

Bible Student's Notebook"

The Herald of His Grace

Presenting every man perfect in Christ Jesus. Colossians 1:28

Volume 26 Issue 640

The Dispensational Frontier of Acts 28:23-31

Part 2 of 3

by — Charles H. Welch (1880-1967)

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 a single hope extending throughout the whole period covered by the Acts of the Apostles, endorsed by Paul in his epistles, and further 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; Acts 28:20 – is not sufficient to prove to our critics that the hope which covers this whole period of the Acts, together with the churches called into being while the Book of Acts was in making, is one and the same, nothing we can add can be expected to bring conviction.

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?" No, it was the question of time:

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

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 at all for doubt.

There is intentional vagueness in the answer of the Lord, but a vagueness that pertained to one feature only – "at this time."

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

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The 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 those who 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" (:4).

The fact that the parable's sequel to this *second* refusal ended with the burning of their city¹ 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. Then there is the sending of a *second* message to the selfsame 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 28:28, to be followed in a few years by the literal burning of "their city."

 "But when the king heard thereof, he was wroth: and he sent forth his armies, and destroyed those murderers, and burned up their city" (:7).



The Eonian Evangel

by — Warren Young Kimball (1909-2002)

150 pages, PB (See order form.) Kimball, a prolific author, was an associate of A.E. Knoch and director of the Eonian Evangel Foundation.

64 Scripture lessons based on texts in which God's great purpose of the eons is revealed. In these studies nearly 1,000 Scripture references are given to 50 books and 304 chapters of the Old and New Testaments.

Associated with this failure is another related feature, found by comparing Acts 28:25-27 with the words of Matthew 13:14-15. 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 Spirit by Isaiah the prophet unto your fathers."

First, we observe that the strongest term is used in Matthew 13:14 for "fulfill," namely the Greek word anaplēroō. 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.

An objection based upon Matthew 13 (regarding the fulfillment 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 criticized 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. In line with this, the Gospels record the prayer of the Savior from the cross, "Father forgive them," which it would be blasphemy to say went unanswered.

The longsuffering 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* (*i.e.*, in law) in Matthew 13 became *de facto* (*i.e.*, in fact, or in effect) 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" (Ephesians 3:1-13).

To show the lengths to which 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 a part of a recital by the Apostle Paul of an event which took place, not at Caesarea (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, KJV).

These 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 supposedly "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:15-16 we have the words of the Lord to Ananias, which words found their fulfillment in Acts chapters 13-26, but not a hint is given in Acts 9 of a subsequent visit by the Lord or about a subsequent com-

mission, for the simple reason that the 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 SPIRIT²

Pentecost cannot be thought of apart from spiritual gifts. 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.

- 2. [Editor:] For more information on sign gifts, see:
 - Tongues, Signs and Visions: Not God's Order for Today, A.E.
 Bishop, <u>Bible Student's Notebook #416</u>;
 - Sign Gifts: For Another People and Another Time, Clyde L. Pilkington, Jr. & André Sneidar, <u>Bible Student's Notebook</u> #417;
 - The Signs of Paul's Early Ministry, A.E. Knoch, <u>Bible Student's Notebook #511</u>;
 - Miraculous Demonstrations: Watch Out!, Richard Jordan, <u>Bible Student's Notebook</u> #430;
 - Paul and His Early Healing Ministry, A. E. Knoch <u>Bible Student's</u> Notebook #527;
 - Israel's Signs, John LaVier, Bible Student's Notebook #106;
 - To What Do the Signs Point?, Richard Jordan, Bible Student's Notebook #156.



A Pocket Cyclopedia: Brief Explanations of Religious Terms as Understood by Universalists by — J.W. (John Wesley) Hanson (1823-1901)

90 pages, PB (See order form.)

This book aims to furnish inquirers

with a handy manual in which they can find answers to questions frequently asked as to the views of Universalists on the different points of Christian theology. No attempt at elaborate exposition or proof is made; but brief, plain statements are given, indicating the views held by our people on subjects of interest.

