

WHY I AM NOT A 'MID-ACTS-ER'

Before I begin the message, I thought it would be helpful to share the history of 'How We Got To Where We Are'. For nearly 30 years, I myself was a 'mid-Acts-er', whole-heartedly supporting the doctrine, the man, the school, the chart, the paradigm. However, several years ago, in my study when I read afresh:

1 Tim 3:1 This is a true saying, If a man desire **the office of a bishop**, he desireth **a good work**.

.... I was stopped in my tracks! Nearly all of protestant Christendom used the word 'pastor' instead of 'bishop'! But what were WE to do? WE, who claimed to be KJV? WE, who touted PAUL as OUR apostle? WE, who taught that we are NOT SHEEP? In light of the verse as well as other verses (1 Tim 3:2-7, Titus 1:7-9, Phil 1:1) what SHOULD WE do? The answer is simple, though embarrassing. WE OUGHT to STAND on the verse/s, and CHANGE our vocabulary to MATCH the KJV scriptures! Every time the KJV uses 'bishop', The Living Bible says 'pastor'. So we just go along with 'pastor' because of tradition? Or we cite 'demographics' as an excuse, that we don't want anyone to associate us with 'certain' religious organizations?

We did not handle any other KJV word that way. 'Mid-Acts-ers' do not have a problem with the other office being the office of a deacon.

We STOOD boldly for the KJV word 'dispensation', even defending it with our very identity using it as a 'title' in describing 'Who We Are' calling ourselves 'dispensationalists'. It is written in literature/conference programs, "We are distinctively mid-Acts dispensationalists," and advertising ".... the program is straight-forward and unapologetically anchored in 'old time' Bible believing dispensationalism." We did not substitute another word, like 'administration' or 'commission' or 'trusteeship', nor other phrases, like 'the sacred trust' or 'this special work' or 'his secret plan'. We did not ever exchange 'dispensation' for the other KJV word 'stewardship'. Of the 7 times the Greek word [oikonomia] was translated in the KJV, 4 times it was translated 'dispensation' and 3 times it was translated 'stewardship' (Luke 16:2,3,4). Not only did we not trade the words but we brazenly STOOD AGAINST doing so! Yet we back up on 'bishop'?

We STOOD unashamedly for the KJV word 'cross'. We did not switch to calling it a 'tree' because others use an ancient symbol of a crucifix. But we avoid 'bishop'?

Initially, I assumed we had just over-sighted the term 'bishop' and followed culture. With such a plain, straight-forward verse (1 Tim 3:1) when "we zero in on" "the authority of the King James Bible" and considering the fact that 1 Tim 3:1 is 'from Paul' I naively thought we preachers, who referred to ourselves and each other as 'pastors' (even though we taught that we were separate and different from the SHEEP of Israel), would correct our 'office'. But since I brought this issue to attention, I was surprised by the stubborn opposition to it.

In an e-mail I wrote to the president of a so-called 'grace' school as he was preparing to attend and preach at a conference in Florida, I encouraged him to take a stand among the speakers there. He responded that he hoped I would 'be the champion he knew me to be'.

In Tennessee at a conference, 'the school president' (or the 'teaching elder' - as he identified himself just last month) was openly beseeched from the pulpit by a bishop who repeatedly begged him to take a public stand on the 'pastor-bishop' issue. At another meeting I arranged to discuss this matter, after a regular nightly service, I confronted him from the podium. No dancing around it. "We want to know from YOU." I called his name and asked him the question -- point blank, "Which is it? Pastor or bishop?" He answered, "Bishop is correct." There we had it -- flat out, his 'official' stand, on record in front of many men as witnesses.

Another event happened when my wife and I were having lunch with a bishop, who is a trucker from North Carolina, asked me if I thought 'a particular man' would say one thing in one place and say a different thing at another. I defended his honor and said, "No, I do not believe he would do that. He will always stand for what the verse says!" So when my friend got home, he sent me an e-mail that was sent to him by another man who used it as a defense for using the title 'pastor'. The letter had an attachment with approximately 17 minutes of excerpt from a sermon 'the man' had preached to the church where he is the 'overseer' in Illinois, in which he made the word 'pastor' acceptably interchangeable with 'bishop'. Then I found a website that had a recording that indicated he had preached a morning service and an evening service about it on the same day. I downloaded the audio, and listened to its entirety. I could hardly believe my ears. After he read the verses and admitted that 'bishop' was correct, he proceeded to make excuses for why it was unnecessary to use it. On many other occasions, I had heard him preach from Eph 4:8-13 to explain that the gifts listed there were 'specially' given 'when' Christ ascended on high, and that there were no 'specially-gifted' men functioning today. But on this recording, he said the WORK of those gifts is still going on. Then he asked if you wanted to know where the apostles and prophets are today and he answered, the apostles and prophets today are your Bible. What?!

At last year's conference in Illinois, I got 2 different weeks' bulletins from the same church. The older one showed 2 men's names listed as pastors, 1 man as elder, and 2 deacons. A newer one showed 3 men as elders and 2 deacons. Why the change? Changing the word from 'pastor' reveals guilt but to go to 'elder' and not to 'bishop' still indicates prejudice against the KJV, Pauline word for the office of a 'bishop'. Are the 2 men that hold the office of a bishop ashamed to be called a bishop? Evidently! And yet, God, through Paul, calls it a good work:

1 Tim 3:1 This is a true saying, If a man desire **the office of a bishop**, he desireth **a good work**.

Also, at that same conference last summer, as well as at this year's conference, all the speakers were introduced to the podium as 'Brother So-and-so' (whoever) when nearly every one of the men is the overseer of their local church. Not one preacher (including the host), that I heard, was ever acknowledged by anyone (including the host) as being a bishop.

The 'mid-Acts-ers' who claim to be KJV (but are not, because of their rebellion to the KJV WORD for the office that GOD through PAUL gave - a bishop) are planning to celebrate the 400th birthday of the KJV as the central theme during their conferences from now until next summer's Illinois conference comes again.

There are more instances than I will mention here, but suffice it to say that there is **a history of pretense** by many 'mid-Acts' preachers and 'the school president' to shun "the very words of God" in the KJV AND from the apostle Paul they claim to follow. So much so, that it caused me to open my eyes and see their **unfaithfulness to the scriptures**. I realized the man and the men who followed him (his teaching, his school, his doctrine, his chart, his paradigm) that I had admired and fully endorsed for years, made the conscious decision, after I pointed out the verses about a bishop, to stay with their tradition and comfort, rather than to own up to their error, and fix it. When I discovered their willingness to let it go, instead of correct it, I wondered where else they were wrong. When I looked, I found many places. Since then, I have been trying to expose their false teaching and deception.

The title of this message came as a response to 3 seminars about "Why I am not a" (? Whatever, 3 other doctrinal positions) that were conducted at a recent 'mid-Acts' 'grace believers' conference. As it was said of me, here is the hill on which I stand and on which I'm willing to die.

WHY I AM NOT A 'MID-ACTS-ER'

This will be a brief explanation, rather than a comprehensive one.

But hopefully, this will be enough to prove the fallacy of their doctrine.

Why am I not a 'mid-Acts-er'? I do not believe that God started a 'new, DIFFERENT' church in the middle of Acts with Paul.

God **already HAD** a church in the beginning of Acts. 'Mid-Acts-ers' believe that God started a 'new, DIFFERENT' church called 'the body of Christ' with PAUL in the 'middle' of the book of Acts hence, their title 'mid-Acts':

Acts 2:47 Praising God, and having favour with all the people. And **the Lord added to the church** daily such as should be saved.

Acts 5:11 And great fear came upon **all the church**, and upon as many as heard these things.

The earliest record for the word 'church' was the one that was in the wilderness that had Moses as its leader, and Christ as its Rock (1 Cor 10:1-4):

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:

Saul persecuted (1 Cor 15:9, Phil 3:6) and wasted (Gal 1:13) the church:

Acts 8:1 And Saul was consenting unto his death. And at that time there was **a great persecution against the church** which was at Jerusalem; and they were all scattered abroad throughout the regions of Judaea and Samaria, except the apostles.

Acts 8:3 As for **Saul**, he **made havock of the church**, entering into every house, and **haling** men and women **committed them to prison.**

After Saul met the Lord Jesus on the road to Damascus (Acts 9:1-9, where the 'Acts 9-mid-Acts-ers' I was among, say the church BEGAN), a disciple named Ananias took him in and healed his blindness (Acts 9:10-19). Then Saul showed **the JEWS** that Jesus was their Messiah (John 1:41, 4:25):

Acts 9:20-22 And straightway he preached Christ **in the synagogues**, that he is the Son of God.

