

When Paul wrote to the Corinthians way back in the Acts period, he implored them thus;

So let a man think of us as ministers of Christ and stewards of the mysteries of God. [1Co 4:1](#)

And though I have prophecies, and understand all mysteries and all knowledge; and though I have all faith, so as to move mountains, and do not have charity, I am nothing. [1Co 13:2](#)

Therefore I beseech you, be imitators of me. [1Co:4:16](#)

Be imitators of me, even as I also *am* of Christ. [1Co:11:1](#)

Paul's desire for the faithful at Corinth was that they considered him a minister of Christ and a steward of the mysteries of God, yet despite the fact he understood all mysteries, without charity (loving benevolence), he was nothing. He wanted them to show the same qualities, to know the mysteries of God but to show love at the same time, cp [1Co:8:1](#).

As students of the Word of Truth, we should not dismiss the mysteries of God or Bible study in general because some claim love is the more important attribute to seek, this is a very dangerous doctrine indeed. How do we know of God's love apart from studying His Word? Thus love is not an excuse to leave Bible study in the hands of others, see [2Tim:2:15](#).

To study the mysteries of God, we first recognize that there are a number and, as always, to understand them we must apply the Bible study principal which is to test things differing, [Phils:1:9-10](#). Not all mysteries are the same and here are some found in the New Testament. Stuart Allen's audio number A56 on this link is helpful; bibleunderstanding.com/allen1.htm

And He said, To you it is given to know the mysteries of the kingdom of God. But to others I speak in parables, so that seeing they might not see and hearing they might not understand. [Luk:8:10](#), [Mat 13:10-11](#)

For I do not want you to be ignorant of this mystery, brothers, lest you should be wise within yourselves; that blindness in part has happened to Israel, until the fullness of the nations has comes in. [Rom.11:25](#)

But we speak *the* wisdom of God in a mystery, which God has hidden, predetermining it before the world for our glory; [1Co:2:7](#)

For the mystery of lawlessness is already working, only he *is* now holding back until it comes out of *the* midst. [2Th 2:7](#)

And without controversy great is the mystery of godliness: God was manifested in the flesh, justified in the Spirit, seen by angels, preached among nations, believed on in *the* world, and received up into glory. [1Tim.3:16](#)

the mystery of the seven stars which you saw in My right hand and the seven golden lampstands. The seven stars are the angels of the seven churches, and the seven lampstands which you saw are the seven churches. [Rev.1:20](#)

And on her forehead was a name written, MYSTERY, BABYLON THE GREAT, THE MOTHER OF HARLOTS AND OF THE ABOMINATIONS OF THE EARTH. [Rev.17:5](#)

The Bible word mystery does not mean something inexplicable or incomprehensible, rather something that is or was, a secret. Once a mystery is explained to us, then it no longer remains secret but is understandable and informative.

In this new series we will examine two mysteries which some claim are the same, but when we see the differences then our understanding of the present dispensation of grace and our calling which is found within it shall be much clearer. We shall compare the mystery of Romans.16 with that of Ephesians and Colossians. Please read Col.1:24-28, Eph.3:1-10 and Roms.15:25-26.

How many opinions have we heard regarding any subject found in the Word of God? Probably too many.

Some might ask if it is really possible to come to a definitive conclusion on anything since the static of human opinion is so loud it drowns many. Yet the Lord encourages us to be diligent and study His Word and when we allow the Word to explain the Word we finally arrive at God's opinion which is precisely where we should be despite the fact this might not be popular.

One method of finding clarity on any passage is to consider it in its context. As Miles Coverdale said;

“It shall greatly help ye to understand the Scriptures if thou mark not only what is spoken or written, but of whom and to whom, with what words, at what time, where, to what intent, with what circumstances, considering what goeth before and what followeth after. ”

In other words, Miles was reminding us that every passage must be understood in its context. So before we can understand the mysteries of Romans 16 and Ephesians and Colossians, we need to see each of them in their immediate, near and remote contexts before we decide if they are the same, or even related. Thus we cannot define the mystery of Romans 16 by opening Ephesians and Colossians and ignoring all of Romans. Here is the mystery of Romans 16;

[The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all. Amen.](#)

[Now to him that is of power to stablish you according to my gospel, and the preaching of Jesus Christ, according to the revelation of the mystery, which was kept secret since the world began,](#)

[But now is made manifest, and by the scriptures of the prophets, according to the commandment of the everlasting God, made known to all nations for the obedience of faith: To God only wise, be glory through Jesus Christ for ever. Amen. Rom 16:24-27](#)

This simple structure of Paul's letter to the Romans shows how the mystery of chapter 16 fits comfortably within the scope of the letter;

- A. 1:1-17. Gospel of God (promised afore, prophets in Holy Scriptures)
concerning Jesus Christ, Son of David & God
apostleship, grace, obedience to the faith, all nations
called and faithful in Rome-Paul's desire to visit
spiritual gift, goal "established", ready to preach gospel
gospel of Christ, power, Jew first, just live by faith
- B. 1:18-3:20 Jews & Gentiles all guilty before God,
as it is written, Ps.51:4
- C. 3:21-31 Glory of God, all short of it, as it is written
- D. 4:1-25 what says the Scripture?
Abraham's body "now dead", flesh v just'n by faith
- E. 5:1-11 Reconciliation of remnant, peace through Christ
- F. 5:12-21 CONDEMNATION in Adam, law of sin & death
- G. 6-7 Questions and repudiations
- F. 8 NO CONDEMNATION in Christ, law of Spirit of life
- E. 9-11 Reconciliation of "all Israel", Deliverer out of Zion, NC
- D. 12-13 Present your bodies a living sacrifice,
for it is written, vengeance, put on Christ, no flesh

C. 14-15:7 The Glory of God received to, things written aforetime
B. 15:8-16:24 Jews & Gentiles all acceptable before God, hope,
promises to fathers, confirmed, as it is written, Is.11

A.16:25-27 to Him, power to "stablish", my gospel
preaching of Jesus Christ acc'g to revelation of mystery
kept secret (silenced) since the world began
but now manifested and by Scriptures of prophets
commandment of everlasting God
all nations for obedience of faith

(based on Mr. Welch's structure from Just and the Justifier)

Notice the parallel features in the parts A and A? But most importantly, the mystery of Roms.16 cannot be separated from the rest of the epistle in which 70 plus OT quotes can be found and 14 times Paul writes "as it is written" or similar. The Roms.16 mystery is never once said to be "hid in God" with riches of Christ unsearchable, Eph.3:8-9, or "hidden (away) from ages and generations", Col.1:26, which are the contexts of the Mystery of Ephesians and Colossians.

The mystery of Romans chapter 16 is the preaching of Jesus Christ, not the revelation of the present dispensation in which we live. The mystery of Roms.16 is in a context of the Old Testament writings. These writings also make plain this mystery which previously had been kept secret or silent since the world began. The mystery of Ephesians goes back before the foundation of the world, 1:4. Testing things differing in Paul is rightly dividing the Word of Truth and what joy is ours when we see these different things.

The structure of Romans is a brief outline of the themes in that epistle. It shows how the entire letter is held together and the mystery of chapter 16 is understood in these relationships. To isolate the mystery of Roms.16 from the rest of the letter is not allowing the context to tell us about that mystery. Romans explains the mystery found within its pages.

Let us compare the opening and closing sections and see the many connections.

Opening

Paul, a servant of Jesus Christ, called *to be* an apostle, separated unto the gospel of God, (Which he had promised afore by his prophets in the holy scriptures,) Concerning his Son Jesus Christ our Lord, which was made of the seed of David according to the flesh; And declared *to be* the Son of God with power, according to the spirit of holiness, by the resurrection from the dead: By whom we have received grace and apostleship, for obedience to the faith among all nations, for his name: Among whom are ye also the called of Jesus Christ: To all that be in Rome, beloved of God, called *to be* saints: Grace to you and peace from God our Father, and the Lord Jesus Christ. [Rom 1:1-7](#)

For I long to see you, that I may impart unto you some spiritual gift, to the end ye may be established; [Rom 1:11](#)

So, as much as in me is, I am ready to preach the gospel to you that are at Rome also. [Rom 1:15](#)

Close

The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all. Amen.