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. 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 16:17-18, 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,

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).

That prayer was followed by a special visitation of the

Holy Spirit, as noted in 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).

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 Spirit 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. He also raised to life a woman named Dorcas, who had died and had been laid out in her chamber (See Acts 9:32-41).

Enough has been brought forward to prove beyond dispute that from Pentecost onwards believers were 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:



58 pp, PB

Bible Study for Bereans

Bible Study for Bereans
- October 1936

This issue covers such issues as: Progressive Revelation, Dispensational Changes, Different Churches, and the 12 Apostles and Paul.

From Melita to Miletum (What About the Signs of Mark 16:17-18?)

A trip with the apostle Paul from Acts 28:1-9 to II Timothy 4:20.



48 pp, PB

See order form.

Two Works from J.C. O'Hair (1876-1958)



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 then, but they DO NOT follow now. 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 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 is 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 to note the complete absence of miracles in the Prison Epistles.

A handkerchief or an apron brought from the body of the Apostle was 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 (Philippians 2:26). Another was left at Miletum sick (II Timothy 4:20), and we note that Timothy was urged to take a little wine for his stomach's sake and his "frequent infirmities" (I Timothy 5:23).

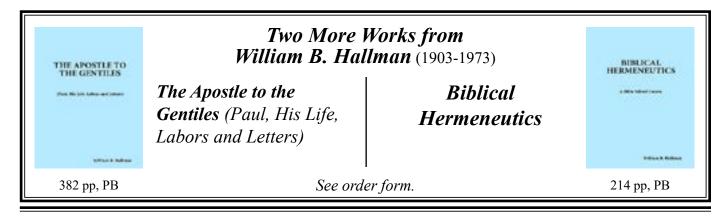
The signs of Mark 16:17-18 did not follow them that believed after Acts 28:28. We believe that we have already given sufficient evidence regarding the claim that Acts 28 constitutes a dispensational frontier. We have, however, one further item of truth to bring forward to complete the weight of evidence, 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 Savior, we shall discover that there Israel was not "first" but "alone."

These Twelve 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" (Matthew 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 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 to the lost sheep of the house of Israel (Matthew 15:24).

Here again, the "faith" of the Gentile who declares that the Gospel of Matthew is truth for the church is challenged. The Savior 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 savor 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" (Matthew 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. 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, turning away ev*ery one of you from his iniquities (Acts 3:26).

Let the reader search Acts chapters 2 and 3 and note those addressed. They were "Jews," "Men of Judea," "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 ad-



The Restoration of All Things

by — Jeremiah White (1629-1707)

> 226 pages, PB (See order form.)

mit that **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 sometime 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,

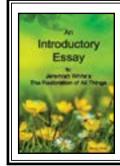
to none but unto the **Jews only** (Acts 11:19).

The fact that when the apostles and brethren that were in Judaea 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).

This 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 preeminence 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 Book of Acts, we shall find that Israel or the Jew is given the first place. "To the Jew first" (Romans 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 sal-



An Introductory Essay to Ieremiah White's "The Restoration of All Things"

by — David Thom (1795-1862) 112 pages, PB (See order form.) vation, "there is no difference" (Romans 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 tree grafted contrary to nature for the Gentile believers (Romans 11:17, KJV).

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 28:28. 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 until evening (Acts 28:23), and not until these representatives of Israel acted in a similar way to the way in which their brethren in Judaea had acted, does *Isaiah* 6:9-10 appear for the last time in Scripture.

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 "the Mystery," 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.

THE BOOK OF ACTS IS ONE TERRITORY, ACTS 28 THE FRONTIER LINE

In the pursuit of these four items, we have established that the Acts of the Apostles is to be considered one territory, that the frontier line is drawn at Acts 28:28, and that the Prison ministry of Paul is what he claims it to be, "the Dispensation of the Mystery" (Ephesians 3:9, R.V., Colossians 1:25-26).

