Testament prophecy, whether with reference to the gospel, the hope, outpouring of spiritual gifts, or the inclusion of the Gentiles. None of these things has any reference to the Mystery as made known for the first time in the epistles to the Ephesians and Colossians.

If in all Paul's ministry up to the date of Acts 26 he had said `none other things than those that the prophets and Moses did say should come', then it is both vain and unbelieving to look for the Mystery in these early epistles. If upon examination it should be found that the early epistles do contain truth which

neither the prophets nor Moses did say should come, then there will have to be a drastic readjustment of our teaching. At the moment, however, our position is that the Mystery is not found in these early epistles, and that they belong to a different dispensation. Salvation by the blood of Christ, and justification by faith, are taught in both sets of epistles, but these are foundation truths, and do not touch the subject of the Mystery. Until a man is saved, no dispensational position is possible for him, either in the earthly kingdom, the heavenly city, or 'far above all'.

So far as the Acts of the Apostles is concerned, our examination enables us to affirm that there at least, the apostle is found saying *'none other things than those which the prophets and Moses did say should come'*

## No. 2

### **The gospel as preached by Paul was in accordance with the testimony of the law and the prophets.**

It would probably not be easy to find complete agreement among our readers as to the chronological order of Paul's epistles. This question does not, however, influence our present investigation, and we will therefore take the canonical order and commence with the Epistle to the Romans though here we may all be in agreement that it was the last epistle written before the change of dispensation. If we can prove that this epistle fulfils the apostle's claim as cited at the head of this booklet, the case is practically settled, for if the latest epistle of this series adheres closely to the law and the prophets, the earlier ones must have done so also.



We commence reading this epistle, and in the opening verses we are faced with the fact that 'the gospel of God', to which the apostle had been 'separated', was 'promised afore by His prophets in the Holy Scriptures'. This gospel was 'for obedience of the faith among all nations' (1:5), and its power was the provision of righteousness by faith - a provision to be found promised in the prophets:

'... As it is written, The just shall live by faith' (Rom. 1:17; cf Hab. 2:4).

After having proved both Jew and Gentile to be under sin, giving in Romans 3:13-18 a continuous and composite series of quotations from the Psalms, the apostle returns to the subject of the provision of righteousness by faith, which constitutes the basis of the gospel:

'But now the righteousness of God without the law is manifested, being witnessed by the law and the prophets' (Rom. 3:21).

This righteousness by faith belongs to the believer by imputation, and in Romans 4, both Abraham and David are quoted:

'For what saith the Scripture? Abraham believed God, and it was counted unto him for righteousness' (verse 3).

'Even as David also describeth the blessedness of the man, unto whom God imputeth righteousness without works, saying, Blessed are they whose iniquities are forgiven, and whose sins are covered' (verses 6,7).

Pursuing this theme, we come to Romans 10. There the apostle speaks of Christ as being the 'end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth', and declares that it was 'ignorance' on the part of Israel that led them to attempt to produce a righteousness of their own. For even though Moses

described the righteousness which is of the law - 'That the man which doeth those things shall live by them'; in Deuteronomy 30:12-14 he is equally insistent upon the nature of the gospel message (Rom. 10:6-10), as also are the prophets: 'For the Scripture saith, Whosoever believeth on Him shall not be ashamed' (verse 11).

Moses, the Psalms and Isaiah are quoted in the remainder of Romans 10 in proof of the fact that 'faith cometh by hearing', and that the extension of the gospel to the Gentile was intended to provoke Israel to jealousy.

Coming now to 1 Corinthians, we find the preaching of the cross confirmed by quotations from Isaiah and Jeremiah:

'That, according as it is written, He that glorieth, let him glory in the Lord' (1 Cor. 1:31).

In 1 Corinthians 5 Christ is spoken of as 'our Passover' and in chapter 15 as 'the Firstfruits'. Both of these terms refer back to the law of Moses.

In 1 Corinthians 15:3,4, the apostle affirms:

'I delivered unto you first of all that which I also received, how that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures; and that He was buried, and that He rose again the third day according to the Scriptures'.

The Epistle to the Galatians insists upon the fact that the gospel is entirely in harmony with the Old Testament Scriptures:

'The Scripture, foreseeing that God would justify the heathen through faith, preached before the gospel unto Abraham, saying, In thee shall all nations be blessed' (Gal. 3:8).

'The Scripture hath concluded all under sin, that the promise by faith of Jesus Christ might be given to them that believe' (Gal. 3:22).

The Epistle to the Hebrews is in some measure outside the present enquiry. Being written to the Hebrews, we naturally expect an appeal to be made to the Old Covenant Scriptures. Nevertheless, it is significant that, while the apostle sets aside the Old Covenant with its ceremonies and sacrifices that did not touch the conscience, he quotes the prophets for the bringing in of the New Covenant (Heb. 8), and cites the fact that the tabernacle which was erected by Moses was an earthly copy of the pattern shown to him in the mount:

'Who serve unto the example and shadow of heavenly things, as Moses was admonished of God when he was about to make the tabernacle: for, See, saith He, that thou make all things according to the pattern shewed to thee in the mount' (Heb. 8:5).

We will not, however, pursue this investigation further. So far as our present purpose is concerned there is no controversy with regard to this epistle, which, by its very theme, is an expansion of the Old Testament type and shadow, and raises no problems in connection with Gentile admission or hope. At the moment we are concerned with how far Paul's words uttered in defence before Agrippa are true and binding with reference to the teaching of his early epistles as the apostle of the Gentiles. We believe that there will be full agreement among us all, that, so far as the basic theme of the gospel was concerned - redemption by blood, and the imputation of righteousness by faith - the apostle preached *'none other things than those which the prophets and Moses did say should come'*.

## **The inclusion of the Gentile in Gospel and Promise was never a secret.**

While it may readily be admitted that the basic terms of the gospel are to be found in the Law and the Prophets, it may nevertheless be contended that the extension of the blessings of the gospel to the Gentiles, and their inclusion among Abraham's seed, does, in fact, go beyond what is written in the Old Testament Scriptures.

It is undoubtedly true that the opening of the door of faith to the Gentiles took the early Church by surprise, and the contention of those of the circumcision at Jerusalem with Peter after they had heard of his visit to Cornelius (Acts 11:3), and Peter's own attitude (Acts 10:28), most certainly show a deep prejudice against such an inclusion of the Gentile. But prejudice, however deep, is not the standard of our faith; and our quest must still be: 'What saith the Scriptures?'

At the conference convened at Jerusalem, as recorded in Acts 15, James shows that the inclusion of the Gentile agreed with Old Testament prophets.

'Simeon hath declared how God at the first did visit the Gentiles, to take out of them a people for His name. And to this agree the words of the prophets; as it is written, After this I will return, and will build again the tabernacle of David, which is fallen down; and I will build again the ruins thereof, and I will set it up: that the residue of men might seek after the Lord, and all the Gentiles, upon whom My name is called, saith the Lord Who doeth all these things. Known unto God are all His works from the beginning of the world' (Acts 15:14-18).

If we turn to the prophet Amos, and consult the context of the passage cited by James (Amos 9:11,12), we shall perceive that

James very rightly says: `To this *agree* (or harmonise) the words of the prophets' (plural - the prophets as a whole), for Amos 9:11,12 looks forward to a yet future time for its *fulfilment*. There was much that took place during the Acts that was of a tentative nature, waiting to see (speaking after the manner of men) whether Israel would repent and the earthly kingdom be set up, or whether they would refuse, and the kingdom purpose fall into abeyance.

In Acts 13 we find the apostle Paul using the Old Testament Scriptures in much the same way. When the Jews manifest their envy at the Gentile acceptance of the gospel, the apostle says:

`... It was necessary that the word of God should first have been spoken to you: but seeing ye put it from you, and judge yourselves unworthy of everlasting life, lo, we turn to the Gentiles. For so hath the Lord commanded us, saying, I have set thee to be a light of the Gentiles, that thou shouldest be for salvation unto the ends of the earth' (Acts 13:46-47).

Commencing once again with the Epistle to the Romans, we observe that the gospel which was `promised afore ... in the Holy Scriptures', was also for the `obedience to the faith among (unto) all nations' (Rom. 1:1-5).

In chapter 3 the apostle brings forward as an argument, the fact that God is One.

`Is He the God of the Jews only? Is He not also of the Gentiles? Yes, of the Gentiles also: seeing it is one God, which shall justify the circumcision by faith, and uncircumcision through faith. Do we then make void the law through faith? God forbid: yea, we establish the law' (Rom. 3:29-31).

This basic fact was evidently in the apostle's mind when he addressed the men of Athens and commented upon the worship of the `Unknown God'.

`God that made the world and all things therein, seeing that He is Lord of heaven and earth, dwelleth not in temples made with hands; neither is worshipped with men's hands, as though He needed any thing, seeing He giveth to all life, and breath, and all things; and hath made of one blood all nations of men ... that they should seek the Lord ... now commandeth all men every where to repent' (Acts 17:24-30).

Another argument is brought forward in Romans 4:9-10 :

`Cometh this blessedness then upon the circumcision only? ... How was it then reckoned? When he (Abraham) was in circumcision, or in uncircumcision? Not in circumcision, but in uncircumcision'.

We can only dimly realise the blow that this question and its answer must have been to Jewish prejudice and exclusiveness. The Jews had boasted with pride that Abraham was their father, but had forgotten that Abraham was not an Israelite, but a Gentile from Ur of the Chaldees. Abraham was already justified by faith and the heir of the promises, before the rite of circumcision was instituted, and before Isaac was born. He was therefore :

`... the father of all them that believe, though they be not circumcised; that righteousness might be imputed unto them also: and the father of circumcision to them who are not of the circumcision only, but who also walk in the steps of that faith of our father Abraham, which he had being yet uncircumcised ... Abraham; who is the father of us all, (As it is written, I have made thee a father of many nations)' (Rom. 4:11-17).

With this passage should be compared the argument of Galatians 3:

`The Scripture, foreseeing that God would justify the heathen (nations) through faith, preached before the gospel unto

Abraham, saying, In thee shall all nations be blessed' (Gal. 3:8).

`Now to Abraham and his seed were the promises made. He saith not, And to seeds, as of many; but as of one, And to thy seed, which is Christ' (Gal. 3:16).

`For as many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ. There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female: for ye are all one in Christ Jesus. And if ye be Christ's, then are ye Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise' (Gal. 3:27-29).

It is evident from the testimony of James, and of Paul, that the inclusion of the Gentile in the blessings of the gospel and the Abrahamic promise, was no mystery (secret) but the consistent witness of Moses and the prophets.

Both these authorities are quoted in Romans 10 with regard to the inclusion of the Gentile:

`... First Moses saith, I will provoke you to jealousy by them that are no people, and by a foolish nation I will anger you. But Esaias is very bold, and saith, I was found of them that sought Me not; I was made manifest unto them that asked not after Me' (Rom. 10:19,20).

With reference to the gospel, the Jew and the Gentile stand level. Both are sinners, and `there is no difference', either in the matter of guilt or salvation (Rom. 3:22,23; 10:12). When we come to dispensational privileges, however, we find, during the early ministry of the apostle, that the Jew is `first'. In Romans 11 after showing that the believing Gentiles, equally with the believing Jews, are Abraham's seed and heirs, the apostle writes:

`And if some of the branches be broken off, and thou, being a wild olive, wert grafted in among them, and with them partakest of the root and fatness of the olive tree; boast not against the branches' (Rom. 11:17,18).

This dispensational distinction we must keep well in mind, for while it lasted and until the middle wall was broken down, no church of the One Body with the threefold equality of Ephesians 3:6 was possible.

In Romans 15, the apostle speaks of the earthly ministry of the Lord Jesus Christ as being concerned with the `circumcision':

`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).

This testimony is explicit. The `Gospels' are primarily concerned with the `circumcision' and with the confirmation of promises made `unto the fathers'. We have already seen, however, that in the great promise made to Abraham the Gentiles were included, with Israel as the channel of blessing. Consequently Romans 15:8 is followed by 15:9-12 :

`And that the Gentiles might glorify God for His mercy; as it is written ... and again He saith ... And again ... And again'.

Apparently no opposition was anticipated to the exclusiveness of Romans 15:8, for the apostle had already alluded to the strength of Jewish prejudice by asking, `Is He the God of the Jews only?'. Today, however, the whole aspect of things is reversed. Anyone who dares to believe Romans 15:8 and teach that the Gospels are primarily `Jewish' must prepare to meet criticism and opposition, while in most congregations the hope of the Jew is so far forgotten or spiritualised that today one would have to ask `Is He the God of the Gentiles only?'. The inclusion of the Gentile, even as a wild olive in the olive tree of



Israel, presupposes Paul's glorious teaching concerning the reconciliation of the world in its dispensational aspect (Rom. 11:15), even as the gospel he preached (2 Cor. 5:21) necessitated the reconciliation of the world, in its doctrinal aspect (2 Cor. 5:19,20).

For our present purpose Romans 15:8-12 provides an abundant confirmation of the fact that the inclusion of the Gentile was no new thing. Further evidence can be gathered from the remaining epistles of the period, but enough, we trust, has been brought forward to establish the fact that the inclusion of the Gentile, both in the gospel and in the Abrahamic promise, demands for its confirmation *`none other things than those which the prophets and Moses did say should come'*.

#### No. 4

### **The Hope of the Church of the Acts still the Hope of Israel.**

The conclusions that we have so far reached with regard to the gospel, and the inclusion of the Gentile during the Acts, do not make a very great demand upon the believer whose position is what we may call *`orthodox'*. There are, however, other subjects so close to the heart of the redeemed that anyone suggesting that present traditional views with regard to them are unscriptural, must be prepared not only to meet strong opposition, but also to endure a good deal of misunderstanding and possibly abuse. Among these sensitive themes is that of the Hope of the Church. Many a believer who would be prepared to endorse all that has been put forward in the three opening studies, would

nevertheless affirm with conviction that *the hope of 1 Thessalonians 4 is the hope of the Church of the Mystery.*

Now, if Paul taught 'none other things than those which the prophets and Moses did say should come', it follows that the hope set before us in Romans, Corinthians, Galatians and Thessalonians must be the hope of Israel, and further that, if this hope is also the hope of the Church revealed in Paul's Prison Epistles, then the word 'mystery' loses its meaning, at least in so far as it can be applied to the *hope* of the Church. We shall be content to present to the judgment of the reader exactly what is written concerning the hope of the Church during the Acts administration, and we believe that he will find abundant evidence to prove that, as in the case of the gospel and the inclusion of the Gentile, this hope agrees with the testimony of Moses and the prophets, and cannot therefore be the hope of a company called under terms which were unrevealed until the apostle became the 'prisoner of the Lord'.

While 1 Thessalonians 4 is the passage to which we naturally turn for a definite statement concerning the hope of the Church of the period, we will follow the rule adopted in the earlier studies and investigate first the Epistle to the Romans. In chapter 15 the apostle not only speaks of the inclusion of the Gentile, as we saw in our last study, but also associates the believing Gentile with the hope of Israel.

'And again, Esaias saith, There shall be a root of Jesse, and He that shall rise to reign over the Gentiles; in Him shall the Gentiles trust. Now the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, that ye may abound in hope, through the power of the Holy Ghost' (Rom. 15:12,13).