Now to him that is of power to stablish you according to my gospel, and the preaching of Jesus Christ, according to the revelation of the mystery, which was kept secret since the world began,

But now is made manifest, and by the scriptures of the prophets, according to the commandment of the everlasting God, made known to all nations for the obedience of faith: To God only wise, be glory through Jesus Christ for ever. Amen. [Rom 16:24-27](#)

Paul opens declaring he was separated unto the gospel of God concerning His Son Jesus Christ and sends grace. This is balanced at the close where Paul sends grace and writes "my gospel and the preaching of Jesus Christ". In other words, the "preaching of Jesus Christ" at the close is balanced by "concerning His Son Jesus Christ" at the opening. The theme of Romans is the preaching of Christ Jesus and all that great preaching included during Acts when Romans was written.

Thus the mystery kept secret but now made manifest and by the scriptures of the prophets at the close is balanced by the gospel of God which He promised before by His prophets in the holy Scriptures in the opening. Both are concerning Christ Jesus the Lord, not any change in dispensation.

Paul's apostleship in the opening section is to bring about obedience of the faith among all nations, and the preaching of Jesus Christ and the mystery at the close had the same goal in view, that is, made known to all nations for the obedience of faith.

In the opening portion, Paul longed to see them so he could impart, give over to them, some spiritual gift. The preaching of Jesus Christ when Romans was written included the accompanying supernatural gifts, and we must not miss this again in chapter 15:18-19 thus;

For I will not dare to speak of any of those things which Christ hath not wrought by me, to make the Gentiles obedient, by word and deed,

Through mighty signs and wonders, by the power of the Spirit of God; so that from Jerusalem, and round about unto Illyricum, I have fully preached the gospel of Christ.

Rom 15:18-19

Here we have supernatural gifts, gentiles obedient and the gospel of Christ, the very same elements in the opening and closing sections. The mystery of chapter 16 is inseparable from these. The but now of Roms.16:24-27, is when Paul was empowered to preach the gospel of Christ, promised before in the holy Scriptures for the obedience of faith among all nations. Which gospel he wanted to preach to those saints, already saved, at Rome. The but now of Roms.16 is not the but now of Eph.2 which we will be proved during the course of these lessons.

Finally, we read the wonderful words of Paul regarding the gospel of Christ, which gospel he wanted to preach to the saved saints at Rome remember; **So, as much as in me is, I am ready to preach the gospel to you that are at Rome also. For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek. For therein is the righteousness of God revealed from faith to faith: as it is written, The just shall live by faith. For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who hold the truth in unrighteousness; Rom 1:15-18**

We must not miss Paul's use of the word "revealed" and gospel in this opening section and the great balancing word "revelation" and mystery found at the close. Both opening and closing sections are for the same obedience of faith and we cannot separate the gospel concerning Christ Jesus at the beginning and the preaching of Christ Jesus according to the mystery at the close; they are related dispensationally.

The simple structure of Romans provided previously, is a brief outline of the themes in that epistle. The mystery of chapter 16 must be understood according to these themes. To isolate the mystery of Rom.16 from the rest of the letter is not allowing Romans to explain the mystery of Romans. Here are the opening and closing sections which enable us to see some significant recurring words or phrases which help in understanding this mystery.

A. Rom.1:1-17 Paul separated to Gospel (promised afore, [prophets, Holy Scriptures](#)) concerning Jesus Christ, Son of David & God, power, apostleship, grace, **obedience** to the faith, all nations, called and faithful in Rome-Paul's desire to visit, spiritual gift, goal **established**, ready to preach gospel, gospel of Christ, power, Jew first, just live by faith,

A. Rom.16:25-27 to Him, power to **stablish**, my gospel, preaching of Jesus Christ acc'g to revelation of mystery, kept secret (silenced) since the world began, but now manifested and by [Scriptures of prophets](#), commandment of everlasting God, all nations for **obedience** of faith,

We read of "Paul separated to the gospel" harmonized with "my gospel" in the closing section. Then there is the "gospel promised beforehand through the prophets in the Holy Scriptures" correlating to the "Scriptures of the prophets". "Concerning His Son Christ Jesus" is balanced by the "preaching of Jesus Christ". "Establish" and "stablish", which are identical words in the original language, stand out as well, and one incredibly helpful structure balance is the repeat of the phrase, "obedience to and of the faith".

We begin with the Prophets, namely the Old Testament ones. These were instrumental in giving forth the Gospel of God which concerned His Son in the opening and who are found in the closing section as well. These prophets made manifest the mystery of Romans 16 which had been kept secret since the world began;

[Now to him that is of power to stablish you according to my gospel, and the preaching of Jesus Christ, according to the revelation of the mystery, which was kept secret since the world began, But now is made manifest, and by the scriptures of the prophets,..... Rom 16:25-26](#)

This mystery was made plain by the prophets, plural, while that of Ephesians was not made plain by them, it was revealed to Paul alone having been hid in God and hidden away from ages and generations, concerning unsearchable riches, Eph.3:8-9, Col.1:26. How can the Romans mystery, if the scriptures of the prophets made it plain?, be the same as that of Ephesians previously hidden in God?

Another difference is that the mystery of Rom.16 had been kept secret since the world began, while the mystery of Ephesians is tied way back before the foundation of the world, see Eph.3 and 1:4.

So when Paul writes that the mystery of Romans 16 had been kept secret since the world began we have a different time relationship and does the word secret mean that the mystery had been hidden in God just like the mystery of Ephesians and Colossians? No, it does not. Paul does not use the word hid or hidden in Romans 16 when he writes the mystery kept secret. Does this secret mean that it was hidden?

The KJV, which is popular still, uses secret in Matt.13:35-36 where the Lord spoke of things totally unrelated to the dispensation of the grace of God. The things the Lord spoke about had not been hidden in God only kept secret from the foundation of the world. Thus in Matthew we read;

All these things spake Jesus unto the multitude in parables; and without a parable spake he not unto them: That it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the prophet, saying, I will open my mouth in parables; I will utter things which have been kept secret from the foundation of the world. Mat 13:34-35 (Ps.78:1-7)

The Lord told his disciples they knew the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven but he spoke in parables to the crowds for they had not been given knowledge of them, see Matt.13:10-17. Thus the parables hid, but also revealed, things which had been kept secret from the foundation of the world but which related to the earthly kingdom of, that is originating out of, heaven.

These secrets have nothing to do with us today, nor were these things hidden in God for the Lord described the disciples' eyes as being blessed because many prophets and righteous men desired to see and hear the things of the kingdom. The prophets wrote of things which had been kept secret, but now in Matthew, the disciples understood them. Peter writes along the same lines;

Of which salvation the prophets have enquired and searched diligently, who prophesied of the grace that should come unto you: Searching what, or what manner of time the Spirit of Christ which was in them did signify, when it testified beforehand the sufferings of Christ, and the glory that should follow. Unto whom it was revealed, that not unto themselves, but unto us they did minister the things, which are now reported unto you by them that have preached the gospel unto you with the Holy Ghost sent down from heaven; which things the angels desire to look into. 1Pe 1:10-12

Thus some earthly kingdom things kept secret from or since the foundation of the world, were not outside the prophetic writings and Paul writes that the mystery of Roms. was made plain by the scriptures of the prophets.

We are further helped when we find that the original word translated secret is defined as "kept silent". Thus we read in some translations as follows;

Rom 16:25 Now to him that is able to stablish you according to my gospel and the preaching of Jesus Christ, according to the revelation of the mystery which hath been kept in silence through times eternal, RV

Rom 16:25 Now to Him who is able to establish you according to my gospel, and the preaching of Jesus Christ according to the revelation of the mystery, having been unvoiced during eternal times; MKJV

Rom 16:25 Now to the one who is able to strengthen you by my gospel and the message that I preach about Jesus Christ, by revealing the secret that was kept in silence in long ages past ISV

The mystery of Romans 16 was something which had been silenced in the Scriptures and to which the OT Scriptures witnessed.

We have found that there are certain things that were kept silent in the Scriptures; the full meanings of which were not disclosed. We might consider our Lord's vicarious offering which was pictured in type and shadow but which things were not fully explained for had the enemy known, then the redemptive purposes of God would have been jeopardized. Paul writes along these lines;

Howbeit we speak wisdom among them that are perfect: yet not the wisdom of this world, nor of the princes of this world, that come to nought: But we speak the wisdom of God in a mystery, even the hidden wisdom, which God ordained before the world unto our glory: Which none of the princes of this world knew: for had they known it, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory. But as it is written, Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him. But God hath revealed them unto us by his Spirit: for the Spirit searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God. 1Co 2:6-10

The things hidden here were about the crucifixion of the Lord of glory; who Jesus was, for had these things been known clearly, then He would not have been crucified. The wisdom hidden in this context is then linked to the Scriptures, see Is.64, which is what Paul quotes in 1Cor.2:9. It is wrong division to drag the hidden things of Ephesians into this context when our Apostle refers to the OT Scriptures of the prophets.

In the Gospels, the Lord hid things from his disciples, see Lk.18:31-34. Thus we are not to suppose that all things hidden are about the dispensation of the grace of God. Here is a case where things clearly prophesied were rejected and the rejection brought about a closing of the eyes; a hiding of the things eagerly expected. Notice the but now;

Saying, If thou hadst known, even thou, at least in this thy day, the things which belong unto thy peace! but now they are hid from thine eyes. Luk 19:42

Certain revealed truths can be hidden and other truths hidden within the pages of Scripture are later unfolded, but this does not mean that all things hidden and revealed are about our calling today.

Returning to the closing section of Romans we remind ourselves of the context;

*A. Roms.16:25-27 to Him, power to **stablish**, my gospel,
preaching of Jesus Christ acc'g to revelation of mystery,
kept secret (silenced) since the world began,
but now manifested and by Scriptures of prophets,
commandment of everlasting God,
all nations for **obedience** of faith,*

The mystery of Roms.16 concerns the preaching of Jesus Christ and made plain by the Scriptures of the prophets. The mystery of Romans 16 has already been addressed by Paul in the letter so we shall canvas the distribution of the Old Testament used by Paul in this wonderful epistle to find where this Mystery has been kept secret or silenced. We shall follow the structure of Romans found near 109 on bibleunderstanding.com/pastissues.htm

In the opening portion of Romans marked A, chapter 1:1-17 we find the following; Roms.1:2 reference to the holy Scriptures. Roms.1:3 seed of King David. Roms.1:11 supernatural gifts, the subject of prophesy. Roms.1:17 is Hab.2:4.

In the second section marked B, Roms.1:18-3:20 we find a total of 12 OT references thus, Roms.2:6 is Ps.62:12, Roms.2:24 is Is.52:5 (see Ez.36:223), Roms.3:4 is Ps.51:4, Roms.3:10-18 includes, Ps.14, 53, 5, 140, 10, 59, 36 and Prov.1.

In the third section C, 3:21-31 we have Deut.9:5, Is.45, 53, 54 and Jer.23:5-6.

In the fourth section D, Roms.4:1-25 we have Gen.15, Ps.32, Gen.17 and Gen.15 twice again.

Thus from Roms.1:1 to 4:22 we have a total of about 23 OT references not counting all the OT verses used by Paul. This is a large number, in fact more than twice as many used in the 6 chapters of Galatians. From chapter 8:36 through to the close of Romans there are another 47 references to the OT. In other words, in the opening chapters there are 23 references, in the closing chapters another 47, nearly 70 plus in total.

Next follows something worth considering. From Roms.4:22 through to 8:35 there is not one reference to OT Scripture. In the opening 4 chapters 23 references, from chapter 8 through 16 another 47 but in chapters 5 through 8:35, not one OT reference. Could Romans 5-8 be the very section of Romans speaking about the mystery kept secret or silent in the Scriptures? We think so.

Some of the OT quotes in Romans are found on this link bibleunderstanding.com/romansprophecy.htm

The distribution of the Old Testament in Paul's letter to the Romans is informative. First of all, the huge volume of the Law and prophesy confirms Paul's words spoken many years later;

And now I stand and am judged for the hope of the promise made of God unto our fathers: Unto which *promise* our twelve tribes, instantly serving *God* day and night, hope to come. For which hope's sake, king Agrippa, I am accused of the Jews. Act 26:6-7

Whereupon, O king Agrippa, I was not disobedient unto the heavenly vision: But shewed first unto them of Damascus, and at Jerusalem, and throughout all the coasts of Judaea, and *then* to the Gentiles, that they should repent and turn to God, and do works meet for repentance. Act 26:19-20

Having therefore obtained help of God, I continue unto this day, witnessing both to small and great, saying none other things than those which the prophets and Moses did say should come: That Christ should suffer, *and* that he should be the first that should rise from the dead, and should shew light unto the people, and to the Gentiles. Act 26:22-23

Twice in this Acts statement, Paul re-affirms it was still Jew first as it was in Romans, but how can we escape the plain truth that Paul was saying none other things than those which the prophets and Moses did say should come? This must include the mystery of Romans 16 which was written before this statement.

The mystery of Romans 16 was kept secret, that is silent in the Scriptures yet the Scriptures contained it; it was never hidden in God as the Ephesians Mystery.

There is no doubt that certain things of the Old Testament scriptures were made much clearer in the writings of the New and when we consider elements of Paul's gospel, given him by direct instruction from the Lord, we see some wonderful examples of this. Take this feature as a case in point. When Paul wrote to the Galatians he mentioned this:

And the scripture, foreseeing that God would justify the heathen through faith, preached before the gospel unto Abraham, *saying*, In thee shall all nations be blessed. So then they which be of faith are blessed with faithful Abraham. Gal 3:8-9

The Scripture which foresaw this is part of the original sevenfold blessing given to Abraham when called to depart out of his country, namely Gen.12:1-3. It is not so evident that the great truth of justification by faith through grace upon all people is contained in that blessing but the Lord knew it was so and revealed that truth to Paul. Paul's use of the promised seed in Gen.15:5 expounded to mean Christ and those of faith is another example of truths not so evident originally but which are more fully expounded by revelation of God, see Gal.3:16, 29, Roms.4:13 & 16. We thus realize that Paul spoke the truth when he said, very late in Acts, that he was saying none other things than those which the prophets and Moses did say should come. So in what way does the distribution of OT quotes through Romans help us determine the mystery of chapter 16?

From Roms.1:1 through to 4:22 there are 23 OT references.

From Roms.4:22 through to 8:35 not one OT reference can be found.

From Roms.8:36 to 16:27 another 47 OT references.

It is difficult to accurately count the OT references as those who have attempted to do so will know that Paul will combine snippets of prophesy. Needless to say, the variance in those three sections is significant. But here is the amazing thing, Roms.4:22 through to 8:35 which is void of OT references is about an OT character, Adam.

Adam is mentioned 18 times from Gen.2:19 through to 5:5. He is next mentioned in Deut.32:8, Jos.3:16, 1Chron.1:1 and Job31:33. These are the only references to Adam in the Old Testament and not one of them expounds the typology; the

foreshadowing of Messiah contained in him. No wonder Paul cannot refer to the OT in the matter of Adam in this regard.

In the New Testament, Luke mentions Adam in the Lord's genealogy, 3:38, Jude identifies Enoch as the 7th from Adam, 1:14, but Paul most of all writes about Adam, Roms.5:14, 1Cor.15:14, 22, 45, 1Tim.2:13 and 14.

To Paul alone was given the truth that Adam was a figure of Him that was to come. Paul alone writes that in Adam all die even so in Christ shall all be made alive. It is Paul who writes that Adam was a living soul but in wonderful contrast, the last Adam was made a quickening spirit or a life-giving Spirit.

