

I had just retired in December of 2012 and was looking forward to devoting more time to learning Mid Acts doctrine and connecting with the many wonderful grace believers I know and love. A thorny issue appeared, however, in an online Bible study I regularly attended, regarding whether the "mystery" Paul writes of in his letters is really "unsearchable" or kept secret in the Old Testament. In my determination to prove that it was "hid in God" as Paul claimed in Ephesians 3:9, I stumbled upon a website in which Brian Kelson explained the differences in ministries within Paul's letters. These differences held the answer to my dilemma, and I was forced to change my entire worldview!

The logic of the Acts 28 position is inescapable.

At Acts 28 Israel's hope of the kingdom was temporarily set aside after Paul's declaration in Acts 28:25-28, his ministry of presenting their Messiah to Israel and of inviting the Gentiles to share in the kingdom Christ would usher in (when Israel had accepted that Messiah) came to an end. Paul then declares the "revelation of the mystery" he received at that time in a circular letter to all the churches in Asia that is popularly titled, "Ephesians." It is this "revelation of the mystery"—as opposed to the "revelation of the mystery" of Romans 16:25 that concerned the preaching of the gospel which, although kept secret since the world began, "now is made manifest by the scriptures of the prophets" (in other words, searchable) – that declares a new creation of God, the "one new man," the "church, the body of Christ, with a glorious heavenly hope (not an earthly kingdom hope) made possible when anyone anywhere trusts the Lord Jesus Christ and what he accomplished through his shed blood at Calvary.

This means that Paul's letters written during the Acts period were part of his ministry of proclaiming the attainability of the earthly kingdom to, first, Jews, and then Gentiles that might believe. Finally! I could read and understand the analogy of the olive tree in Romans 11! It means just what it says! What a refreshing concept! And when Paul writes that he and his coworkers are "able ministers of the new testament" in 2Corinthians 3:6, it's because they are! No scripture wrangling necessary! Paul quotes from the Old Testament in his Acts period letters because he was holding forth the hope OF the Old Testament! The so-called "rapture" of his Acts period letters is a description of kingdom saints being resurrected and caught up to Christ as he descends to the earth in his second coming; it's not about a pre-trib., rescue for the body of Christ at all.

My biggest regret, apart from having proselytized fellow saints with Mid Acts error, is that for so many years I refused to apply God's forgiveness through his Son Jesus Christ to all that trusted him after he had paid the full penalty for all sins, including those of his chosen people! 2Corinthians 5:18-20 was written while God was stretching forth his long

suffering to his chosen nation in hopes they would believe and he could grant them their blessed hope, the kingdom on earth, so the fact that "God was in Christ reconciling the world unto himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them," is a fact that encompasses Israel as well as the Gentile nations during the Acts period when their kingdom was on offer, as well as the world today during the dispensation of the Grace of God when our heavenly hope is on offer! Granted, there were and are Mid Acts teachers that proclaim the truth that Israel too was reconciled to God by the work of Christ (i.e., the late Keith Blades of Enjoy the Bible Ministries and Michael McDaniel of the Millennium Bible Institute); but I chose to believe Mid Acts teachers that insisted Israel had a law/works clause in their plan of salvation. Yes, the Jews still possessed the Law of Moses; but obedience of it determined, not their salvation, but their position and inheritance in the coming kingdom—just as our works will determine our position and inheritance in the heavenly places!

Lord God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, I am so thankful that even my sin of denying your grace to your chosen nation of whom Paul was inspired to write, "And so all Israel shall be saved: as it is written, There shall come out of Sion the Deliverer, and shall turn away ungodliness from Jacob: For this is my covenant unto them, when I shall take away their sins" (Romans 11:26-27), is forgiven because I have trusted your Son! Thank you for your servant, Brian Kelson, who gave so generously of his time in helping me understand your marvelous plans; and for those that have come along with me on this exciting journey! I await the appearing of your Son Jesus Christ when we shall appear with him in glory; and I pray I can be of some use to you in declaring your marvelous all-encompassing grace to a lost world!

Deborah