There can be no question here as to whether the Gentiles referred to are in the Church, for the presence of such words as, 'all joy and peace in believing' and 'the power of the Holy Ghost' is conclusive. We are dealing here with the hope of the believer, and therefore with the hope of the Church at that time.

We must first draw the reader's attention to the fact that the word 'trust' here is *elpizù* in the original, and that the word 'hope' is *elpis*. The noun and the verb are from the same root, and both demand the same English word. Also, before the word 'hope' in verse 13 we have the definite article, and the two words should therefore be translated 'that hope'. Putting in these corrections, we have:

'In Him shall the Gentiles hope. Now the God of that hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing'.

This hope of the believing Gentile is found in the Prophet Isaiah, and a reference to Isaiah 11 will reveal that it is millennial. We might have anticipated this by observing the clause 'rise to reign over the Gentiles', a statement consistent with the hope of Israel and the earthly kingdom, but impossible of application to the Church of the Mystery. The hope here in Romans is, therefore, millennial, and, if Romans was written after 1 Thessalonians 4, then it is impossible that the hope of 1 Thessalonians 4 should be other than this same hope.

In dealing with 1 Thessalonians 4, it is of the utmost importance to remember that there arose a misunderstanding in the Church as to the apostle's teaching concerning the hope, and that he consequently wrote a second letter with the express purpose of correcting these errors. It is patent, we trust, to all

our readers, whatever may be their views concerning the Coming of the Lord, that any interpretation of 1 Thessalonians that ignores the inspired corrective, 2 Thessalonians, must necessarily fail.

The Thessalonians had been led astray with regard to the Second Coming of Christ, both by teachers speaking under the influence of an evil spirit, and by a spurious epistle, and had come to believe that the Day of the Lord was at hand (2 Thess. 2:2). Instead of telling these anxious believers that their hope had *nothing whatever to do with the Day of the Lord* - which would have been the simplest solution, had it been true - the apostle occupies the bulk of this second epistle with a detailed account of that awful day, and also reminds them, when dealing with the great antichristian blasphemy of Revelation 13, that he had told them these things when he was with them (2 Thess. 2:5).

In 1 Thessalonians 4 he comforts the believer by referring to the descent of the Lord from heaven; and in 2 Thessalonians 1:7 he comforts him with the prospect of 'rest' at the 'revelation of the Lord Jesus'. The descent 'from heaven' and the revelation 'from heaven' are the same in the original, *ap ouranon* being used in both passages. In 1 Thessalonians 4, the descent 'from heaven' is associated with the 'voice of the Archangel', and, as we shall prove presently, with the Lord's 'holy angels' (1 Thess. 3:13). In 2 Thessalonians 1 this is repeated with added details: 'With His mighty angels, in flaming fire taking vengeance'.

In Daniel 12:1 we read that, when Michael the 'Archangel' stands up: 'There shall be a time of trouble, such as never was

since there was a nation even to that same time'. There can be only one such time of trouble, and Daniel 12:1 must therefore synchronise with the event spoken of in Matthew 24:21 and Revelation 7:14.

If it be objected that this makes the hope before the Church of the Thessalonians identical with the hope of Israel, we would reply that this is not an objection, but actually the truth of the matter. The hope of Israel was the only hope in view in Acts 1:6 and the hope of Israel was still in view in Acts 28:20. We have seen that the Church at Rome was taught to abound in this very hope, and we also find that all that is written concerning the hope in 1 and 2 Thessalonians links it to this same hope of Israel. Michael, according to Daniel 12, 'stands for the people of Israel'; and the coming of the Lord 'with all His saints' is a fulfilment of Zechariah 14:5. The 'saints' here are angels, as a comparison of Deuteronomy 33:2 and Psalm 68:17 will show.

The only other mention of the Archangel in the New Testament is in Jude 9, and Jude speaks of the days immediately preceding the dreadful Day of the Lord.

The whole of the prophetic passage in 2 Thessalonians 2 is taken up with the teaching concerning the Beast and the False Prophet. If the hope of the Thessalonian Church was the blessed hope of the Mystery, why should the apostle spend so much time describing a period that has nothing to do with this hope?

It may be necessary to say a word here on 2 Thessalonians 1:10. The translation 'When He shall have come' is to be preferred to the A.V. rendering, but there is no warrant for teaching from this that the hope of the Church will have been

fulfilled before 'He shall have come'. The context points the other way, and there is no possibility of this meaning in other passages where the same tense is used.

'When the lord of the vineyard shall have come'. This leads on to what He will then do (Matt. 21:40).

'When ye shall have done all those things' - say, 'We are unprofitable servants' (Luke 17:10).

'Of him shall the Son of Man be ashamed when He shall have come' (Mark 8:38).

'When He (the Messiah) shall have come (then, and not before), He will tell us all things' (John 4:25).

'This is My covenant unto them, when I shall have taken away their sins' (Rom. 11:27).

'When He shall have delivered up the Kingdom ... when He shall have put down all rule ... (then, and not before), God shall be all in all' (1 Cor. 15:24-28).

So, when He shall have come, in that day, to be glorified in His saints, then, in that same coming, He will take vengeance and punish with *aionion* destruction those who know not God and obey not His gospel. It is not possible to appeal to this passage as evidence of a hope entertained by these saints before 'that day' when He shall have come.

In 1 Thessalonians 4:15-17, the apostle speaks of the 'order' that will govern the resurrection, and it may at first sight be felt that here is a distinct revelation - something more than can be found in Moses and the prophets. While it is true that the actual words of 1 Thessalonians 4 are not found in the Law or the Prophets, they are but a legitimate expansion of what the Old

Testament revealed, and if this is so, Paul's claim is not invalidated.

Take for example the passage in Daniel 12 that appears to have coloured the language of 1 Thessalonians 4 with reference to the Archangel. Daniel speaks of two companies, one living in the time of trouble and delivered out of it, the other sleeping in the dust of the earth and awakened. Daniel knew that he himself would 'rest' and would 'stand in his lot at the end of the days' (Dan. 12:13), but he neither affirms nor denies the precedence either of the living or of the dead. Paul, however, does affirm that these two companies go 'together', and we understand, therefore, that this is implicit in Daniel, though explicit only in Paul. This does not mean, however, that Paul is saying something more than the Law and the Prophets allowed. It was all within the framework of the Old Testament and was by no means a secret 'hid' in God.

The apostle makes very full use of the wilderness wanderings of Israel, and his conclusion at the end of Hebrews 11 to the effect that 'they without us' should not be perfected, could easily be substantiated from the story of Caleb and Joshua. These two men qualified for entry into Canaan at the time of the spies, but they had to wait the full period of the wilderness wandering, and finally entered the land 'together' with the rest of the people.

It is not our custom to quote the writings of others in confirmation of our teaching; we prefer to stand or fall by the Book itself. In this case, however, some readers may be interested to see the last words of Dr. E.W.Bullinger on the dispensational place of 1 and 2 Thessalonians and their teaching

concerning the hope of the Church. Speaking of the fact that in all our versions the Epistles to the Thessalonians come *last* he says:

‘It must be evident to us all at the outset that, as long as Jehovah's promise to "send Jesus Christ" was not withdrawn, while it was still open to Israel to see the fulfilment of "all that the prophets have spoken" on the one condition (of repentance) laid down, while the imminence of the Lord's speedy coming was everywhere the testimony of "them that heard Him", whether spoken or written, the waiting for God's Son from heaven, and deliverance from the wrath to come would necessarily be the central point of all testimony during the Dispensation of the Acts.

*The Pauline Epistles cannot be exempt from this conclusion* (our italics). If any one is disposed to hold that the promise made in Acts 3 was withdrawn at any time before Acts 28, it is incumbent on them to point out where such an epoch-making event is recorded. But this cannot be done. There is not a tittle of evidence that can be produced. *Indeed, the very first epistle written by Paul (1 Thess. 1:10) emphasises this, and the second letter cannot even be understood apart from it'.*

These words of Dr. Bullinger's were published in 1911-13 in ‘*Things to Come*’, and in 1913 it will be remembered he fell asleep. Readers who know only the Doctor's ‘Church Epistles’ should note carefully his own correction of his earlier views.

In the same series, after having quoted 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18, Dr. Bullinger writes:

‘Paul was here confirming what the Lord had said in Matthew 24. "This great trumpet" is the "trump of God" in 1 Thessalonians 4, and the gathering is the gathering of "them that are alive and remain". This is the work assigned to the angels’.



We will not multiply quotations, but must give the following, because of its bearing upon our own position.

`We quite understand, and fully sympathise with those who, like ourselves, have spoken or written on 1 Thessalonians 4 as being the great charter of our hope of the Lord's coming. But we ought thankfully to relinquish it when we find we have a better hope (*our italics*), which we can enjoy all the more because we need not reproach ourselves with having robbed Israel of their hope, which is only postponed, and will yet have a wondrous and literal fulfilment for them' (Foundations of Dispensational Truth, Dr. E.W.Bullinger).

We trust that sufficient has been set before the reader to lead to the conviction that the hope before the Church of the Acts was in entire harmony with what *'the prophets and Moses did say should come'*.

## No. 5

### **The Gifts of the Spirit, and the Abrahamic Promise.**

The present study was originally suggested by a correspondent who, among other things remarked, 'Surely the *Charismata* cannot come under this heading'. This is certainly an important point, and if it can be shown that the endowment with supernatural gifts, which was the peculiar privilege of the early Church, is unrelated to the testimony of Moses and the prophets, or goes beyond anything they have said, then it will be necessary for us to reconsider our position.

We begin our investigation, where spiritual gifts first make their appearance, namely, in Acts 2. The day of Pentecost having fully come, and the number of the twelve having been completed, a most wonderful thing happened:

`They were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance' (Acts 2:4).

The assembled multitude were `confounded' and `amazed ... saying one to another, What meaneth this?' Others mocked and said, `These men are full of new wine' (Acts 2:6-13). It is evident from the reaction of the multitude that something extraordinary had happened, but the fact that these Jews, who were `devout men', did not recognise the fulfilment of Old Testament prophecy when they saw it, is no proof that the prophets and Moses did not say that these things should come. The nation rejected their Messiah, in spite of the fulfilment of prophecy and type.

Most of our difficulties in connection with this matter vanish when we consider Peter's inspired answer in verses 14-40, and particularly in verse 16:

`This is that which was spoken by the prophet Joel' (Acts 2:16).

If we turn to chapter 2 of this prophecy, we shall find in verses 28-32 the complete testimony to this great event. It is true that the seven wonders in heaven and earth have not yet taken place, but this is explained by Israel's failure to repent. All that we are at the moment attempting, however, is to prove that the `gifts' of the early Church were promised before in the Holy Scriptures.

Peter not only refers to Joel, but later in his explanation to the testimony of David:

`... David ... being a prophet ... seeing this before spake of the resurrection of Christ ... therefore being by the right hand of God exalted, and having received of the Father the promise of the Holy Ghost, He hath shed forth this, which ye now see and hear' (Acts 2:29-33).

It is evident from the above references that Peter would have been surprised to hear any one deny, or even question the fact that the gifts bestowed on the Day of Pentecost were spoken of by the prophets of the Old Testament. The term 'Moses and the prophets' and the term 'the law and the prophets' are synonymous, yet we should be unscriptural to draw a hard and fast line, and limit the term 'law' to Moses. In John 10:34, quoting Psalm 82:6, the Lord says, 'Is it not written in your law?' And in 1 Corinthians 14:21, the prophet Isaiah is quoted as 'the law', with reference to the spiritual gifts of the early Church. 'Moses and the prophets' in its common usage simply stands for the Old Testament Scriptures.

'In the law it is written, With men of other tongues and other lips will I speak unto this people; and yet for all that will they not hear Me, saith the Lord' (1 Cor. 14:21).

On the Day of Pentecost, the gifts were received by Jews only. It is pure imagination to believe that on that day both Jews and Gentiles, then and there, were baptized into one body. One reading of Acts 2, with this tradition of the elders in mind, is enough to dispel such an interpretation for ever. That Peter himself held no such belief is made abundantly clear in Acts 10:

'While Peter yet spake these words, the Holy Ghost fell on all them which heard the word. And they of the circumcision which believed were astonished, as many as came with Peter, because that on the Gentiles also was poured out the gift of the Holy Ghost' (Acts 10:44-45).

There were two converging reasons for the abundance of gifts that were poured out upon the early church. The first of these is given in Galatians 3:

`Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us ... that the blessing of Abraham might come on the Gentiles through Jesus Christ; that we might receive the promise of the Spirit through faith' (Gal. 3:13,14).

Here it is made clear that the promise to Abraham, which we have already seen includes the gospel as preached in Romans, and was, as Galatians 3:8 testifies, `foreseen' by the Scriptures, includes also `the Spirit'. It may perhaps be objected that this reference to `the Spirit' does not include `spiritual gifts' but just gospel grace. The same chapter in Galatians, however, contains a complete proof that `spiritual gifts' are in view:

`Received ye the spirit by the works of the law, or by the hearing of faith? ... He therefore that ministereth to you the Spirit, and worketh miracles among you, doeth he it by the works of the law, or by the hearing of faith? Even as Abraham believed ...' (Gal. 3:2-6).

It is clear, therefore, that the spirit given through the faith that is reckoned for righteousness, is also the spirit associated with `working miracles', and that being so, our case is proved.

The other line of teaching associated with spiritual gifts is that found in 1 Corinthians 14:21. Those addressed in 1 Corinthians 10 & 11 were by nature `Jews' - for it obviously could not be written of Gentiles that `*all our fathers* were under the cloud, and all passed through the sea' (1 Cor. 10:1). To those who have `ears to hear' this fact and its bearing upon the only reference to the Lord's Supper in Paul's writings (in 1 Cor. 11) will speak with no uncertain sound.

In 1 Corinthians 12, however, the apostle turns from the Jewish section of the Church and addresses the Gentiles:

`Now concerning spiritual gifts, brethren, I would not have you ignorant. Ye know that ye were Gentiles' (1 Cor. 12:1,2).

To those who believe that `all Scripture is given by inspiration of God' these things will be the end of the argument.

1 Corinthians 12 to 14 deals with these spiritual gifts from various angles. We are not at the moment concerned with the nature of these gifts, their variety, permanence or cessation, but we are concerned with the reason why Isaiah 28 should have been quoted. This quotation from Isaiah is rather similar to the passage in Deuteronomy 32:

`I will move them to jealousy with those which are not a people; I will provoke them to anger with a foolish nation' (Deut. 32:21).

This passage is quoted or referred to in Romans 10:19; 11:11 and 11:14. After having stressed the blessing of the Gentile, the apostle uses the illustration of the olive tree. The Gentile believer is likened to a wild olive grafted in contrary to nature, partaking in both the root and the fatness of the olive tree. The apostle magnifies his office as the apostle of the Gentiles `if by any means I may provoke to emulation them which are my flesh, and might save some of them' (Rom. 11:14).

We learn from these passages that one of the reasons for the abundance of spiritual gifts that characterised the Gentile churches, was that Israel might, if it were possible, be awakened to see their prerogatives passing to the uncircumcision, and so be provoked to jealousy, and repent and be saved. This, however, was not to be. Israel were not provoked; they passed out into their present blindness, and the gifts ceased.

There can be no doubt after considering the testimony of these Scriptures that the gifts enjoyed by the early Church were well within the sphere of those things *`which the prophets and Moses did say should come'*.