Returning to Roms.16:25-27 we remember that the preaching of Jesus Christ according to the revelation of the mystery kept secret since the world began had a goal in view.

A. Roms.16:25-27 to Him, power to **stablish**, my gospel, **ESTABLISH**
preaching of Jesus Christ acc'g to revelation of mystery,
kept secret (silenced) since the world began,
but now manifested and by Scriptures of prophets,
commandment of everlasting God,
*all nations for **obedience** of faith, **OBEDIENCE***

That goal was to stablish them and bring forth the obedience of the faith of all nations and in the section void of OT references we find two great contrasts, the disobedience of Adam and the OBEDIENCE of Christ and the resulting consequences.

There are strict Bible study rules clearly evident in the Word of Truth and one of the first rules is to consider every text in its context. When we read of the mystery kept silent in Roms.16 and immediately turn to Ephesians and Colossians for its interpretation, we have brushed aside the rules and is it any wonder myriads of ideas surrounding this mystery abound to confuse and weaken faith.

The mystery of Roms.16 was kept secret since the world began but there are words and phrases around it which gives us contextual clues as to its meaning, here they are again;

[Roms.16:25-27](#)

to Him, power to **stablish** (ESTABLISH), (Roms.1:11) **my gospel**, (Roms.1:1) **PREACHING OF JESUS CHRIST** (Roms.1:3) **acc'g to revelation of mystery**, kept **SECRET (SILENCED)** since the world began, but now manifested and by [SCRIPTURES OF THE PROIPHETS](#), (Roms.1:2) **COMMANDMENT** of everlasting God, all nations for **OBEDIENCE OF FAITH**, (Roms.1:5)

It is imperative to note that this mystery is given in the closing doxology, it is thus an inclusion in the letter somewhere. I have included the links back to the same or similar words and phrases in the opening of the letter to remind us that the doxology is not an afterthought.

Paul would never append anything to the close of a letter, information which held dispensational truths contrary to the very words he had just written. There is no warrant to look forward to Ephesians, not even written at the time, to explain the mystery of Roms.16.

The preaching of Jesus Christ according to the revelation of the mystery kept secret since the world began had goals in view, these were to stablish them, and bring obedience of faith. These were the objectives at the beginning of the letter. If Paul started with teaching which would establish them and bring obedience and concludes with the same objectives, in what way can the mystery of chapter 16 be something new and foreign to the entire epistle?

Paul is not preaching to establish them or bring obedience to anything new hinted at in one phrase at the close of the letter.

There is nothing new, dispensationally, in Romans. No dispensational truths of Ephesians can be found in this letter. Paul has just written chapter 15 where their hope was the promises made to the fathers, not the heavenly places of Ephesians.

Establishment and obedience of faith are keys in the structure of Romans 16:25-27. The preaching of this mystery was according to a command of God, not a revelation of Christ Jesus and the last idea in this thread of Paul, is the obedience of faith.

Taking our lead from the contextual clues, we will allow Romans to explain Romans and thus are working within the Bible study rules.

There is no doubt that certain things of the Old Testament scriptures were made much clearer in the writings of the New, including Paul. But during Acts, Paul was saying "none other things than those which the prophets and Moses did say should come" (Acts 26:22), and Romans, written during Acts, is full of OT references, except in one section. In chapters.4:22 through to 8:35, not one OT reference can be found.

Obviously the mystery kept secret will not be explained by the OT Scriptures and could it be that this mystery is brought forth by Paul in that section void of the OT? We think so.

In the section void of OT references, we find two great contrasts, the disobedience of Adam and the OBEDIENCE of Christ and the resulting consequences are elaborated. No other NT writer brings out the relationship between the two Adams as does Paul.

Here are the passages that feature obedience and obedience of faith;

Rom 1:5 [By whom we have received grace and apostleship, for obedience to the faith among all nations, for his name:](#)

Rom 5:19 [For as by one man's disobedience many were made sinners, so by the obedience of one shall many be made righteous.](#)

Rom 6:16 [Know ye not, that to whom ye yield yourselves servants to obey, his servants ye are to whom ye obey; whether of sin unto death, or of obedience unto righteousness?](#)

Rom 15:18 [For I will not dare to speak of any of those things which Christ hath not wrought by me, to make the Gentiles obedient, by word and deed,](#)

Rom 16:19 [For your obedience is come abroad unto all men. I am glad therefore on your behalf: but yet I would have you wise unto that which is good, and simple concerning evil.](#)

Rom 16:26 [But now is made manifest, and by the scriptures of the prophets, according to the commandment of the everlasting God, made known to all nations for the obedience of faith:](#)

God is love and when He created Adam in love and provided a wonderful environment for him, He asked one thing only of Him;

And the LORD God took the man, and put him into the garden of Eden to dress it and to keep it. And the LORD God commanded the man, saying, Of every tree of the garden thou mayest freely eat: But of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it: for in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die. [Gen 2:15-17](#)

No matter what dispensation or redemptive purpose, our loving Father seeks His children to believe Him and show that faith through obedience to His word. As James puts this all-age-abiding truth so well;

Therefore putting aside all filthiness and overflowing of evil, receive in meekness the implanted Word, which is able to save your souls. But become doers of the Word, and not hearers only, deceiving your own selves. For if anyone is a hearer of *the* Word and not a doer, he is like a man studying his natural face in a mirror. For he studied himself and went his way, and immediately *he* forgot what he was like. But whoever looks into the perfect Law of liberty and continues *in it*, he is not a forgetful hearer, but a doer of *the* work. This one shall be blessed in his doing. [Jas 1:22-25](#)

You see friends, disobedience reeks of rebellion and who would wish to be found in such a condition in that Day? And so our apostle, writing to the Romans, was very concerned that they would show this obedience of faith as found in 1:5 and 16:26. The goal of the Mystery of Romans 16 is faithful obedience.

In the central section of Romans; 5-8, we find this mystery previously kept silent but now made plain and it is concerning the relationship between the two Adams. This is an Acts period mystery given to Paul but is not The Mystery of Ephesians and Colossians where, post Acts, Adam is not featured in relation to our Lord but to the wife, see 1Tim.2:13-14.

In Romans, the first Adam was disobedient, the second obedient unto death, even the death of the cross. Here are the contrasts between these two characters and such doctrines found only in Paul.

Death and Life.

But not as the offence, so also is the free gift. For if through the offence of one (Adam) many be dead, much more the grace of God, and the gift by grace, which is by one man, Jesus Christ (the last Adam), hath abounded unto many. [Rom 5:15](#)

What a legacy for the entire human race left by the first Adam. Disobedience has such terrible consequences.

What a blessed and joyous contrast in the obedience of Christ and the very positive consequence resulting from it;

For if by one man's offence death reigned by one; much more they which receive abundance of grace and of the gift of righteousness shall reign in life by one, Jesus Christ.) [Rom 5:17](#)

Praise our heavenly Father! In Adam death but in Christ eternal life and righteousness reckoned by His grace.

Paul writes further about the contrasts in the two Adams in 1Corinthians15, another Acts period epistle. He writes in verse 22, "as in Adam all die, even so in Christ all will be made alive". Not only eternal life in Christ but a glorified body at resurrection because of His obedience. In this context Paul can turn to at least one OT reference here;

It is sown a natural body; it is raised a spiritual body. There is a natural body, and there is a spiritual body. And so it is written, The first man Adam was made a living soul (Gen.2:7); the last Adam *was made* a quickening spirit. [1Co 15:44-45](#)

Adam became a living soul at the breath of God but Christ a life giving spirit through whom we have eternal life and a future body of glory whether we live in the Acts period or in the present dispensation of the grace of God.

Adam certainly was a figure, a type of Christ who was to come, Roms.5:14.

Once Paul has established the consequences of the disobedience of the first Adam and the joyous consequences of obedience in the last, he will then turn to his readers and bring obedience and disobedience right home to them. It is one thing for the Romans to know what Christ had accomplished by obedience, but as children of God who had provided such a rich environment for them, how would they live? Would they walk in the steps of their father Abraham who believed but also obeyed? Or would they, like Adam show rebellion and disobey?

