

The Apostle Paul makes claims to be the sole recipient of The Mystery, the dispensation of the Grace of God in the following passages;

Eph 3:1 For this cause, I, Paul, am the prisoner of Jesus Christ for you nations, (Gentiles)

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

Eph 3:7 Of this gospel I was made a minister,

Eph 3:8 This grace is given to me

Paul states the same position in Col.1:23-27 and 2Tim.1:8-12. Paul, the prisoner of Christ Jesus for us Gentiles with a dispensation of God is his post Acts ministry. In Ephesians & Colossians Paul says that the dispensation given to him alone for us Gentiles today was "hidden in God" (Eph.3:9) and "hidden from ages and from generations" (Col.1:26).

This special revelation was given to Paul after Israel were set aside at Acts 28 and we are providing Scriptural evidence to show that today's dispensation was hidden in God and away from ages and generations up until it was revealed. Prior to its revelation it was also hidden away from Paul and this was proven by showing the dispensational differences in Paul's Acts letters and ministry compared to those letters he wrote after Acts 28 and his ministry found in them.

Turning back to the Acts period we read Paul's own statements regarding his worship and centre of faith during that time. Defending himself before the governor Felix, Paul says this;

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.

During the Acts period Paul worshipped the God of his (& Israel's) fathers and believed all things written in the OT. This could not include Paul's post Acts gospel of The Mystery of Ephesians 3 because the OT knew nothing about it.

It is very important to notice that Paul was called and commissioned by the God of Israel's fathers;

Act 22:14 And he said, The God of our fathers has chosen you to know His will and to see the Just One, and to hear a voice out of His mouth.

Notice Paul was called by the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, the same God who called Moses (Acts7:32) and who had glorified His Son Jesus of Nazareth (Acts 3:13, 5:30). During Acts, Paul worshipped the God who called Moses. Moses was sent to Israel as was Paul in the Acts period despite the fact he was the apostle of the Gentiles at that time. However, Paul's Acts period commission from the God of Israel was to the Jew first, see Acts 9:15, 26:19-20 & Roms.1:16 & 2:9-10. From Acts 9 to Acts 28, Paul went to the Jew first, see Acts 26:20.

After Acts 28, Paul did not speak of God as the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, Israel had been put to one side at Acts 28 and it is now the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ; the God of all (Eph.1:3, 17 & 4:6). After Acts 28 Paul was sent to all the nations with the glorious message that Christ was now among them independent of Israel, see Eph.3:1 & Col.1:24-27. It was no longer Jew first; it was no longer God in His relationship with Israel's Fathers.

Looking back to Paul's Acts period ministry we find another statement which is in harmony with his worship of the God of Israel and his belief in all things in the Law and the Prophets;

Act 25:8 Defending himself, Paul said, Neither against the Law of the Jews, nor against the temple, nor against Caesar have I offended in anything.

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

Notice all the way to Acts 28 Paul declared he had not offended in anyway against the Law of the Jews, the Temple or the customs of his and Israel's fathers. Now consider this passage written after Acts 28;

Eph 2:13 But now in Christ Jesus you who were once afar off are made near by the blood of Christ.

Eph 2:14 For He is our peace, He making us both one, and He has broken down the middle wall of partition *between us,*

Eph 2:15 having abolished in His flesh the enmity (the Law of commandments *contained* in ordinances) so that in Himself He might make the two into one new man, making peace *between them;*

Eph 2:16 and so that He might reconcile both to God in one body by the cross, having slain the enmity in Himself.

How could Paul write, even figuratively, that the middle wall of partition had been broken down between Jew and Gentile and not offend the Laws of Israel? See Lev.22:10 & Num.16:40.

How could Paul even hint that the enmity the Law of Commandments (contained in ordinances) had been abolished without offending the Law? Compare Ex.12:14, 17, 31:16 & Numb.18:8.

How could Paul not offend a Jew when he said of the two (Jews and Gentiles) God had created one new man?

For those who suggest that Paul had a progressive revelation we find such statements in Acts 25:8 and 28:17 totally contrary to such a position. In Acts 21:27-30 we find the middle wall of partition still standing, past which Paul, as a Jew, was free to go but Trophimus was not. Both these men were believers in the Lord and made righteous by grace.

Remember, Paul has already told us that he worshipped the God of his fathers during Acts, believing all things in the Law and Prophets. He also says this;

[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;

The letters of Paul which are consistent with his Acts statements and ministry are these, Galatians, 1@2 Thessalonians, 1@2Corinthians, Hebrews and Romans.

Some of the progressive revelation teachers will say the Paul gradually decreased his use of the Old Testament as more details of The Mystery of Ephesians were revealed, however this is not the case, in fact quite the opposite. Here are the same Acts period letters with their number of OT quotes placed in parentheses; Galatians ((10), 1@2 Thessalonians (0 but references to prophecy and end time events thereof), 1@2Corinthians (27), Hebrews (42) and Romans (68).

It is interesting to note that Paul's gospel as recorded in Acts 13 contained 5 OT quotes and a recount of Israel's typical salvation. So we see Paul's first recorded gospel started back in Israel's typical salvation and Paul increased the use of the OT as his Acts period ministry progressed.

Turning to Paul's statements after Acts 28 we remind ourselves of these words:

[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* (dispensation) of the mystery which from eternity has been hidden in God, who created all things by Jesus Christ;

The letters which speak of the unsearchable riches of Christ and the dispensation of The Mystery are these; Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians, 1@2 Timothy, Titus and Philemon. Their OT content is as follows; Ephesians (8), Philippians (0), Colossians (0), 1@2 Timothy (2), Titus (0) and Philemon (0).

If Romans was the last letter of Paul in the Acts period, then it drops from 68 plus OT quotes in that letter to 8 in Ephesians with just 2 more in the remaining post Acts letters. It is impossible to claim Paul gradually reduced his use of the OT in the light of these statistics; in fact, such teaching is quite contrary to Scripture. Acts is not a transition it was the ends of the ages. Acts is not a progressive revelation it was Moses the Law and the Prophets.

To sum up this lesson;

The Mystery, the present dispensation of the grace of God was given to Paul alone, it was unknown by Moses, the Prophets and Paul during the Acts period. In the Acts period Paul believed all things in the OT after Acts he spoke about things not found in it.

In this present dispensation Paul refers to God as the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the God of all, whereas previously He was the God of Abraham Isaac and Jacob, the God of Israel's fathers. It was Israel's God who called Paul in the Acts period, it was the God of all in the post Acts dispensation.

In the Acts period Paul says that he had not offended the Law or the Temple but after Acts 28 writes about the breaking down of the Middle Wall of partition, a physical part of Israel's Temple, and the abolition of the enmity contained in the ordinances. Both such statements are in clear opposition to Paul's Acts ministry and worship and would certainly have offended the Jews.

Paul's letters fall into two natural groups, those written during Acts which are in complete internal harmony with his Acts ministry and witness and those written after Acts which are dispensationally different. Please note, there are

fundamental truths in all off Paul's letters, such as righteousness by faith reckoned by grace and redemption by Christ's shed blood and the forgiveness of sins.

May each reader search and see if these things are so. Paul does not exhort us to rightly divide the OT from the New, we must also rightly divide the New and that includes Paul's letters.