## No. 6

### **The heavenly country and calling.**

When the apostle uttered the words which form the title of this booklet, it would of course have been possible for an extreme literalist to have attempted to show that, unless the apostle had confined himself entirely to a literal quotation of the actual words of Moses and the prophets without adding any words of his own, his statement was not true. We can hardly believe, however, that anyone would, in fact, have adopted such an extreme attitude. If such a view were legitimate, Paul's *`one word'* of Acts 28:25 would be open to criticism, for the quotation which constitutes this *`one word'* is made up of 55 *`words'* in the Greek, and 70 *`words'* in the English. Many more such examples could be given, but we fear that the average reader would grow impatient, and feel that we were wasting time. We have an object, however, in view, and that is to show that, even though Paul's utterances were not simply quotations, and even though some of his teaching does not appear upon the surface of the Old Testament Scriptures, the language of the Prayer Book is applicable here, when it speaks of the doctrine of Holy Scripture *`and whatsoever may be proved thereby'*.

In the New Testament we learn that Abraham not only received the land of Canaan as an inheritance, but that he also looked for a *`better country, that is, an heavenly'*. Although the

New Jerusalem is never mentioned in the Old Testament Scriptures, it is nevertheless true that this 'city which hath foundations' constituted a real and blessed hope in Old Testament times. When we read such verses as Hebrews 11:9,10,13-16, we may feel at first that here at least the apostle is saying something more than 'the prophets and Moses did say should come'. Let us observe, however, exactly what is written in Hebrews 11.

We know, from the record of Genesis, that Abraham 'believed' and had 'faith'. The nature of faith is not enlarged upon by Moses and the prophets to the extent that it is so treated in the New Testament, and the reason is fairly obvious.

To teach that Abraham's faith was 'the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen' is certainly an *expansion* of the Old Testament account, but it is not an *addition*. How shall we intelligently interpret the fact that Abraham, Isaac and Jacob were willing to be tent-dwellers in the very land of promise, dying in full faith without possessing more than a burial ground in the land, unless we believe that they knew that the promise upon which they rested demanded the resurrection of the dead for its fulfilment and enjoyment? Paul himself tells us that 'they that say such things, *declare plainly*' (Heb. 11:14 A.V.) or '*make it manifest*' (R.V.). While we may have to admit that some of the deductions tabulated in Hebrews 11. 9,10 and 13-16, were not so 'manifest' to us, our own poorness of insight is surely not the standard whereby we must judge the apostle. From the recorded attitude of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, it is 'manifest' that they sought a country, and it is also clear that if they had had an earthly country in mind, they

could have found an opportunity to have returned. As they did not, it is obvious that such pilgrims and strangers, with such promises apparently unfulfilled, yet with such triumphant faith, must have had a heavenly country and a heavenly city in view, for there is no other alternative.

We must now consider some of the statements made by the apostle with reference to Melchisedec in Hebrews 7. We first meet Melchisedec as 'Priest of the Most High God', in Genesis 14:18. Nothing more is said of him in the Old Testament until we reach Psalm 110, where we read:

'The Lord said unto my Lord, Sit Thou at My right hand, until I make Thine enemies Thy footstool ... Thou art a Priest for ever after the order of Melchizedek' (Psa. 110:1,4).

When this Psalm was written, there was in existence the divinely appointed Aaronic priesthood. The greatness of Melchisedec's order of priesthood is proved from several statements made by Moses in the Book of Genesis.

- (1) The fact that Melchisedec had 'no father or mother' (i.e. no 'pedigree'), and no specific end to his ministry, is in strong contrast with the law regulating the Aaronic order. In these things Melchisedec fore-shadowed the Son of God, 'Who abideth a priest continually' (Heb. 7:3).
- (2) Genesis 14:20 records the fact that Abraham gave tithes to Melchisedec. In Hebrews 7 Paul states that 'without all contradiction the less is blessed of the better' (Heb. 7:4-8).
- (3) 'If I may so say', continues Paul, 'Levi, who was in the loins of Abraham, paid tithes to Melchisedec'. This shows that the



Levitical order was imperfect, and that a change in the priesthood was necessary (Heb. 7:9-11).

(4) This change necessitated the transfer of the Melchisedec priesthood from earth to heaven:

`For it is evident that our Lord sprang out of Judah' (Heb. 7:12-14).

`For if He were on earth, He should not be a priest' (Heb. 8:4).

As we have already remarked, these features may not have been obvious to us, but to the apostle they were `without contradiction'. He could, therefore, speak of the heavenly calling and the heavenly priesthood without going beyond that which was revealed in the Old Testament, even though these things were not expressed in so many words by the Old Testament writers. Those who would object to the apostle's claim must, to be consistent, criticise also the statement of Matthew 2:17,18 that the massacre of the innocents `fulfilled' the prophecy of Jeremiah 31:15, and the further statement of Matthew 2:23, `He shall be called a Nazarene' - for this actual expression is not to be found in the Law and the Prophets. Who would have dreamed that the language of Deuteronomy 30:12,13 could possibly have referred to the gospel, or to the ascended Christ, and His death and burial? And yet the apostle makes no apology for using the passage in this way. The same argument applies to the statement that some will be living at the Coming of the Lord and will not `prevent' those that sleep. Such a statement does not go beyond the testimony of Moses and the prophets.

If Paul had uttered one word that associated any believing Jew or Gentile *with the seated Christ at the right hand of God*, in the holiest of all, he would most certainly have gone beyond the

limits of the inspired testimony of Moses and the Prophets and have revealed truth that was exclusive to the dispensation of the Mystery. It is this that makes the apostle's claim so important to all who would appreciate the distinctive nature of the Mystery. The heavenly calling, with its city the New Jerusalem, is not related to the Mystery, and rightly falls within the limits set by the apostle.

The mention of the Mystery may perhaps cause some reader to remember that, long before the prison epistles were written, Paul spoke of several 'mysteries' (secrets). Can these mysteries possibly fall within the limits of 'Moses and the prophets', or will their investigation prove that the apostle was, after all, wrong in claiming that he had said *'none other things than those which the prophets and Moses did say should come'*?

## No. 7

### **The Mysteries (Secrets).**

The mystery of Israel's blindness (Rom. 11:25) and the mystery that was silenced (Rom. 16:25) considered in the light of our title.

We have already seen that the gospel, the inclusion of the Gentile, the hope entertained by the early church, and the possession of spiritual gifts, all fall within the testimony of the Law and the Prophets. There remains, however, one other subject which at first sight may seem to upset all our previous arguments - the subject of the 'mysteries' of which Paul was a steward long before the 'mystery' of the prison epistles was made manifest.

There are five mysteries specified in the epistles written before Acts 28, that must claim our attention:

- (1) The MYSTERY of Israel's blindness (Rom. 11:25).
- (2) The MYSTERY that had been kept secret (Rom. 16:25).
- (3) The MYSTERY of the wisdom of God (1 Cor. 2:7).
- (4) The MYSTERY in relation to resurrection (1 Cor. 15:51).
- (5) The MYSTERY of iniquity (2 Thess. 2:7).

Let us examine these five mysteries, and see whether we find them in agreement with the Old Testament Scriptures, or whether we shall have to admit that they go beyond them.

*The mystery of Israel's blindness* (Rom. 11:25).

`For I would not, brethren, that ye should be ignorant of this mystery, lest ye should be wise in your own conceits; that blindness in part is happened to Israel, until the fulness of the Gentiles be come in' (Rom. 11:25).

In this same chapter we have another reference to the blindness that fell upon Israel, in verses 8-10:

`According as it is written, God hath given them the spirit of slumber, eyes that they should not see, and ears that they should not hear; unto this day. And David saith ..., Let their eyes be darkened, that they may not see'.