Chapter 6 presses right forward with the obedience and disobedient options by asking a rhetorical question;

[What shall we say then? Shall we continue in sin, that grace may abound? God forbid. How shall we, that are dead to sin, live any longer therein? Rom 6:1-2](#)

[Know ye not, that to whom ye yield yourselves servants to obey, his servants ye are to whom ye obey; whether of sin unto death, or of obedience unto righteousness? Rom 6:16](#)

Which Adam will the Romans emulate? Will they show faith obedience unto life and righteousness, or disobedience unto death?

The Mystery of Roms.16 is the relationship between the two Adams which is used by Paul to bring forth the obedience of faith required in his Roman readers and is not a mystery introducing a new dispensation.

As children of our wonderful heavenly Father we are responsible for our own personal Bible study. But we are more than children, we have the adoption, that is, we are the heirs in the heavenly places. With such a position of glory in Christ our Lord, we are required to be found faithful to His Word and when we are diligent in our studies we find ourselves rejoicing and loving the Word increasingly as others before us;

[Thy word is very pure: therefore thy servant loveth it. Psa 119:140](#)

[... my heart standeth in awe of thy word. Psa 119:161](#)

[Thy words were found, and I did eat them; and thy word was unto me the joy and rejoicing of mine heart: for I am called by thy name, O LORD God of hosts. Jer 15:16](#)

The mystery of Romans 16 is another example of the underlying beauty of God's Word. Not only is it set in the earthly redemptive time frame "since the world began" but as we have discovered, it is the relationship between the first disobedient Adam and the last obedient Adam.

Adam was placed in a garden, Paradise, where he disobeyed and where sin and death entered the world, Roms.5:12. The last Adam, by His offering of Himself without spot to God (Hebs.9:14), reversed the evil but will also restore people into yet a more glorious Paradise where the dominion lost by the first will also be restored. This is the consistent dispensational hope of Romans. Romans knows nothing of the inheritance in the above heavens of Ephesians.

In Paul's gospel declaring introduction, the theme of the gospel was that which had been promised before in the OT Scriptures;

[Paul, a servant of Jesus Christ, called to be an apostle, separated unto the gospel of God, \(Which he had promised afore by his prophets in the holy scriptures,\) Concerning his Son Jesus Christ our Lord,..... Rom 1:1-3a](#)

The good news concerning God's Son throughout Romans, includes both the redemption and the future hope of those called saints during Acts. How many expositors will rejoice in the righteous by faith through grace of chapter 3 and 4, yet fail to highlight the earthly hope of chapter 15?

Paul quotes or refers to Moses and the prophets over 70 times in Romans which is so consistent with his claim many years later, as recorded in Acts 26:22. Here are some of those OT occurrences in Romans followed by a reference in the same OT context.

Romans 1:17 is Habakkuk 2:4. Here is Hab.2:14;

[For the earth shall be filled with the knowledge of the glory of the LORD, as the waters cover the sea. Hab 2:14](#)

Romans 2:24 is Isaiah 52:5. Here is a quote from Isaiah 52;

[Break forth into joy, sing together, ye waste places of Jerusalem: for the LORD hath comforted his people, he hath redeemed Jerusalem. Isa 52:9](#)

See Is.52:7 and Roms.10:15.

Romans 3:4 is Ps.51:4. Here is a quote from Ps.51;

[Do good in thy good pleasure unto Zion: build thou the walls of Jerusalem. Psa 51:18](#)

Romans 8:36 is Ps.44:22, here is a quote from Ps.44;
Thou art my King, O God: command deliverances for Jacob. [Psa 44:4](#)

Romans 9:20 is from Is.45:9-11 (Is.29:16). Here is a snippet from Is.45;
Verily thou art a God that hidest thyself, O God of Israel, the Saviour. But Israel shall be saved in the LORD with an everlasting salvation: ye shall not be ashamed nor confounded world without end. For thus saith the LORD that created the heavens; God himself that formed the earth and made it; he hath established it, he created it not in vain, he formed it to be inhabited: I am the LORD; and there is none else. [Isa 45:15-18](#)

Romans 10:19 is Deut.32:21. Here is a quote from Moses also found in Romans 15:10;
Rejoice, O ye nations, with his people: for he will avenge the blood of his servants, and will render vengeance to his adversaries, and will be merciful unto his land, and to his people. [Deu 32:43](#)

Romans 15:3 is a quote from Ps.69:9. Ps.69 says this;
For God will save Zion, and will build the cities of Judah: that they may dwell there, and have it in possession. The seed also of his servants shall inherit it: and they that love his name shall dwell therein. [Psa 69:35-36](#)

Paul quotes Isaiah over 20 times in Romans. Note the earthly setting Is.51:3;
For the LORD shall comfort Zion: he will comfort all her waste places; and he will make her wilderness like Eden, and her desert like the garden of the LORD; joy and gladness shall be found therein, thanksgiving, and the voice of melody. [Isa 51:3](#)
Therefore the redeemed of the LORD shall return, and come with singing unto Zion; and everlasting joy shall be upon their head: they shall obtain gladness and joy; and sorrow and mourning shall flee away. [Isa 51:11](#)

Adam who disobeyed was placed in a garden, the last Adam who obeyed will bring redemption, righteousness and an inheritance for those called saints during Acts in the promised land which will be like Eden.

The Mystery of Romans 16 is in an earthly redemptive context, has nothing to do with the dispensation of the grace of God and it is wrong division to define it with the Mystery of Ephesians and Colossians.

We are following a Bible study principle which is comparing spiritual with spiritual, to determine if the mystery of Romans 16 is the mystery as featured in Ephesians and Colossians. Thus far we have considered much which shows these two mysteries are not the same.

The mystery of Romans 16 fits perfectly with the structure of Romans and is defined when we consider Romans' structural and contextual guidelines. Here are just a few;

1. The Mystery of Romans 16 was to establish the elect remnant of prophesy. Roms.16:25, 9:23-27, 11:5-7 who were the called of Christ Jesus, 1:6.
2. The proclamation of the Mystery of Romans 16 was accompanied by supernatural gifts promised to Israel, Roms.16:25, 1:11 and 15:18-19.
3. The Mystery of Roms.16 was kept secret or silent since the world began but made plain by the Scriptures of the prophets, not Paul alone. Roms.16:25-26 and compare Roms.1:1-6.
4. The Mystery of Romans 16 was the preaching of Christ Jesus as the One prefigured in Adam, Roms.16:25, 5:14.
5. The Mystery if Romans 16 was to establish the prophetic remnant unto the obedience of faith, Roms.16:26, 1:5, 5:19, 6:16, 15:18.
6. The Mystery of Romans 16 is associated with a dispensational advantage held by the Jews, Roms.1:16-17, 2:9-10, 3:1-3, 11:18, and the prophetic inclusion of the Gentiles as counter provocation, Roms.10:19, Deut.32:21, and Roms.11:11, 13-14.
7. The Mystery of Romans 16 is inseparable from the hope of Israel which during Acts, was sustained by supernatural gifts. Roms.16:20, 15:3-13, where Paul quotes Ps.69 (God will save Zion) and Roms.15:8, the promises made to Israel's fathers. See also Roms.15:9 (Ps.18), 15:10 (Deut.32:43), 15:11 (Ps.117) and 15:12 (Is.11). The Holy Spirit provided the ability to sustain this hope at that time, see Roms.15:13 and 1Cor.1:4-8.

By comparison, we shall preface our examinations of The Mystery of Ephesians and Colossians by highlighting some of the structural and contextual elements which accompany it.

1. The Mystery of Ephesians and Colossians was to inform the saints who had crossed the Acts 28 boundary, of the new dispensation revealed through Paul alone.

