

Back in March I began a series on ‘why I am a hyper-dispensationalist.’ Hyperdispensationalist and Ultra-dispensationalist are two labels that those who disagree with Mid-Acts dispensationalism put on those who do believe in the doctrine we teach. The purpose of this series is to look at the objections of those who oppose what we believe, and to see if they are truly legitimate.

* The first objection we looked at was that the church had to begin in Acts 2 because that is when the “baptizing work of the Holy Spirit” began. What we found was that the phrase: “baptizing work of the Holy Spirit” was not found in the scripture, and was made up to cover any baptism that involved the Holy Spirit in any way.

But we found that to do that, you have to ignore the plain words of the scripture and teach a doctrine based on a phrase that you made up. A plain reading of the words shows that there is a difference.

* **Matt 3:11** I indeed baptize you with water unto repentance: but he that cometh after me is mightier than I, whose shoes I am not worthy to bear: he shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost, and with fire:

Acts 1:5 For John truly baptized with water; but ye shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost not many days hence.

- According to these two verses, who is doing the baptizing in Acts 2? Jesus Christ.
- What are they being baptized with in Acts 2? The Holy Spirit.

1Cor 12:13 For **by** one Spirit are we all baptized into **one body**, whether *we be* Jews or Gentiles, whether *we be* bond or free; and have been all made to drink into one Spirit.

What body is that?

1Cor 12:27 ¶ Now ye are **the body of Christ**, and members in particular.

- According to these two verses, who is doing the baptizing in the dispensation of grace? The Holy Spirit.
- What are they being baptized into? The body of Christ.

These are different and can only be the same if you change the words of the scriptures. Furthermore, if we say that the baptism of the Holy Ghost in Acts 2 is the same as the baptism by the Spirit into the body of Christ, then we have to conclude that that is when the earnest of the Spirit that indwells the believer was given to the disciples. We have to conclude this, because after we believe we are sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise.

Eph 1:13-14 In whom ye also *trusted*, after that ye heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation: in whom also **after that ye believed, ye were sealed with that holy Spirit of promise, 14** Which is the earnest of our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession, unto the praise of his glory.

But, as we saw, in

John 20:22-23 And when he had said this, he breathed on *them*, and saith unto them, **Receive ye the Holy Ghost: 23** Whose soever sins ye remit, they are remitted unto them; *and* whose soever *sins* ye retain, they are retained.

So we can conclude that the baptism that was received in Acts 2 was very different than the baptism by the Spirit into the body of Christ.

Now this week we are going to explore the next objection.

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So, he makes the assumption, as even many mid-Acts dispensationalists make, that to be in Christ means that you are in the body of Christ. This assumes that no one who lived before the beginning of the body of Christ was in Christ. But scripture tells a different story.

* No one from the beginning to the end of time who receives eternal life receives it outside of Christ.

Eph 1:9-10 Having made known unto us the mystery of his will, according to his good pleasure which he hath purposed in himself: **10** That in the dispensation of the fulness of times **he might gather together in one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven, and which are on earth; even in him:**

We divide God's word, understanding that God has one purpose that has two eternal destinies: Heaven and Earth. Tat one purpose is that all things are IN Christ. His purpose and plan for His earthly people is Christ's eternal kingdom on the earth; His purpose and plan for His heavenly people is Christ's eternal kingdom in the heavens. The only difference in that purpose is the location where each will dwell.

But all are in Christ. The question then becomes, when did those before and during Christ's ministry come to be in him? Fortunately that question is answered for us. *

Rom 3:23-26 For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God; **24** Being justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is **in Christ Jesus:** **25** Whom God hath set forth *to be* a propitiation through faith in his blood, to declare his righteousness **for the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God;** **26** To declare, *I say*, at this time his righteousness: that he might be just, and the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus.

When Christ shed his blood on the cross, his righteousness was declared for the remission of sins that were past. That is, all those who had trusted what God had revealed to them throughout history were given, by grace, the righteousness of Christ through the forbearance of God. Now look again at verse 24. Where is the redemption that those who lived prior to Christ's death found? IN Christ. Everyone from Adam to the disciples of Christ were placed in Christ at his death and resurrection because of God's faith in the blood of Christ.

In verse 25, God sets forth Christ to be a propitiation through His faith in Christ's blood, not ours or theirs – God's faith. That is how he could forbear judging them for their sins. He trusted that Christ would be judged for their sins, so he, through His forbearance, didn't judge their sins. When Christ died, he paid the penalty for their sins and God's faith in Christ's blood became a reality.

In verse 26, then, he goes on to tell us how we get to be in Christ in this dispensation. *

Rom 3:26 To declare, *I say*, at this time his righteousness: that he might be just, and the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus.

We now just believe what God the Father believed throughout the ages about Jesus, and now we are granted his righteousness because of his sacrifice.

* When did the disciples of Christ get "in Christ"?

