

IRONSIDE'S ARGUMENT

- “It is contended by Bullingerites, and others of like ilk, that Paul did not receive the revelation of the mystery of the one Body until he was imprisoned in Rome, 63 A. D. Generally, too, the ground is taken that this revelation was given to him alone, and that the twelve knew nothing of it. Let us see if these assertions will stand the test of Holy Scripture.” (pg31)
 - First, note the derogatory tone.
 - Second, Bullinger did, late in his ministry, contend that the mystery was not until the Roman imprisonment. This was based on the fact that Paul was preaching the Kingdom until that time, both in Acts and in his epistles. Only in the prison epistles does he not speak of the Kingdom. Thus Bullinger made a conclusion based on evidence (though I believe a false conclusion). Ironside fails to give the argument *any* consideration, which is a sign of weakness.
 - Concerning the 12 and their knowledge of the "one Body," prior to Paul, it is well to "see if these assertions will stand the test of Holy Scripture."
- Concerning Romans 16:25-27 - “Here we have the plain statement that Paul’s preaching throughout the years had been in accordance with the revelation of the mystery previously kept secret, but at that time made manifest. (Pg. 32)
 - In this, I agree. Bullinger believes that vv. 24-27 were a postscript, added by the Apostle *after* his imprisonment, thus is only related to his preaching after the mystery. There is textual evidence to support the case.
 - While I disagree with Bullinger, Ironside would have been better to produce a more compelling argument.
- “Moreover, he intimates that it had been already published abroad in writing, for he says, “It is made manifest (not exactly by the Scriptures of the prophets, as though he referred to Old Testament prophets, but) by prophetic writings,” that is, his own and others. (pg. 32)
 - Ironside's interpretation of these words in v. 26 is a far stretch and not at all the "plain sense" of the passage.
 - Who would understand **the scriptures of the prophets** to be *the writings of Paul*?
- “Does anyone ask, How can any ultra-dispensationalist dare to say in the face of such a Scripture as this, that the mystery had not been made known and had not been previously preached before Paul was imprisoned at Rome?” (pg. 32)
 - First, Ironside *does* answer how he "dare to say" that the mystery was not made known until Rome.
 - Second, and as important, one must ask how Ironside will dare claim, “in the face of such a Scripture as this,” that the mystery was made known *prior to* the Apostle Paul.
- Dr. Bullinger and others who follow him suggest that in all likelihood the last three verses of the Epistle to the Romans were not written by Paul when he sent the letter from some distant Gentile city, but that they were appended to the letter after he reached Rome and received the new revelation.” (Emphasis mine - pg. 32)
 - Bullinger NEVER claims that these verses "were not written by Paul."
 - Bullinger's words:
 - "the *doxology* is a postscript added **by the apostle** after he arrived at...Rome"
 - Further, "there is no question as to the genuineness or authenticity of these verses."
 - Further still, "this postscript was added later **by the apostle**."
 - Finally, "**The apostle** was guided by the Holy Spirit to add the postscript to Romans." ¹
 - To claim that Bullinger said that the words were “not written by Paul” is slanderous.

¹ The Companion Bible, pg. 1694. Note on Romans 16:24-27 - Emphasis mine.

- “Is this unbelievable? Nevertheless, it is exactly what these men teach. It is higher criticism of the worst type and impugns the perfection of the Word of God.” (pg. 32)
 - This is a conclusion necessarily false because it is built on a false assumption (accusation).
- Needless to say, the contention of Dr. Bullinger is an absolute fabrication. It is the special pleading of a hard-driven controversialist, bound to maintain his unscriptural system at all costs, even to destroying the unity of the Word of God. (pg. 32)
 - Continued hyperbole by Ironside, who himself is "bound to maintain his unscriptural system at all cost," albeit a different system and more widely accepted.

MY NOTES ON ROMANS 16:25-26

- Romans 16:25 – *Now to him ... of Jesus Christ*
 - First, note that **stablish** is not an archaic term for *establish*. To *establish* is to start something. To *stablish* is to build up that which has already been started. Only the KJV uses this precise term.
 - Paul's joy was that the Romans would be established **according to my gospel** (a term he uses three times directly and, though not using the exact phrase, explains himself in Galatians 2:2). Only a cursory reading of the Scriptures show that Paul's Gospel is very different from the Gospel of the Kingdom that had been presented by Jesus and the Apostles. There are numerous examples, but try to reconcile Matthew 19:23-25 with Paul's Gospel and you will recognize the differences. Under the Law (which governed entrance into the Kingdom) the wealthy had heavy demands and could easily forsake devotion to the Law (see Deuteronomy 8:10-13). Notice how many times the Gospels warn of riches (the man with the barns, two masters, the rich man and Lazarus, Zacchaeus, the rich young ruler, etc.), but the Gospels are all about the Kingdom. Would anyone under "Paul's Gospel" tell a rich man that he needed to get rid of his possessions before calling upon the Lord?
- Romans 16:25 - *according to the ... the world began*
 - There are some extremely important theological concepts in the second half of this verse. One should ask: *what is according to the revelation of the mystery?* Is it **my Gospel**? Is it **the preaching of Jesus Christ**? Is it the building up of the believer? In one sense, all lead to the same conclusion. It appears that it is **my Gospel** that **was kept secret since the world began**. The **preaching of Jesus Christ** was carried out under days which had been prophesied (compare Acts 3:18-26, especially v. 24), thus were not under a **mystery**. So, every student of the Word must determine: *was Paul given a Gospel that had not been previously revealed?* If not, then the student must determine *what is the mystery now revealed?* If Paul was indeed given a previously hidden mystery, what implications does that have upon Bible interpretation and application for the believer today?
- Romans 16:26 – *now is made manifest*
 - When was this **made manifest**? Ephesians 3:7-9 and Colossians 1:25-26 show that it was made manifest through Paul (who is the only person who makes such a claim).
- Romans 16:26 – *and by the scriptures of the prophets...*
 - The prophets did not know the mystery (otherwise v. 25 would be false). However, the prophets are necessary for making known the mystery, because the mystery makes no sense without the prophetic age. This is why, whenever possible, the best way to lead someone to faith in Jesus Christ is to teach them the Scriptures from the beginning.