[For this cause I Paul, the prisoner of Jesus Christ for you Gentiles, if ye have heard of the dispensation of the grace of God which is given me to you-ward: How that by revelation he made known unto me the mystery;](#) Eph 3:1-3a

2. The Mystery of Ephesians was not accompanied by mighty signs and wonders. Eph.4:8-11 and see 1Tim.5:23 & 2Tim.4:20.
3. The Mystery of Ephesians and Colossians goes back before the foundation of the world and was never kept silent but hid in God. Neither is it made plain by the scriptures of the prophets. Eph.1:4-5, 3:8-9.
4. The Mystery of Ephesians and Colossians was the proclamation of Christ Jesus as the Head of a new called out company called the Church

which is His Body. Eph.1:22-23 and Col.1:18.

5. The post Acts Mystery of Ephesians and Colossians was not given to establish the remnant, but to reveal a completely new calling unknown to the prophets. Col.1:25-26 and 2Tim.1:9.

6. The Mystery of Ephesians and Colossians reveals a new dispensation in which the Jews and Gentiles are on equal footing dispensationally. The Jews have no advantage today, it is Christ among (all) nations. Eph.2:10-18 and Col.1:27, Christ among the Gentiles.

7. The hope associated with the Mystery of Ephesians and Colossians is a hope never before revealed in the OT, or the NT up until it was revealed to Paul post Acts 28. Paul prays the Ephesians would be granted by the Father, to know the hope of His calling. Eph.1:15-18, 2:4-10, Col.3:1-4. This hope was never declared in Romans.

May the God of our Lord Christ Jesus, the Father of glory, help us all in the growing understanding of The Mystery of Ephesians and Colossians.

When we open our Bible we find it is separated into two parts; the Old Testament and the New. In nearly every church system it is assumed that the OT is about Israel and the NT is about us, the church. This is incorrect and the basis of the great divisions within the Christian faith.

There are those who study Paul in the New Testament because Paul is the only Apostle for us Gentiles, Eph.3:1. However, Paul ministered both sides of the Acts 28 NT dividing line thus not all of Paul is about us today.

It was Paul who warned us we must distinguish things that differ. We must rightly divide the Word of Truth if we wish to be unashamed, approved, found sincere and without offense;

[And this I pray, that your love may abound yet more and more in knowledge and in all judgment; That ye may approve things that are excellent \(margin test things differing\); that ye may be sincere and without offence till the day of Christ; Php 1:9-10](#)

[Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth. 2Ti 2:15](#)

Paul's example of wrongly dividing the Word of Truth in 2Tim.2:16-18, shows us the danger of loosely handling God's Word.

[But shun profane and vain babblings: for they will increase unto more ungodliness. And their word will eat as doth a canker: of whom is Hymenaeus and Philetus; Who concerning the truth have erred, saying that the resurrection is past already; and overthrow the faith of some. 2Ti 2:16-18](#)

Hymenaeus and Philetus were teaching a Bible truth but joining it with an incorrect time. Our Lord's resurrection was in the past, but they were teaching about the believer's resurrection as being in the past and overturned the faith of some. Taking a bible truth and misplacing it is confusing not edifying.

There are some Bible teachers like Hymenaeus and Philetus today. They fail to understand the dividing line of Acts 28 so when they read of the church which is His Body and our inheritance in the heavenly places of Ephesians, they claim they "see" it in the Old Testament where it cannot be found. They think all the Bible is about us today. All the Bible is for us (2Tim.3:16), but not all of it is about us. Dragging truth for today back into the past is wrong division and this creates confusion and the faith of many is overturned.

Others like Hymenaeus and Philetus, find the Mystery in Ephesians then they "see" this mystery in all of Paul's writings, including those written before the Acts 28 dividing line. These assume that since all of the churches featured in Paul's writings were established during Acts it follows all those churches knew of The Mystery of Ephesians during Acts. This is contrary to the truths in those Acts period letters and is also dragging truth for today back into the past.

Romans 16 speaks of a mystery but Romans was written before Acts 28. It fits into that part of the New Testament which is a continuation of the

Old Testament. Paul writes in Romans of God's earthly purpose and their earthly hope (15:4-13). The church at Ephesus, established during Acts also had an earthly hope prior to Acts 28, this we shall prove. But after Acts 28, Paul wrote to the Ephesians with new dispensational truths and a heavenly hope.

Yes, the Ephesians church was established during the Acts period but that fact does not mean they knew the dispensational truth for today.

When Paul returned to Jerusalem via Miletus, he called the elders of Ephesus telling them he had kept back nothing profitable from them, which included all the counsel of God, Acts 20:17-27. All the counsel of God must be understood in the words of Paul recorded later in Acts when he said these words;

And now I stand and am judged for the hope of the promise made of God unto our fathers: Unto which *promise* our twelve tribes, instantly serving *God* day and night, hope to come. For which hope's sake, king Agrippa, I am accused of the Jews.. Act 26:6-7

Having therefore obtained help of God, I continue unto this day, witnessing both to small and great, saying none other things than those which the prophets and Moses did say should come: Act 26:22

Paul preached to the Ephesians, during Acts, all the counsel of God and that counsel was none other things than those which the prophets and Moses did say should come. Now let's look at another letter sent to the Ephesians during the Acts period.

Unto the angel of the church of Ephesus write; Rev 2:1

He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches; To him that overcometh will I give to eat of the tree of life, which is in the midst of the paradise of God. Rev 2:7

This letter from the Lord himself, does not encourage the Ephesians of the Acts period with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places, rather He promises access to the tree of life in the midst of paradise. Paradise is linked with the New Jerusalem which descends out of heaven, and the New Earth, see Rev.21:1-14, 22:1-5.

During Acts the Ephesians and Galatians looked to Paradise and the New Jerusalem, but after Acts Paul prayed they would know the hope of His (new) calling and the inheritance in the heavenly places, Eph.1:15-2:9.

When Paul wrote to the Corinthians during the Acts period, he mentioned Paradise in 2Cor.12:1-7. Some words heard regarding the new heaven and Paradise were not permitted to be revealed, 12:4. However, Paul could and did write about Paradise, The New Jerusalem and the New Earth to the believers during Acts, see Gals.4:22-27 (and Hebrews 12:22). These were part of the whole counsel of God to the churches during the Acts period, but are absent from Paul's post Acts letters to them. The counsel of God changed at Acts 28.

It is false to assume that because the churches were established during Acts they knew the truth for today during Acts. It is equally confusing for us to read everything in the NT and assume it is about us today. God never changes as to character, but He certainly can change His revealed purposes. Therefore we must rightly divide the Word of Truth and test things differing if we seek our Lord's approval.

The church at Laodicea was established during Acts, and Paul included them in his letter to the Colossians after Acts, see Col.2:1. The Lord wrote to the Laodiceans during Acts thus;

And unto the angel of the church of the Laodiceans write; These things saith the Amen, the faithful and true witness, the beginning of the creation of God; [Rev 3:14](#)

Here the Lord speaks of Himself as the faithful witness. He had already used that term earlier in Revelation;

[John to the seven churches which are in Asia:..... And from Jesus Christ, who is the faithful witness, and the first begotten of the dead, and the prince of the kings of the earth. Unto him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood, And hath made us kings and priests unto God and his Father; to him be glory and dominion for ever and ever. Amen. \[Rev 1:4-6\]\(#\)](#)

The Lord wrote to the Laodiceans during Acts as the faithful witness; the Prince of the Kings of the Earth. The Laodiceans of the Acts period were made kings and priests on the earth, see [Rev.5:10](#). But after Acts 28 they were included in Paul's agonizing struggles to make known the mystery, the present set of conditions, see [Col.2:23-2:2](#). During Acts the Lord was the Prince of the Kings of the earth, the King of Kings and Lord of Lords, but after Acts 28, He was revealed as the Head of the church which is His body which has nothing to do with the earth.

When Paul arrived in Rome as recorded at Acts 28, he called for the (unrepentant) Jews which was his custom during Acts, see Acts 17:2; [And when we came into Rome, the centurion delivered the prisoners to the camp commander. But Paul was allowed to dwell by himself, with a soldier guarding him. 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 28:16-17](#)

After Paul had explained his circumstances, he assured them that he was bound in chains for the hope of Israel, Acts 28:20. We also saw this in Acts 26:6-7. Up until Acts 28 the purpose of God was for the world through Israel.

The final witness to the Jews took place in Rome, but they disagreed among themselves regarding the message and so the entire nation was set aside to a future date. The purposes of God for the world were set aside with Israel, and The Mystery of Ephesians is the revelation of a new purpose for the above heavens.

Acts 28 is the New Testament dispensational divide. Before Acts 28 the hope of Israel, after Acts 28 the hope of the church which is His Body.

Romans was written during Acts when the purpose of God was for the world through Israel. The Mystery of Ephesians was written after Israel had been set aside and the purpose was for the heavenly places. The Mystery of Ephesians is not the mystery of Romans 16.

Paul opened his letter to the Ephesians with a doxology, a hymn of praise. In this hymn of praise are concepts never before revealed; [Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenlies in Christ; according as He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before Him in love, Eph 1:3-4](#)

The Ephesians, believers who had lived through the change at Acts 28, received a letter from Paul in which he told them that now they had blessings, all spiritual and in the heavenly places. These are not the blessings of the Acts period where the believing Gentiles were to be blessed with faithful Abraham, see Gals.3:7,9. Galatians was written before Acts 28, Ephesians was written after.

Paul's letters fall either side of Acts 28, please email me for a copy of a chart showing these two groups of letters.

Having blessed God for these new blessings revealed, Paul leaves them in no doubt as to the location of them. Our blessings are in the heavenly places which is precisely where our Lord is seated at the Father's right; [..... He seated Him at His right hand in the heavenlies, Eph 1:20](#)

Before Acts 28, the believers were not destined for the heavenly places but the earth and the New Jerusalem which descends to the new earth, see Gals.3:18, 4:26 and 1Cor.15:54-55 and see Is.25 and Hosea 13-14.

These wonderful new blessings of Ephesians were according to a choice God made regarding us before the foundation of the world, before the earth or Israel came into being. Thus our blessings are not related to this world, but to the very place where God existed before it.

Paul is writing of something never before revealed but something that God had planned before the foundation of the world. People did not know of these things before Acts 28 because our Heavenly Father did not chose to reveal them until after Acts 28. Here is Paul's first mention of mystery in Ephesians;

In Him we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of His grace, which He caused to abound toward us in all wisdom and understanding; having made known to us the mystery of His will, according to His good pleasure which He purposed in Himself, for an administration of the fullness of times, to head up all things in Christ, both the things in Heaven, and the things on earth, even in Him, Eph 1:7-10

The mystery of our Father's will, that which He had kept to Himself was that our Lord, when the time is right, will Head up all things both the things in heaven and the things on earth.

From Genesis 1:1 to Acts 28, the purpose of the Father for Christ was the earthly one. After Acts 28 the Father revealed the mystery of His will regarding the purpose for the heavenly places.

Romans, before Acts 28 is about the earth, Ephesians, after Acts28 is about the heavenly places; their mysteries are not the same.

When Paul wrote to the Ephesians after Acts 28 and declared the new blessings in the heavenly places he was writing of things unheard of previously. Galatians, Romans, Thessalonians, Corinthians and Hebrews have nothing of such blessings in the heights of heaven. There is a reason why these wonderful new things were previously unknown, God had not revealed them. Look carefully at this passage;

In Him we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of His grace, which He caused to abound toward us in all wisdom and understanding; having made known to us the mystery of His will, according to His good pleasure which He purposed in Himself, for an administration of the fullness of times, to head up all things in Christ, both the things in Heaven, and the things on earth, *even in Him*, Eph 1:7-10

After Acts 28, Paul is writing about a mystery revealed which shows how the Lord will head up all things, whether they are things on the earth or things in heaven. Up until Acts 28, the purposes of God were about the families associated with the Kingdom on the earth and the new earth. But now Paul is given a revelation about our family in the heavens, a purpose of God not previously made known. Here is another emphasis on these different families in Ephesians; For this reason I bow my knees to the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, from whom every family in heaven and upon earth takes its name, Eph 3:14-15

The mystery of God's will revealed this new purpose for the heavenly places. This new purpose includes us believers today who have been raised and seated with our Lord and Head in front of God's face.

Paul had spent 2 years with the Ephesians in the Acts period, Acts 19. When he called for the elders as recorded in Acts 20 we read this;

... he said to them, You know how I was with you at all times, from the first day I arrived in Asia,how I kept back nothing that was profitable, but declared it to you, teaching you publicly and from house to house, Act 20:18, 20

And now behold, now I know that you all, among whom I have passed through preaching the kingdom of God, will no longer see my face. Therefore I testify to you this very day, that I am innocent of all blood. For I did not draw back from declaring to you all the counsel of God. Act 20:25-27

Paul had declared all the counsel of God to the Ephesians but the counsel of God for believers changed at Acts 28. It was no longer the earthly aspect of the Kingdom but the heavenly one. Look at Paul's prayer for the Ephesians after Acts 28;

Therefore I also, hearing of your faith in the Lord Jesus and love to all the saints, do not cease giving thanks for you, making mention of you in my prayers, that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give to you the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of Him, the eyes of your understanding being enlightened, that you may know what is the **hope** of His calling, and what is the riches of the glory of His **inheritance** in the saints, and what is the surpassing greatness of His **power** toward us, Eph 1:15-19

This prayer is threefold. Put simply the prayer is for enlightenment as to their hope, their inheritance, and the power toward them. These things are all new because the mystery of God's will regarding the heavenly places had not been given Paul during Acts. He had given them all the counsel of God regarding the families belonging to the earth, but now that purpose had been set aside.

It was never a mystery that the Lord of Glory could descend from heaven and return there, He had appeared frequently to His servants from Genesis to Malachi. The disciples saw the Lord ascend through the clouds, Acts 1:9 and Peter knew that the heavenly beings there were now subject to him; ... the resurrection of Jesus Christ; who is at the right hand of God, having gone into Heaven, where the angels and authorities and powers are being subjected to Him. 1Pe 3:21-22

When Peter wrote his letters during the Acts period, it was not known that any family of believers would be raised and seated with Christ in that glorious place. Peter wrote about the salvation the Prophets researched in their own writings, see 1Pet. 1:9-12. Peter did not write of the salvation which had been kept a mystery. The mystery of God's will had not been revealed when Peter wrote, it was revealed to Paul alone after Israel had been set aside at Acts 28. Look at these words of Paul to the Ephesians;

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

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. 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, and to bring to light what *is* the fellowship of the mystery which from eternity has been hidden in God, who created all things by Jesus Christ; so that now to the rulers and powers in the heavenlies might be known by the church the manifold wisdom of God, Eph 3:7-10

Paul assured the Ephesians back in the Acts period, that he had declared all the counsel of God to them; he had kept back nothing. But while God does not change as to character, God certainly does change His dealings with people, and at the revelation of the mystery to Paul after the Acts period closed, we find that God has fatherhoods (families) on the earth and in the heavenly places and our Lord will head all companies there in due course.

Galatians was written early in the Acts period. Paul told the Jew and Gentile believers at that time that they were to be blessed with faithful Abraham in the Promised Land, see Gals.3. But after Israel were put aside at Acts 28, Paul was given a new revelation about new blessings in the very place where Christ had been raised and seated, Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenlies in Christ; Eph 1:3
.....the working of His mighty strength which He worked in Christ in raising Him from the dead, and He seated Him at His right hand in the heavenlies, Eph 1:19-20

The inheritance of Galatians was given by promise to Abraham before the Law, Gals.3: 18 but our inheritance in the heavenly places was according to His purpose before the foundation of the world; according as He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before Him in love, having predestined us to the adoption of children (sons) by Jesus Christ to Himself, according to the good pleasure of His will, Eph 1:4-5 in whom also we have been chosen to an inheritance, being predestinated according to the purpose of Him who works all things according to the counsel of His own will, Eph 1:10-11
But God, ... has made us alive together with Christ ... and has raised us up together and made us sit together in the heavenlies in Christ Jesus, Eph 2:4-6

Back in the Acts period, Paul wrote the Gentile believers were graft in to provoke the Olive Tree to fruit and were not to boast against the root which supported them, Roms.11. The advantage the Jews had and the dispensational disadvantage of the Gentile has gone at the new creation of the One New Man revealed after Acts28.