If they trusted that Jesus was the Christ, the Son of the Living God, after his blood was shed for them, they dwelt in him and he in them. They were in Christ at the same time the Old Testament saints were in Christ.

So everyone who ever trusted God at His word before the Apostle Paul was IN Christ before Paul.

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So we can see his logic here:

- Saul persecuted the church of God before his salvation.

- Christ is the head of the body
- Christ is the beginning of the church
- The church is the body
- Andronicus and Junia were in Christ (the church) before Paul
- Therefore, the church, the body of Christ, began before Paul at the resurrection of Christ

What is the problem with that logic? First is context.

- In Deut. 33:2, Daniel 8:13 and other passages, angels are referred to as ‘saints.’
- Paul refers to believers as ‘saints’ over 30 times
- Therefore believers become angels when they die

You can see that reasoning would break down very quickly when compared to other verses in the scripture, such as I Cor. 6:2-3 where we’re told that saints will judge angels.

If we start in Galatians where he did, and keep reading, we find out something that would be astounding if the church began at the resurrection of Christ.

Gal 2:1-2 ¶ Then fourteen years after I went up again to Jerusalem with Barnabas, and took Titus with me also. 2 And I went up by revelation, **and communicated unto them that gospel which I preach among the Gentiles, but privately to them which were of reputation,** lest by any means I should run, or had run, in vain. *

The church at Jerusalem didn’t know the gospel that Paul was preaching to the Gentiles. How could that even be possible if the churches are the same?

Now if we continue reading, we see why they didn’t understand the gospel that Paul was preaching:

Gal 2:6-9 But of these who seemed to be somewhat, (whatsoever they were, it maketh no matter to me: God accepteth no man's person:) for they who seemed *to be somewhat* in conference added nothing to me: 7 But contrariwise, when they saw that the gospel of the uncircumcision was committed unto me, as *the gospel* of the circumcision *was* unto Peter; 8 (For he that wrought effectually in Peter to the apostleship of the circumcision, the same was mighty in me toward the Gentiles:) 9 And when James, Cephas, and John, who seemed to be pillars, perceived the grace that was given unto me, they gave to me and Barnabas the right hands of fellowship; that we *should go* unto the heathen, and they unto the circumcision. *

- Peter had the keys to the kingdom – the apostleship of the circumcision – the gospel of the circumcision.
- Paul was the apostle of the Gentiles (including unbelieving Jews) – with the gospel of the uncircumcision.
- Why would the church the body of Christ have two different apostles with two different gospels to two different peoples when there is neither Jew or Gentile, bond or free, male or female in the body of Christ?

Now if we look at the verses in Colossians where he deduced that Christ was the first member of the church, and read the whole passage in context, we learn something a little different if we start reading a little before and keep reading.

Col 1:16-17 For **by him were all things created**, that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether *they be* thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers: **all things were created by him**, and for him: 17 And **he is before all things, and by him all things consist**.

Now we get to the first verse he read:

Col 1:18 And he is the head of the body, the church: **who is the beginning**, the firstborn from the dead; that in all *things* he might have the preeminence.

- Considering the verses directly preceding this one, do you think the phrase ‘who is the beginning’ refers to him being the beginning of the church, or the beginning as in “I am the Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end?” * I think it’s pretty plain that he is Alpha.
- The first born of the dead isn’t referring here only to the church. It is the same as in:

1Cor 15:20 ¶ But now is Christ risen from the dead, *and* become **the firstfruits of them that slept**.

This is, as in Ephesians one, the mystery of His will. * “That in all *things* he might have the preeminence.”

Col 1:19-20 For it pleased *the Father* that in him should all fulness dwell; **20** And, having made peace through the blood of his cross, **by him to reconcile all things unto himself; by him, I say, whether they be things in earth, or things in heaven.**

Here we see the one purpose in two places again.

It is obvious that this passage isn’t declaring that when Christ rose from the dead the church began.

Now, he declares that he will put the nail in the coffin. But wait until the end. The last statement reveals the fatal flaw in his logic.

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Did you catch that last statement?

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Most teachers that believe that the dispensation of grace began at the cross teach that salvation before the cross came by looking forward to it, and salvation after the cross comes by looking back at it.

This man has the intellectual honesty to admit that nothing about the church, the body of Christ, or salvation by grace through faith in trusting the shed blood of Christ was revealed before Paul revealed them. That is what that statement is saying. I have heard Peter Ruckman’s sermons on hyper-dispensationalism, and that is what he says.

The church began at the cross and continued for at least 15 years before the disciples in Jerusalem knew anything about it. That is what they want you to believe.

Because the kingdom church and the church the body of Christ are both called the church of God. *

Now one last thing: If the word church always refers to the body of Christ, then Moses began the body of Christ.

Acts 7:37-38 This is that Moses, which said unto the children of Israel, A prophet shall the Lord your God raise up unto you of your brethren, like unto me; him shall ye hear. **38** This is he, **that was in the church in the wilderness with the angel which spake to him in the mount Sina**, and *with* our fathers: who received the lively oracles to give unto us: