

It is imperative that we realize the enemy is more “cunning than any beast of the field” and we can be sure his question to Eve was delivered with respectful curiosity; “Is it so that God has said?” He then immediately altered God’s Words.

In his endeavors to deceive Christians today Satan is far too intelligent to ask them to go and commit adultery or send an agent into the local church boldly claiming to be Messiah. His techniques are the same today; he very slowly seduces the faithful away from the Word of God by using the Word of God in an altered state or out of context.

Eve eventually misquoted God’s Words, she omitted, she altered and she added to them (compare Gen.2:16-17 with Gen. 3:1 and 3:2-3.) This old technique has resulted in the same seduction away from the Word in wide stream Christianity today; here are some humorous examples.

Eve ate of the apple tree. (For the truth see the Genesis references above).

Three Kings arrived at the manger on Christmas Eve to worship the new born Son of God. For the truth see Matt.2:1-11 where “three” is not mentioned in relation to the wise men, not Kings. They arrived at the house, not a stable, and the Lord was a young child not a new born infant. That it could not have been Christmas Eve is obvious.

So who said Pentecost was the “birthday of the church” or that the Acts period was the beginning of the early “church”? It doesn’t matter who said it, what matters is this, are either of these statements the truth? The answer is no to both. Pentecost is a Feast given to Israel and the Acts period was God’s extended mercy to Israel, holding out His loving hands to them and even saving some Gentiles to provoke Israel to jealousy. See Lev.23, Roms.11:1-2, 10:21

Israel still remained as God’s people during Acts. From Acts 13 Israel was under God’s judgment she was stumbling, partially blinded. Because of this national stumbling, Gentiles were included in the calling of that time. Even though Israel was stumbling Paul writes that Israel had not stumbled to fall and was anticipating their full inclusion in God’s purposes for the world through them;

[Rom 11:11-12](#) And so I ask, "They have not stumbled so as to fall, have they?" Of course not! On the contrary, because of their stumbling, salvation has come to the gentiles to make the Jews jealous. Now if their stumbling means riches for the world, and if their fall means riches for the gentiles, how much more will their full inclusion mean! (ISV)

Back in Israel’s typical salvation, God took them immediately from Mt Sinai to the border of the Promised Land, see Deut. 1:2, but Israel lacked faith to enter. Israel was then lead for 40 years in the wilderness but God did not change His plans, Israel arrived at the Eastern border and entered through the Jordan River. The Lord did not introduce something new, or change His mind for Israel in Acts just because they were lacking in faith. This is what Paul says when he wrote Romans during the Acts period;

[Rom 11:28-29](#) Indeed as regards the gospel, they are enemies for your sakes. But as regards the election, they are beloved for the fathers' sakes. For the free gifts and calling of God are without repentance.

However, the Lord had warned Israel that persistent rejection of his Word (in this case the proclamation of the Lord as their long awaited Messiah) would result in loss of privileges and curses would result, rather than blessing. According to the warning of Isaiah 6, at Acts 28, Israel was “put away” for a time.

[Act 28:25](#) And disagreeing with one another, they were let go (by God), Paul saying one word: Well did the Holy Spirit speak through Isaiah the prophet to our fathers,

[Act 28:26](#) saying, "Go to this people and say: Hearing you shall hear and shall not understand; and seeing you shall see and not perceive. (Isaiah 6).

After pronouncing this judgment passage against Israel, Paul then makes the following statement;

[Act 28:28](#) Therefore be it known to you that the salvation of God is sent to the nations, and they will hear.

During the Acts period Paul preached to the Jew first and when they rejected the gospel, he turned to the Gentiles, but here is a difference. Here Israel is finally placed aside and Paul proclaims a new message to all the nations without turning back to the Jews. The Jews have no advantage, no dispensational privilege today. All those dispensational things of the Acts period were put aside and a completely new set of conditions was introduced to the world through Paul the one appointed by God for us today.

The church to which we belong was revealed to Paul after Israel was put aside at Acts 28. Not before. Pentecost cannot be the “birthday” of our church, the Acts period is not “the beginning” of our church, it had not been revealed at that time. Let us read some plain statements of Paul in Ephesians;

Eph 3:1 For this cause, I, Paul, am the prisoner of Jesus Christ for you nations,
Eph 3:2 if you have heard of the dispensation of the grace of God which is given to me toward you,
Eph 3:3 that by revelation He made known to me the mystery

In this letter Paul is a prisoner for us Gentiles and we notice the link made with his imprisonment and the dispensation of the grace of God which was given to Paul for us. By comparing Scripture we notice something different, back in Acts this is what Paul said;

Act 28:17 And after three days it happened that Paul called together those being chief of the Jews. And they coming together, he said to them, Men, brothers, I did nothing against the people or customs of our fathers. I was delivered a **prisoner** from Jerusalem into the hands of the Romans

Act 28:20 For this cause, then, I called for you, to see and to speak with you. For I have this chain around me **for the hope of Israel.**

Israel's hope is not our hope today. When we carefully compare Paul's own words we find something glaringly different between the Acts period and Ephesians, here more of Paul's words from the Acts period;

Act 24:14 But I confess this to you, that after the Way which they call heresy, so I worship the God of my fathers, believing all things that are written in the Law and in the Prophets.

Act 26:6 And now I stand and am judged for *the* hope of the promise made to our fathers by God,

Act 26:7 to which *promise* our twelve tribes hope to attain, serving God fervently night and day. For the sake of this hope, king Agrippa, I am accused by the Jews.

Act 26:22 Then having obtained help from God, I stand until this day, witnessing both to small and great, saying no other things than those which the prophets and Moses said was going to happen;

Act 26:23 whether the Christ *was* liable to suffer, whether first by a resurrection of *the* dead He was going to proclaim light to the people and to the nations.

These statements by Paul in his Acts period ministry message cannot be married to the statements after the Acts period. The promises made to Israel's fathers, the things that Moses and the prophets wrote about were the basis of the Acts period but are not the dispensational basis of our calling today.

Let us read more of this change in Ephesians chapter 3;

Eph 3:7 Of this *gospel* I was made a minister, according to the gift of the grace of God given to me by the effectual working of His power.

Eph 3:8 This grace is given to me (*who am* less than the least of all saints) **to preach the gospel of the unsearchable riches of Christ among the nations,**

Eph 3:9 and to bring to light what *is* **the fellowship (or dispensation) of the mystery** which from eternity **has been hidden in God,** who created all things by Jesus Christ;

This gospel is concerning the unsearchable riches of Christ and the dispensation is one that had previously been hidden in God. Ephesians was not written in the Acts period, it was written after; after Israel had been put aside at Acts 28.

In Ephesians Paul writes about a completely new set of conditions that had previously been hidden in God, not revealed to Moses or the prophets but revealed to Paul alone. If it was given to Paul alone then Matthew, Mark, Luke and John do not know anything about it because they, like the prophets, did not receive this new message. The four gospels tell us of our Lord's death burial and resurrection, essential for the redemption of all but they do not write about our calling. However there is one other who knew nothing of this new set of conditions until its revelation and that is Paul.

One of the gravest mistakes in Bible exegesis is to take these later, post Acts truths of Paul and force them into his Acts period ministry and writings. This is wrong division and must be exposed for the confusion it creates.

For many years the Christian community has held to traditions which have concealed this wonderful post acts dispensation given to Paul for us today. The enemy has done his work well. Christians are confused with the traditions that Pentecost is the birthday of the church that the Acts is the history of early church and that Paul was given a progressive revelation of truth. These doctrines are not true.

Paul was given the dispensation of the grace of God for us today after the close of the book of Acts, it is important we know all about it.

In the following lessons we will bring forth all the evidence to show the marked dispensational differences in Paul, comparing his Acts period ministry and his post Acts ministry.