From the opening of the NT we find that the nation of Israel held a dispensational advantage; they were God's firstborn son in the earthly program, see Ex.4: 22-23. The Lord came to his people and ministered among them and spoke clearly of that ministry as being limited to Israel. Not only so, but when the message was taken to the Gentiles starting Acts 10, they were included in the blessings of Abraham, not the later blessings of Ephesians.

We are left in no doubt that Gentiles were saved because Israelites were rejecting the message and the saved Gentiles were a means of provocation. Before Acts 28 it was Jew first and Gentiles to provoke her. Consider these passages please;

And I say to you that many shall come from the east and the west, and shall sit down with Abraham and Isaac and Jacob in the kingdom of Heaven. Mat 8:11

Jesus sent out these twelve, commanding them, saying, Do not go into the way of the nations, and do not enter into any city of the Samaritans. But rather go to the lost sheep of the house of Israel. Mat 10:5-6

But He answered and said, I am not sent except to the lost sheep of the house of Israel. Mat 15:24

Having raised up His son Jesus, God sent Him to you first, to bless you in turning every one of you away from his iniquities. Act 3:26

But speaking boldly, Paul and Barnabas said, It was necessary for the Word of God to be spoken to you first. But since indeed you put it far from you and judge yourselves unworthy of everlasting life, lo, we turn to the nations. Act 13:46

For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ, for it is the power of God unto salvation to everyone who believes, to the Jew first and also to the Greek. Rom 1:16

I say then, Did they not stumble that they fall? Let it not be! But by their slipping away came salvation to the nations, to provoke them to jealousy. Rom 11:11

So then those of faith are blessed with faithful Abraham. Gal 3:9

For if the inheritance *is* of Law, *it is* no more of promise; but God gave *it* to Abraham by way of promise. Gal 3:18

For as many as were baptized into Christ, you put on Christ. There cannot be Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is no male nor female; for you are all one in Christ Jesus. And if you *are* Christ's, then you are Abraham's seed and heirs according to the promise. Gal 3:27-28

The above passages present a brief scan of our Lord's earthly ministry, the inclusion of the Gentiles in the earthly Kingdom program and the advantage held by the Jew up until Acts 28. But here is the amazing difference, at the revelation of the new heavenly program, the Jews and Gentiles had been created one new man where no disadvantage or advantage exists;

Therefore remember that you, the nations, in time past were in the flesh, who are called Uncircumcision by that which is called the Circumcision in the flesh made by hands; and that at that time you were without Christ, being aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers from the covenants of promise, having no hope, and without God in the world. But now **in Christ Jesus** you who were once afar off are made near by the blood of Christ.

For He is our peace, He **making** us both one, and *He* has broken down the middle wall of partition *between us*, 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 2:14-15

and so that He might reconcile both to God in one body by the cross, having slain the enmity in Himself. And He came and preached peace to you who were afar off, and to those who were near. Eph 2:11-17

Now, after Acts 28, we believers who are IN CHRIST, are one new man where all previous dispensational distinctions between Jews and Gentiles are abolished. Today we don't provoke Israel, today we are not blessed with faithful Abraham, we are not the seed of Abraham, we are not supported by the root, we do not need to be careful lest we be cut off. Are you beginning to see these incredible differences?

The Mystery of Romans 16 is in a completely different dispensational setting to the mystery of Ephesians and Colossians.

One of the most popular but misunderstood and out of context verses is found in this passage;

But God, who is rich in mercy, for His great love with which He loved us (even when we were dead in sins) has made us alive together with Christ (by grace you are saved), and has raised us up together and made us sit together in the heavenlies in Christ Jesus, so that in the ages to come He might show the exceeding riches of His grace in His kindness toward us through Christ Jesus. For by grace you are saved through faith, and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God, not of works, lest anyone should boast. For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus to good works, which God has before ordained that we should walk in them. Eph 2:4-10

When Paul wrote "for by grace you (we) are saved through faith, and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God, not of works..." he was not writing about justification by faith reckoned ours through grace (see Roms.3: 19-26). Paul is writing about where God has placed us in this Eph., passage. Yes, by faith in Christ we have been presented holy unblameable and unproveable in His sight, COI.1:22, but Eph.2 is about our position in the heavenlies by grace through faith.

The gift of God in Eph.2 is not the faith nor the grace but the incredible salvation which is ours in our Lord. This salvation is that which has made us alive together, raised and seated us together in the heavenlies in Christ. That is the salvation gift of God we have received by grace through faith. Roms.3:20-27 is about the righteousness we have in Christ as individuals whereas Ephs.2 is about the wonderful place we have been seated. The goal of this grace in Eph., is also to show forth our heavenly Father's exceeding riches of kindness toward us in the heavenlies, not on the earth and new earth with Abraham.

We have established that "by grace (we) are saved through faith, and that not of (our)selves, it is the gift of God" refers to the truths that God has quickened us together, raised us together and seated us together in the heavenlies. These things are part of the contents of this mystery in Ephesians. It reveals our new hope, inheritance and power give us today by grace. The contents of this mystery revealed after Acts 28 makes for very exciting reading and more exciting when we see how different they are to the dispensational truths revealed previously.

First up, the phrase "in the heavenlies" only occurs in Ephesians and when we put them together we find a truly wonderful set of verses.

1. This is where our blessings and inheritance are located;

Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenlies in Christ; according as He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before Him in love, having predestined us to the adoption of children (sons, heirs) by Jesus Christ to Himself, according to the good pleasure of His will, Eph 1:3-5

But God, who is rich in mercy, for His great love *with* which He loved us (even when we were dead in sins) has made us alive together with Christ (by grace you are saved), and has raised *us* up together and made *us* sit together in the heavenlies in Christ Jesus, so that in the ages to come He might show the exceeding riches of His grace in *His* kindness toward us through Christ Jesus. For by grace you are saved through faith, and that not of yourselves, *it is* the gift of God, not of works, lest anyone should boast. For we are *His*

workmanship, created in Christ Jesus to good works, which God has before ordained that we should walk in them. Eph 2:4-10

2. This is where the Head of our church has been raised and seated; and what is the surpassing greatness of His power toward us, the ones believing according to the working of His mighty strength which He worked in Christ in raising Him from the dead, and He seated Him at His right hand in the heavenlies, Eph 1:19-20

3. We have been raised up there with Him, the church which is His body in the same location as the Head thereof; But God, who is rich in mercy, for His great love with which He loved us (even when we were dead in sins) has made us alive together with Christ (by grace you are saved), and has raised us up together and made us sit together in the heavenlies in Christ Jesus, Eph 2:4-6

4. According to the purpose of God before the foundation of the world there is a twofold consequence of our calling and position located in the heavenlies. One is to show forth His kindness up there and the other as a testimony to the principalities and powers up there; But God, .. has raised us up together and made us sit together in the heavenlies in Christ Jesus, so that in the ages to come He might show the exceeding riches of His grace in His kindness toward us through Christ Jesus. Eph 2:6-7.

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, and to bring to light what *is* the fellowship of the mystery which from eternity has been hidden in God, who created all things by Jesus Christ; so that now to the rulers and powers in the heavenlies might be known by the church the manifold wisdom of God, according to the eternal purpose which He purposed in Christ Jesus our Lord; Eph 3:8-11.

5. Our opponents are not the nations of the world, but the devil and those principalities and powers aligned with him, in the heavenlies. Put on the whole armor of God so that you may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil. For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the world's rulers, of the darkness of this age, against spiritual wickedness in high places (in the heavenlies). Therefore take to yourselves the whole armor of God, that you may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand. Eph 6:11-13

The mystery of Romans 16 was written before Paul was given the mystery of Ephesians and Colossians. These latter letters of Paul and The Mystery in them reveals the hope and inheritance about us today, it was revealed after Israel was nationally put aside at Acts 28.

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