IRONSIDE'S ARGUMENT, CONTINUED

- When then did Paul get this revelation of the truth of the one Body? He tells us he had been preaching it throughout the world among all nations. (Pg. 33)
 - The question is fundamental. However, Romans 16:26 does not tell us what Ironside claims, that "he had been preaching it throughout the world." Rather, from the time of the writing, it had been preached. This does not conflict with Bullinger's argument (which I reject) and it does not say what Ironside wants us to believe it says (that the mystery was necessarily preached many years prior to Rome - a position I hold but which finds no support here).
- “The answer clearly is, he received it at the time of his conversion, when he cried in amazement, “Who art Thou, Lord?” and the glorified Saviour answered, “I am Jesus whom thou persecutest.” This was the revelation of the mystery. In that announcement our Lord declared that every Christian on earth is so indissolubly linked up with

Him as the glorified Head in Heaven, that everything done against one of them is felt by the Head. This is the mystery—members of His Body, of His flesh, and of His bones.” (pg. 33)

- This is utter lunacy. In no stretch of the imagination would anyone make this conclusion by reading the three occasions of Paul's Damascus road testimony, nor is there any corroborating evidence that would allow a theological conclusion from this experience.
- How, from the Damascus road experience, would anyone know that gentiles were now being allowed direct access to God? Or that the Law had no force and could be wholly disregarded for the believer?
- Ironside's conclusion to a fundamental question is eisegesis almost beyond compare.
- “Now no one was ever added to the Lord in any other way than by the baptism of the Holy Spirit. So that clearly we have the Body of Christ here in the Acts [5:14 and 11:22-24], although the term itself is not used.” (pg. 34)
 - Ironside is making the false assumption that being "added to the Lord" through the "baptism of the Holy Spirit" is the mystery. It would be most difficult to build a Biblical argument that the baptism of the Spirit was ever a hidden mystery, for it has been prophesied a number of times in the Hebrew Scriptures and was repeatedly foretold the Apostles by Jesus. Furthermore, it did not release the believer from the Law nor did it remove the barrier of the Law.

RANDY WHITE'S ANALYSIS

- Ironside does not have a grasp on what *the mystery* is.
 - It is *not* being baptized into Christ by the Holy Spirit.
 - It is *not* gentiles being baptized into Christ and the Jews and Gentile believers being one body.
 - It is the setting aside of Israel and her Kingdom rather than the immediate judgment of Israel for the rejection of the Messiah, and the subsequent offer of individual, personal salvation given without regard for one's legal standing with the commonwealth and covenants of Israel.
- Because he misunderstands the mystery, Ironside spends his time arguing that the Body of Christ existed long before the Roman imprisonment. Such argument is easily made, but irrelevant.
- A failure to understand the mystery has led to a confusion of the revelation of the mystery.
 - “The distinction between Jew and Gentile was abolished in the cross, not after Paul's imprisonment in Rome.” (pg. 39).
 - While the abolishment of the distinction was enabled by the cross, no revelation was given through the cross, nor by the Lord in the 40 days following the resurrection in which He spoke of the Kingdom which would be established in, through, and for the Jewish nation, nor among the 12 Apostles who were holding to the distinction even as late as the Jerusalem Council in approx. 51 AD.
- Ironside goes to great pains to show that the mystery was revealed long before the Roman imprisonment, but *also* long before Paul, to the apostles before him.
 - Concerning Ephesians 3:5, Ironside says, “The apostle himself tells us here that “it is now revealed unto His holy apostles and prophets.” Note not only the plural, but that others besides apostles had this revelation. How utterly absurd would words like these be if he were referring to something that had just been secretly made known to him! But is it true that other apostles and prophets **had already known** of the mystery? **It is.**” (pg. 40) [emphasis mine].
 - The problem with Ironside's argument is that the text doesn't say what he is forcing it to say. There is *no* communication that the apostles *previously* knew of this mystery, but only that **it is now revealed**. Compare Colossians 1:26 which is perfectly clear. How Ironside moves from a scripture that speaks of "now" and makes it "in the past" is "utterly absurd."
- Ironside rejects the idea that Paul was the unique recipient of a mystery that was hidden totally before revealed to Paul. By this rejection, he opened a wide door to Lordship salvation and Progressive dispensationalism.