We have here three quotations taken from Isaiah 29, Deuteronomy 29, Isaiah 6:9 and Psalm 69:22. If we turn, first, to Isaiah 29:10 we find no hint of the `secret' revealed in Romans 11, but as we read on to verses 17 and 18 we become aware of the fact that a change is intended. Instead of judgment we have restoration; Lebanon shall be turned into a fruitful field, the deaf shall hear, and *`the eyes of the blind shall see'*. The secret of Romans 11 is here, for those who are able to discern it.

The passage in Deuteronomy 29:4 does not refer primarily to the time of which Paul spoke, but to the condition obtaining when Israel came out of Egypt. The words: 'unto this day' as uttered by Moses can have no other interpretation. There is a hint, however, of further and fuller revelation in the last verse of the chapter - a verse that has suffered somewhat at the hands of translators. We transcribe the note given in *The Companion Bible*:

'The italics in the A.V. (put in Roman type in the R.V.) show that the Hebrew was not clear to the translators. They make good sense in English, but this is not the sense of the Hebrew text. The words rendered 'unto the Lord our God' should have the extraordinary points (Ap.31) to show that they form no part of the text. The meaning then is:

'The secret things, even the revealed things, (belong) to us and to our children for ever, that we may do all the words of this law'; i.e. the revealed things, and the secret things which have not been, but will yet be revealed'.

Israel had 'seen' the miracles which had been wrought in Egypt, but these 'revealed' things had left them blind. Their children, however, were to 'do all the words of this law', so that the fact that blindness was only for a time was evidently a part of the 'secret'. Moreover, it is the 'nations' that comment upon Israel's excision (Deut. 29:24-28), and that are likely to become 'wise in their own conceits'.

Isaiah 6:9 and 10 - the third passage mentioned above - is followed by the prophet's question 'LORD, how long?' and the LORD'S answer in verse 11. In verse 13, also, we have the pledge of the remnant. Even Psalm 69, which seems to speak of hopeless misery, ends on the same note: 'God will save Zion'.

We may conclude, therefore, that the secret of Israel's blindness is well within the testimony of Moses and the prophets.

*The mystery that had been kept secret* (Rom. 16:25).

We have now to enquire whether or not this secret is outside the scope of Moses and the prophets.

If we examine the structure of Romans, it becomes clear that the complete epistle demands the inclusion of Romans 16. 25-27; otherwise the opening salutation of Romans 1. 1-7 is without its corresponding member. In verses 1-7 we have the gospel, 'which He had promised afore by His prophets in the Holy Scriptures', concerning Christ as the Seed of David and Son of God, 'for obedience of faith among all nations'. In the corresponding passage at the end of the epistle, Romans 16.25-27, we have, not the 'preaching' of the gospel or its 'power unto salvation', but a reference to 'Him that is of power to stablish you according to my gospel, and the preaching of Jesus Christ, according to the revelation of the mystery, which was kept secret since the world began, but now is made manifest, and by the Scriptures of the prophets, according to the commandment of the everlasting God, made known to all nations for the obedience of faith'. In Romans 16 we have an advance on Romans 1, but not something entirely different. The secret 'now' made manifest (that is, at the time of Paul's writing) is said to have been 'silenced' in *aionion* times. Let us give this statement our careful attention. Where the Authorised Version reads 'kept secret' we have substituted 'silenced'. What is the justification for this alteration and what does it imply? The

word used in the original is *sigaiù*, and occurs nine times in the New Testament. One of these occurrences is in Luke 9, where the disciples had heard the voice speaking out of the cloud saying: 'This is My beloved Son; hear Him'. Immediately after this we read:

'And when the voice was past, Jesus was found alone. And they kept it close, and told no man in those days any of those things which they had seen' (Luke 9:36).

Again, in Luke 20, after the Lord had answered the question put to Him regarding the lawfulness of giving tribute to Caesar, we read:

'And they could not take hold of His words before the people: and they marvelled at His answer, and held their peace' (Luke 20:26).

The remaining occurrences are Acts 12:17; 15:12,13; Romans 16:25; 1 Corinthians 14:28,30 and 34. There is no suggestion in any of these passages of 'keeping a secret', but rather the consistent idea of keeping something quiet.

Returning to Romans 16, we observe that this act of 'silencing' is said to have taken place 'in *aionion* times', whereas the mystery of Ephesians is related to a period 'before the overthrow of the world' (Eph. 1:4), or 'before *aionion* times' (2 Tim. 1:9). The mystery of Romans 16 cannot, therefore, be the mystery of Ephesians 3 or Colossians 1. Moreover, this mystery, which was silenced in age times, was made manifest by the apostle Paul and 'by the Scriptures of the prophets'. It has been suggested that these 'Scriptures of the prophets' are not the Old Testament prophecies, but the 'prophetic writings' of the New Testament, either the epistles of Paul himself, or the writings of those who had the gift of prophecy in the early church. So far as

Romans 16 itself is concerned, there is no positive evidence either way, so that we must turn to other passages for help. In Romans 16 we have *graphon prophetikon*, 'writings prophetic' and in 2 Peter 1:19 *prophetikon logon*, 'prophetic word'. In the latter passage we are not left in doubt as to whether this 'prophetic word' was uttered by Old Testament or New Testament prophets, for the inspired comment reads:

'For the prophecy came not in old time by the will of man: but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost' (2 Pet. 1:21).

As this is the only other occurrence of *prophetikon*, we feel bound to accept the view that the word refers definitely to the Old Testament writers.

If we examine the Epistle to the Romans carefully, we discover that it contains an inner and an outer section, which may be set out as follows:

Romans 1:1 to 5:11	Romans 5:12 to 8:39	Romans 9:1 to 16:27
Outer Portion	Inner Portion	Outer Portion

While the outer portion deals with Abraham, the inner is concerned with Adam - and it was this truth relating to Adam which, though incipient in the pages of Genesis, was 'silenced' while the truth relating to Abraham occupied the bulk of the Old Testament.

Of the glorious doctrine of justification, the apostle wrote:

'But now the righteousness of God without the law is (hath been) manifested, being witnessed by the law and the prophets' (Rom. 3:21).

Of the equally glorious doctrine of Romans 5:12 to 8:39 the apostle declares that it had been silenced in age-times, but was

now made manifest and by prophetic scriptures made known to all nations for the obedience of faith.

Truth has its times and seasons. Man must first realise his own sinnership and personal transgression, before he learns of his association with the ruined race and a federal head. At the time when Romans was written, the moment had come when the full teaching concerning the 'one offence' and the 'one righteousness' must be brought out of obscurity and made manifest. No uninspired commentator could ever have brought out from Genesis 3 what Paul makes known in Romans 5, but, on the other hand, there is nothing revealed in Romans 5 which cannot be dimly perceived in the ancient record, when once the light of inspiration is turned upon it.

The reconciliation of the Gentile was never a secret. We have already considered the testimony of Moses and the prophets regarding the inclusion of the Gentile, and this inclusion of necessity involved their reconciliation. The reconciliation of one portion of the race (the circumcision) with the other (the uncircumcision) now gives place to the deeper reconciliation of the race as such, for in Romans 5, where the silenced secret has been made manifest and Genesis 3 made to speak, neither Jew nor Gentile is mentioned.

We offer the above comments with full confidence that all who are willing to follow the lead of the inspired Scriptures only, will find no difficulty in believing that, so far as these two mysteries in Romans are concerned, they do not go beyond the things *'which the prophets and Moses did say should come'*.



## **The remaining mysteries of Paul's early ministry, considered in the light of the apostle's claims.**

We have so far examined the mysteries of Romans and found no reason to call in question the accuracy of Paul's statement before Agrippa, and we must now go on to consider the two mysteries that are specifically mentioned in 1 Corinthians. We use the word 'specifically' because there are also two general references in chapters 4 and 13:

'Let a man so account of us, as of the ministers of Christ, and stewards of the mysteries of God' (1 Cor. 4:1).