21 But all that heard him were amazed, and said; **Is not this he that destroyed them which called on this name in Jerusalem**, and came hither for that intent, that he might bring them bound unto the chief priests?

22 But Saul increased the more in strength, and confounded **the Jews** which dwelt at Damascus, proving that **this is very Christ**.

After a lot of the Grecians in Antioch believed on the Lord Jesus, **the church** in Jerusalem sent Barnabas to **the church** in Antioch, where he saw the **grace of God way BEFORE SAUL ever got there:**

Acts 11:19-26 Now they which were scattered abroad upon the persecution that arose about Stephen travelled as far as Phenice, and Cyprus, and Antioch, preaching the word to none but unto the Jews only.

20 And some of them were men of Cyprus and Cyrene, which, **when they were come to Antioch, spake unto the Grecians, preaching the Lord Jesus**.

21 And the hand of the Lord was with them: and a great number believed, and turned unto the Lord.

22 Then tidings of these things came unto the ears of **the church which was in Jerusalem:** and they sent forth Barnabas, that he should go as far as Antioch.

23 Who, when he came, and had seen the grace of God, was glad, and exhorted them all, that with purpose of heart they would cleave unto the Lord.

24 For he was a good man, and full of the Holy Ghost and of faith: and much people was added unto the Lord.

25 **Then** departed Barnabas to Tarsus, for **to seek Saul:**

If 'mid-Acts-ers' want to see **something that happened FIRST in Acts it is NOT a new, different church it is the 'title' called 'Christians':**

(Acts 11:) 26 And when he had found him, he brought him unto Antioch. And it came to pass, that **a whole year they assembled themselves with the church**, and taught much people. And **the disciples were called Christians first in Antioch**.

NO Bible verses even IMPLY that a 'new' church, called 'the church, the body of Christ' STARTED with PAUL. He persecuted 'the church of God':

1 Cor 15:9 For I am the least of the apostles, that am not meet to be called an apostle, because **I persecuted the church of God**.

Paul told 'the churches of Galatia' (Gal 1:2) that WHEN he was in the Jews' religion, he persecuted 'the church of God' --- that already existed:

Gal 1:13 For ye have heard of my conversation in time past in the Jews' religion, how that beyond measure **I persecuted the church of God**, and wasted it: (also see Phil 3:6; 1 Tim 1:13; Acts 8:3, 22:4,5, 26:9-11)

Paul identified the Ephesians as 'the church of God' (Acts 20:28).

Paul also called the Corinthians 'the church of God' (1 Cor 1:2, 2 Cor 1:1).

Paul told Timothy that a bishop was to 'take care of the church of God' (1 Tim 3:1-5). Since Paul PERSECUTED 'the church of God' BEFORE he was a believer -- AND -- since he CLASSIFIED the Gentiles that believed as 'the church of God' then, it stands to reason that NO church of God STARTED with Paul. The church already existed, he persecuted it, then he became part of it. His own testimony, inspired words of God, proves this:

Gal 1:20-24 Now the things which I write unto you, behold, before God, I lie not.

21 Afterwards I came into the regions of Syria and Cilicia;

22 And was unknown by face unto **the churches of Judaea which were in Christ**:

23 But they had heard only, That **he which persecuted us in times past now preacheth the faith which once he destroyed**.

24 And they glorified God in me.

'Mid-Acts-ers' teach that you cannot get **doctrine** (that is, teachings, principles, beliefs) from the book of Acts. They say that Acts is a place to spiritually break your neck, which leads people to stay away from it. But God through Paul said that ALL scripture is for doctrine:

2 Tim 3:16-17 All scripture is given by inspiration of God,
 and is profitable for doctrine,
 for reproof,
 for correction,
 for instruction in righteousness:
 17 That the man of God may be perfect (mature, complete),
 thoroughly furnished <exartizo> unto all good works.

FYI, the same Greek word (only used 2 times) that is translated 'thoroughly furnished' is also translated 'accomplished' in Acts 21:5.

'Mid-Acts-ers' don't WANT to get doctrine out of Acts, because it proves their doctrine to be WRONG. Every time they see 'the church' they ASSIGN 'which' church they want it to be according to **how they DIVIDE the church into DIFFERENT churches**. They make one church be a JEWISH church - BEFORE Paul was saved in Acts 9. They make a new, DIFFERENT church BEGIN with Paul in Acts 9. **The churches of Judaea** would not have recognized Paul personally when he was persecuting them (Gal 1:22), though they knew him by reputation. But after he became a disciple like them, he and Barnabas took them aid and support:

Acts 11:29-30 Then the disciples, every man according to his ability, determined to **send relief unto the brethren which dwelt in Judaea:**
 30 Which also they did, and **sent it to the elders** by the hands of Barnabas and **Saul**.

'Mid-Acts-ers' put James and Peter back in 'the church' before Paul, though the scripture verses make no distinction between any churches:

Acts 12:1-5 Now about that time Herod the king stretched forth his hands to vex certain of **the church**.

2 And he killed James the brother of John with the sword.

3 And because he saw it pleased the Jews, he proceeded further to take Peter also. (Then were the days of unleavened bread.)

4 And when he had apprehended him, he put him in prison, and delivered him to four quaternions of soldiers to keep him; intending after Easter to bring him forth to the people.

5 Peter therefore was kept in prison: but prayer was made without ceasing of **the church** unto God for him.

Barnabas had taken Saul to Antioch to teach there for a whole year (Acts 11:26). Then they made a trip to Judaea to take supplies to the saints (Acts 11:29-30). After they got back, they were sent out again:

Acts 12:25 And Barnabas and Saul returned from Jerusalem, when they had fulfilled their ministry, and took with them John, whose surname was Mark.

Acts 13:1-3 Now **there were in the church that was at Antioch certain prophets and teachers; as Barnabas**, and Simeon that was called Niger, and Lucius of Cyrene, and Manaen, which had been brought up with Herod the tetrarch, **and Saul**.

2 As they ministered to the Lord, and fasted, the Holy Ghost said, **Separate me Barnabas and Saul for the work whereunto I have called them**.

3 And when they had fasted and prayed, and laid their hands on them, they sent them away.

'Mid-Acts-ers' teach that a new, different church STARTED with Paul in Acts 9, called 'the body of Christ'. We read about all these church activities where he was involved and working such as a year's worth at Antioch (which existed before he was ever there) but where he was both a teacher and a prophet, and from where he and Barnabas were sent out and such as in Judaea and Jerusalem, where he delivered groceries and such.

'Mid-Acts-ers' would have you to trust THEM and believe that Paul had this 'other' church in operation ever since Acts 9, that he called 'the body of Christ' although there is no Biblical record of any church being a 'new, DIFFERENT' church. Saul's name was changed to Paul in Acts 13:9.

The Jews caught up with him at Lystra, and thought they killed him but he recovered and travelled around some more. Then he went back to his home base in Antioch (that was 'a church' before his conversion of faith):

Acts 14:19-28 And there came thither certain Jews from Antioch and Iconium, who persuaded the people, and, having stoned Paul, drew him out of the city, supposing he had been dead.

20 Howbeit, as the disciples stood round about him, he rose up, and came into the city: and the next day he departed with Barnabas to Derbe.

21 And when they had preached the gospel to that city, and had taught many, they returned again to Lystra, and to Iconium, and Antioch,

22 Confirming the souls of the disciples, and exhorting them to continue in the faith, and that we must through much tribulation enter into the kingdom of God.

23 And when **they had ordained them elders in every church**, and had prayed with fasting, they commended them to the Lord, on whom they believed.

24 And after they had passed throughout Pisidia, they came to Pamphylia.

25 And when they had preached the word in Perga, they went down into Attalia:

26 And thence sailed to Antioch, from whence they had been recommended to the grace of God for the work which they fulfilled.

27 And when they were come, and had **gathered the church together**, they rehearsed all that God had done with them, and **how he had opened the door of faith unto the Gentiles.**

28 And there they abode long time with the disciples.

There is not even a HINT in scripture that ANY of these churches whether in Jerusalem or Judaea or Antioch (which were all functioning BEFORE Paul was saved) --- were any **DIFFERENT** than the churches he established.