A frontier naturally has two sides: one facing and ending one territory, and 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."



See order form.

Thanks for your ministry and the time you put into this work. – *TX*

Interesting, instructive and faith building. – *Canada*

I love that you have done this for

Daily Gleanings – 365 Selections on Scriptural Truths

Clyde L. Pilkington, Jr., Editor

This book contains a collection of gleanings from some 200 different authors. These excerpts are intended to be an encouragement to those who are walking on a different path with the Lord – a journey that is "outside of the camp."

Some quotations are from beloved and trusted authors, but more often than not, they are from unusual sources. Sometimes, it is simply amazing how an author can admit in print to some grand truth that their writings and ministries otherwise generally deny. For the authors of these quotes, the truth that is conveyed by them may oddly seem "out of place"; but in some ways, the more unlikely the source, the more amazingly it testifies to the truth – and the fact that it cannot be hidden.

us. There is no way that we could go through half the amount of material you go through and pull out these tasty morsels. – *VA*

What a treasured collection! - MI

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Truly an invaluable resource. - IL

These gleanings are so encouraging! – *Kenya*

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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 (Ephesians 3:1-13).

On the Pentecostal side of the frontier, Paul had been met by continual Jewish opposition and persecution. This attitude is marked in the opening of his ministry in Acts 13:45, where we find that the Jews filled with envy spoke 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).



Old Testament Studies

by — William R. Newell (1868-1956)

362 pages, PB (See order form.)

On the other side of the frontier, no such Jewish 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), were a direct reference to the opposition of the Jews. The word translated "forbidding" (Greek, akōlutōs), is found without the negative in I Thessalonians 2:16, (Greek kōluō): "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 (Moffatt).

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

When Isaiah 6:9-10 was quoted by the Lord, He declared that it was then "fulfilled" (Matthew 13:14), using the strong form of the word. When Paul quoted the same passage 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.

(*To be continued.*)

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Scripture education in a semi-weekly format!

This *free* electronic publication is dedicated to:

- the proclamation of the riches of God's abundant, exceeding grace (Romans 5:20; 11:6; Ephesians 1:7);
- the affirmation that God will save all mankind through the death, burial, and resurrection of Christ (I Timothy 2:3, 4; 4:10; Titus 2:11);
- the "preaching of Jesus Christ, according to the revelation of the mystery, which was kept secret in ages past" (Romans 16:25);
- true freedom and liberty apart from law (Galatians 5:1);
- the organic nature of the Body of Christ (I Corinthians 12);
- the distinct message and ministry of Paul, the apostle to the nations (Ephesians 1:1-3);
- the importance of receiving all whom Christ has received (Romans 14-15);
- the recovery of rich Biblical truth that has too long remained hidden under the veils of traditionalism, prejudice, misunderstanding, and fear (Mark 7:7, 13);
- the completeness of the believer in Christ (Colossians 2:10), with:

- total freedom from sins (Colossians 1:14);
- union in His death, burial and resurrection (Romans 6);
- adult sonship position (Galatians 4).

We do not claim infallibility for the contents of this publication. Our readers are asked to be as the Bereans and search the Scriptures (Acts 17:10-11; I Thessalonians 5:21).

This publication is not connected with any "church," "denomination," "movement," "organization," "mission," "creed," "meeting," "school," "conference" or "fellowship."

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PO Box 265, Windber, PA 15963 Office: (800) 784-6010 Local: (814) 701-0063

bsn@studyshelf.com

Clyde L. Pilkington, Jr. – Editor André Sneidar – Managing Editor

Managers and Assistants

Clyde L. Pilkington, III, Keith Martin, Nathan H. Pilkington, Janet L. Maher, Stephen Hill, Aaron Locker, Mark Peters, Cindy Pilkington, Nadine Sneidar

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