'Though I ... understand all mysteries and all knowledge ... and have not charity (love), I am nothing' (1 Cor. 13:2).

These 'mysteries' however, are not defined and cannot therefore be called upon as evidence in the case we are examining. The two mysteries in 1 Corinthians 2 and 15 on the other hand, are specific, and must therefore be examined. The first of these passages reads as follows:

'We speak the wisdom of God in a mystery, even the hidden wisdom, which God ordained before the world unto our glory' (1 Cor. 2:7).

Because we have a reference here to a time 'before the ages', there has sometimes been a tendency to ignore the context and assume that the passage refers to the mystery of Ephesians and Colossians. If we go back to the previous chapter, we find that the apostle speaks of the wisdom of God in connection with the cross of Christ (1 Cor. 1:24), and also, by contrast, of the wisdom of this world (1 Cor. 1:20,21). In the second chapter, he reminds the Corinthians that when he came to them, he did not pander to human fancies and indulge in 'excellency of speech or

wisdom', but rather `determined to know nothing among them, save Jesus Christ, and Him crucified'. The apostle was most anxious that the faith of these believers should not stand in the wisdom of men, but, although he so ruthlessly sets aside human wisdom, he assures the Corinthians that he does speak wisdom `among them that are perfect'. The identity of these `perfect' ones may be gathered from a comparison of 1 Corinthians 3 and Hebrews 5 and 6.

### 1 Corinthians 3

Babes, carnal, fed with milk, not with meat. Building upon the one foundation, that which may be rewarded or may be consumed by fire.

### Hebrews 5 and 6

Need of milk, not strong meat. A babe. Full grown (perfect) ones. Those who go on unto perfection. The earth either received blessing or is nigh unto cursing. Whose end is to be burned.

For our present purpose, it is enough to note that the `perfect' one is one who has grown in grace, who has got beyond the `first principles', and who can be taught further and fuller truth. In contrast, therefore, with the basic truth of `Jesus Christ and Him crucified' the apostle continues: `Howbeit we speak wisdom among them that are perfect' (1 Cor. 2:6). His subject is still `wisdom', though not, as he had already said, `the wisdom of this age, nor of the princes of this age that come to naught'. Nothing has so far been said about `the mystery'; the apostle has confined himself to the one subject of `wisdom', the kind of wisdom of which he spoke, and the kind which he repudiated.

Instead of going to Corinth, and speaking to the unprepared multitude the whole truth of God at once, the apostle fed them according to their capacity. To babes he gave the 'milk' of the Word, to adults the 'meat'. In Galatians 2 he tells us that, when the great controversy was raging concerning the place of the uncircumcised Gentile in the Church, he 'communicated unto them that gospel which I preach among the Gentiles, *but privately* to them which were of reputation, lest by any means I should run, or had run, in vain' (Gal. 2:2).

So the apostle here tells the Corinthians that he had spoken the wisdom of God in a mystery (secret). He does not say that he told them 'the Mystery' for this would have been altogether foreign to his thought. The presence of the word 'hidden', coming so near the word 'mystery' has led the superficial reader to a false conclusion. *It was not the mystery that was hidden, but the wisdom, and it was this of which Paul spoke to those who were perfect - and so, 'in a secret'.* He clinches his argument with a quotation from the Prophets, a proof that 'the Mystery' of Ephesians was not in mind:

'But as it is written, Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love Him. But God hath revealed them unto us by His Spirit: for the Spirit searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God' (1 Cor. 2:9,10).

The apostle's intention here is made very clear by his own expansion of the argument. He proceeds, in verse 12, to place in contrast the 'spirit of the world' and the 'spirit which is of God' - an evident parallel with the contrasted 'wisdom of the world' and 'wisdom of God' in the earlier part of the chapter. In verse 12 we read that this 'spirit which is of God' is given so that 'we

might know the things that are freely given to us of God, *which things we speak*' (1 Cor. 2:12,13). Here we are back again to the subject of verses 6 and 7, which deal with what the apostle said, and how he said it. In verse 13, he repeats the statement that he did not speak 'in the words that man's wisdom teacheth, but which the Holy Ghost teacheth, explaining spiritual things to spiritual persons'. Then follows in verses 14 to 16 the contrast between the natural man and the spiritual man, and then in chapter 3 the subject of chapter 1 is resumed. A careful examination of the context shows that 'wisdom', either human or divine, is the subject, and that being so, there is no necessity to question the apostle's statement that he did not go beyond that which *'the prophets and Moses did say should come'*.

We must now pass on to the second 'mystery' of Corinthians, which is found in chapter 15 and has to do with resurrection:

'Now this I say, brethren, that flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God; neither doth corruption inherit incorruption. Behold, I shew you a mystery; We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed, in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump: for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed. For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality ... then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written, Death is swallowed up in victory' (1 Cor. 15:50-54).

We observe first of all that the 'mystery' here is associated with the testimony of the prophet Isaiah, whose prophecy relates to Millennial times (Isa. 25:6-9). Both in 1 Thessalonians 4 and here in 1 Corinthians 15, the apostle distinguishes between those who shall be 'alive and remaining' at the coming of the Lord, and those who have already 'fallen asleep'. When the change

takes place, with regard both to the 'living' and the 'dead', the prophecy of Isaiah 25:6-9 will have been fulfilled.

When we examine 1 Corinthians 15:51 more closely we observe that there is no word in the original that can really be translated 'show'. The original reads: *Musterion humin legù*, 'A mystery to you I speak'. Moreover, it is necessary to consider whether these words would not be more correctly rendered in the form of a question. To make this point clearer, let us turn for a moment to Luke 16.

It may be that some readers are still perplexed to find our Lord apparently saying, in connection with the parable of the unjust steward: 'But I say unto you, Make unto yourselves friends of the mammon of unrighteousness' (Luke 16:9).

Most of our readers, however, know that the words *Kagù humin legù* should be translated in the form of a question: 'And do I say unto you ... ?', the question being followed by the reasons why the Lord's people *should not* in any sense emulate the spirit of the unjust steward.

Returning to 1 Corinthians 15, and examining the apostle's words again, we discover that there is no 'mystery' here at all. In verses 47-49 he contrasts the first Adam with the Second Adam, and the image of the earthy with the image of the heavenly, and verse 50 opens with the words: *Touto de phemi*: 'But this I say'. The apostle then proceeds to declare that 'flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God: neither doth corruption inherit incorruption'. Immediately following this, in verse 51, we have: *Musterion humin legù*: 'Do I speak a mystery when I tell you this?' - the implied answer being, of

course, 'No'. To sum up, we may conclude that, when the apostle taught the glorious doctrine of the resurrection, he did not go beyond the testimony of Moses and the prophets.

There is now only one other 'mystery' to be considered: 'The mystery of iniquity' in 2 Thessalonians 2:7. It hardly seems necessary to quote from the Book of Daniel to prove that the rise of the Man of Sin, the Son of Perdition, is entirely within the scope of the Old Testament prophecy. The mystery of Godliness, God manifest in the flesh, is enshrined in the Old Testament title Emmanuel ('God with us'), and the mystery of iniquity is but the Satanic travesty of the truth. The Man of Sin sets himself up 'as God' and will one day have his '*parousia*' (coming) with its preliminary 'lying wonders' (2 Thess. 2:9).

There is a possibility that the correct reading of Isaiah 11:4 should be as follows:

'With righteousness shall He judge the poor, and reprove with equity for the meek of the earth: and He shall smite the Oppressor (ariz instead of 'earth' erez) with the rod of His mouth, and with the breath of His lips shall He slay the wicked'.

The manifestation and destruction of this Man of Sin were fully known to the prophets. That which has an end must obviously have had a beginning, and that which finally dares to come out into the light of day may well begin secretly at first. In all this there is nothing that goes beyond the testimony of the Law and the prophets.