Paul and Barnabas went up to the church in Jerusalem because of Jews who were trying to put the disciples under the law which was done away in Christ. But there is **no evidence in the verses** that the churches which were 'in Christ' BEFORE Paul (Gal 1:22, 1 Thess 2:14) were DIFFERENT than those churches that were AFTER Paul:

Acts 15:1-4 And certain men which came down from Judaea (to Antioch - from Acts 14:26) taught the brethren, and said, Except ye be circumcised after the manner of Moses, ye cannot be saved.

2 When therefore Paul and Barnabas had no small dissension and disputation with them, they determined that Paul and Barnabas, and certain other of them, should go up to Jerusalem unto the apostles and elders about this question.

3 And being brought on their way by **the church**, they passed through Phenice and Samaria, declaring the conversion of the Gentiles: and they caused great joy unto all the brethren.

4 And when they were come **to Jerusalem, they were received of the church**, and of the apostles and elders, and they declared all things that God had done with them.

Acts 15:22 Then pleased it the apostles and elders, **with the whole church**, to send chosen men of their own company to Antioch with Paul and Barnabas; namely, Judas surnamed Barsabas, and Silas, chief men among the brethren:

Paul travelled all over the places, and went back to Antioch:

Acts 18:18-22 And Paul after this tarried there yet a good while, and then took his leave of the brethren, and sailed thence into **Syria**, and with him Priscilla and Aquila; having shorn his head in **Cenchrea**: for he had a vow.

19 And he came to **Ephesus**, and left them there: but he himself **entered into the synagogue, and reasoned with the Jews.** (in Ephesus?)

20 When they desired him to tarry longer time with them, he consented not;

21 But bade them farewell, saying, I must by all means keep this feast that cometh in Jerusalem: but I will return again unto you, if God will. And he sailed from Ephesus.

22 And when he had landed at Caesarea, and gone up, and **saluted the church**, he went down to Antioch. (back again?)

Paul went back around and called for the elders of the church at Ephesus (Acts 20:17) to meet him. He reminded them of his message which 'mid-Acts-ers' partly deny.

They teach that you don't need to repent

.... but that you do need faith:

Acts 20:21-25 Testifying both to the Jews, and also to the Greeks,
• **repentance toward God,**
• **and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ.**

22 And now, behold, I go bound in the spirit unto Jerusalem, not knowing the things that shall befall me there:

23 Save that the Holy Ghost witnesseth in every city, saying that bonds and afflictions abide me.

'Mid-Acts-ers' say that Paul taught 'the gospel of the grace of God'

but they pervert that he also taught 'the kingdom of God':

24 But none of these things move me, neither count I my life dear unto myself, so that I might finish my course with joy, and the ministry, which I have received of the Lord Jesus,

to testify the gospel of the grace of God.

25 And now, behold, I know that ye all,

among whom I have gone preaching the kingdom of God,
shall see my face no more.

'Mid-Acts-ers' have created a SEPARATE inheritance for the saints

that belong to what-they-think-are the SEPARATE churches of Paul

even though verses show that the inheritance is shared by ALL the saints:

Acts 20:32 And now, brethren, I commend you to God,
and to **the word of his grace,**
which is able to build you up,

and **to give you an inheritance**
among all them which are sanctified.

'Mid-Acts-ers' do not carefully attend to the words of the verses.

They ignore them or change them. When Paul testified before King Agrippa, he made no difference about his message in different places.

They were ALL to repent and believe on Christ ---

just like what was written in the OLD testament scriptures :

Acts 26:19-23 Whereupon, O king Agrippa, I was not disobedient unto the heavenly vision:

20 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 (fit) for repentance**.

21 **For these causes** the Jews caught me in the temple, and went about to kill me.

22 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:

23 **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.** (also see Acts 28:23, 31)

Why am I not a 'mid-Acts-er'? They **DIVIDE** the church in the book of Acts by using Paul, with no Biblical instruction to do so. Although Paul started churches among the Gentiles, where Christ was not named even that was according to the prophetic scriptures, and they were all 'in Christ':

Rom 15:20-21 Yea, so have I strived to preach the gospel, not where Christ was named, lest I should build upon another man's foundation:

21 **But as it is written**, To whom he was not spoken of, they shall see: and they that have not heard shall understand.

*This is David Dowell, saying, "Think about it!"
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