We have now examined the various mysteries that are found in Paul's early ministry, and have discovered nothing in any one

of them that goes beyond what *'the prophets and Moses did say should come'*.

## No. 9

### **Is the 'Church' within the testimony of the Law and the Prophets?**

We have now considered Paul's teaching in connection with the gospel, the inclusion of the Gentile, the hope, the gifts of the Spirit, and the mysteries, and have found in all these instances the words used in his defence before Agrippa to be literally true. There is no need to lengthen this investigation unduly, and we believe that the most exacting of our readers will be satisfied with the list of subjects examined, if we conclude with some consideration of the 'church' and its relation to Old Testament prophecy. By the church here we mean, of course, the church of the early Acts and Paul's earlier epistles, and not the church of the One Body as revealed in Ephesians.

It is common knowledge that the word translated 'church' is the Greek *ekklesia*, from *ek*, 'out of', and *kaleù*, 'to call'. The term is used mainly in a New Testament setting, but Stephen does not hesitate to speak of the nation of Israel called out from Egypt in the fulfilment of God's purposes as the 'church in the wilderness' (Acts 7:38). Stephen was fully justified in the choice of this word, for both the Septuagint Greek and the Old Testament Hebrew contain the Greek and Hebrew equivalents in abundance.

The New Testament writers did not invent the title of the 'church' neither did they invest it with entirely new attributes

and associations. The meaning of the word will, therefore, be clearer if we examine some of its Old Testament occurrences.

The Septuagint Version of the Old Testament in Greek contains no less than seventy unquestioned occurrences of *ekklesia*, and there may be several more. There are also six occurrences of the verb *ekklesiazō*, 'to gather' or 'assemble'. The first occurrence of *ekklesia* is in Deuteronomy 4:10, where the verb *ekklesiazō* is also found. The word is usually translated in the English version of the Septuagint either 'assembly' or 'congregation'. In addition to the Book of Deuteronomy, the word is also found in Joshua, Judges, 1 Samuel, 1 Kings, 1 and 2 Chronicles, Ezra, Nehemiah, Job, Psalms, Proverbs, Lamentations, Ezekiel, Joel and Micah. It will be seen, therefore, that the word was in common use from the days when Israel were assembled before Moses, up to the time of Ezra, Nehemiah and the prophets.

The word that the Greek translators had before them was the Hebrew *kahal*, 'to call, to gather, to assemble'. It is not necessary to enumerate all the many occurrences, but we give a few that are outstanding.

'The whole assembly of the congregation of Israel shall kill it in the evening' (Exod. 12:6).

The exclusive nature of an *ekklesia* is illustrated in Nehemiah 13:1:

'On that day they read in the book of Moses in the audience of the people; and therein was found written, that the Ammonite and the Moabite should not come into the congregation of God for ever'.



The Book of Genesis uses the word *kahal* in the following passage in chapter 28:

`And God Almighty bless thee, and make thee fruitful, and multiply thee, that thou mayest be a multitude of people' (Gen. 28:3).

The translation of *kahal* by `multitude' here is unwarranted. The Authorised Version itself bears this out, for, apart from the parallel passage in Genesis 48:4, the word `multitude' is never again used as a rendering of *kahal*. The A.V. translators themselves were evidently not quite satisfied, for in the margin they give as an alternative, the word `assembly'. The second and third occurrences of *kahal* in Genesis are in chapters 35 and 48:

`A nation and a company of nations shall be of thee' (Gen. 35:11).

`I will make of thee a multitude of people (Gen. 48:4).

These three passages in Genesis are three prophetic statements in connection with the blessing given to Jacob, who was also named Israel. However strange or improbable it may appear at first sight, these three passages constitute the foundation of every reference to the *ekklesia*, the `church' in the Old or New Testaments. When, therefore, we read in Matthew 15:24 that the Lord said: `I am not sent but unto the lost sheep of the house of Israel', and in 16:18: `upon this rock I will build My church', we do not feel under any necessity to modify the limitation of chapter 15 or to expand the exclusive company of chapter 16. The `church' to which the Lord added daily, on and after the day of Pentecost, was an Israelitish assembly, as a reading of Acts 2 will show, and subsequent statements in the Acts will confirm (e.g., 10:28 and 11:19). The inclusion of the saved Gentiles into

the *ekklesia* was explained by James as being quite consistent with the testimony of the prophets (Acts 15:14-18).

The Septuagint translators of Genesis do not use the word *ekklesia* to translate *kahal*, the 'assembly' or 'congregation', but the word *synagogue*. We must never forget that the 'church' began in the synagogue. After he was 'separated' by the Holy Ghost at Antioch, we read that the apostle 'preached the word in the synagogue of the Jews' (Acts 13:5). Further on in the same chapter we read that 'they came to Antioch in Pisidia, and went into the synagogue on the sabbath day, and sat down' (Acts 13:14). Upon being invited to speak, the apostle gave that wonderful address which contains the first positive statement in the New Testament concerning justification by faith (Acts 13:39). Moreover, when the Gentiles desired to hear more concerning this truth, it was to the synagogue that they had to go (Acts 13:42). Even though the apostle turned from Israel in Acts 13:46, we find him in the very next city preaching in the synagogue (Acts 14:1). Not until we reach Acts 19 do we find the believers withdrawn from the synagogue and meeting on neutral ground (Acts 19:8,9).

In Paul's own summary of his life in Acts 22, we read:

'And I said, Lord, they know that I imprisoned and beat in every synagogue them that believed on Thee' (Acts 22:19).

James also, who tells his hearers to call the Elders of the church, speaks of the synagogue as the place of worship (Jas. 2:2; 5:14).

When, therefore, the apostle confesses in Galatians 1:13 that 'beyond measure I persecuted the church of God', we must

remember that that church, as the Acts of the Apostles shows, *largely was associated with the synagogue, both of the land and of the dispersion.* Today, in the light of the Mystery, the word 'church' has taken upon it a higher meaning. The church of Ephesians was most certainly not within the range of Moses and the prophets; but, while Israel as a nation stood before God, *there was the kahal, the called-out people, the church of God,* and while the hope of Israel remained, as it did until the end of the Acts (Acts 28:20), there could be but one 'assembly' or 'church', and to this the Gentile believer was added.

We trust that the reader has by now satisfied himself that Paul meant exactly what he said in his defence before Agrippa. Should further and fuller confirmation be sought, let each reader take up the Book and examine its testimony. We do not fear the result. Not only did Paul say that he had not said anything outside the testimony of Moses and the prophets, but he also said at the close of this first ministry:

'I have not shunned to declare unto you all the counsel of God' (Acts 20:27).

This of course, did not mean that Paul had exhausted the mind of God; but simply that *everything that had then been made known he had honestly and unreservedly declared.*

In conclusion, may we say that we are grateful to the correspondent who originally challenged us on this question? Truth has nothing to fear from examination: the more it is investigated in the right spirit, the clearer it will become.

C.H.Welch

We hope these studies have helped the reader to a clearer conception of the newly created 'New Man' of Ephesians 2:13-16, which is stated to be a secret (Mystery) up to this point, hidden from previous ages of time and generations of people (Eph. 3:8,9; Col. 1:25,26), but now made known through Paul's prison ministry.

Yet in Acts 26, Paul wrote that he had kept nothing back but had revealed all that was known to him at that time, and one searches in vain in his Acts period letters for the word 'mystery' or secret in connection with the church of that period. Nor do we find it in the written ministry of the other writers of the New Testament. We do find blessing of the Gentile believer with the saved Jew, but this was never a secret, but clearly revealed throughout the Old Testament, and the apostle declared that his ministry up to that point was in harmony with this fact. If we do not accept this, we make God's Word contradict itself, which is a serious thing indeed.

Stuart Allen

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