

SAILING WITH PAUL

HOW TO KNOW GOD'S SPIRITUAL PROGRAM FOR HIS CHURCH

SAILING WITH PAUL BE OF GOOD CHEER

If you were on a sailing vessel, which was being tossed to and fro and going to pieces in the middle of awful darkness and a violent storm, could you be of good cheer? Read in the twenty-seventh chapter of Acts the account of the two hundred and seventy-six people, including the Apostle Paul on a perilous sea voyage. Note Paul's message of assurance and comfort:

“For there stood by me this night the angel of God, whose I am, and whom I serve, Saying, Fear not, Paul; thou must be brought before Caesar: and, lo, God hath given thee all them that sail with thee. Wherefore, sirs, be of good cheer: for I believe God, that it shall be even as it was told me.”

In Acts 27:18 and 20, we read, “And, we being exceedingly tossed with a tempest . . .” “And when neither sun nor stars in many days appeared, and no small tempest lay on us, all hope that we should be saved was then taken away.”

When we are healthy and prosperous and living in the midst of calm and peace it is not difficult to be of good cheer. But when trouble, sorrow and adversity appear and things are going wrong, when everything looks dark and far worse than uncertain, even headed for sure destruction, it is not easy to be of good cheer.

Even statesmen and politicians and military leaders are rather pessimistic as to the future of civilization. Surely the ship of state is sailing in the midst of a violent storm. Darkness prevails all over the world. In many countries the inhabitants are saying with Dr. Luke, “all hope that we should be saved was then taken away.” Acts 27:20.

When the storm wrecked that ship it was an excellent time for God to reveal Himself, not only as the Judge of all the earth but as an Almighty Saviour. For His own glory, God permitted the storm and the shipwreck of the twenty-seventh of Acts. For His glory He saved those frightened storm-tossed passengers.

Could such a world-war, as is now being waged, continue without the permission of God? God is omnipotent. Surely God could miraculously end this terrible slaughter of humanity, if He would. But God is a just and a holy and a righteous Judge, as well as a loving, merciful, gracious Saviour. God hates sin with a vicious hatred, God is love. “But God commendeth His love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.” Romans 5:8.

When sinners continue to despise God's offer of grace, reject His only begotten Son, and treat the blood of that sinless eternal Son as an unholy thing, God says for all such, “vengeance belongeth unto Me.” “It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God.” In the present

disorder and world conflict we think of the question, "hath not God made foolish the wisdom of this world?"

As not even the most spiritual and obedient and faithful servants of the Lord know the times and the seasons which the Father hath in His own hands, we do not know whether man's civilization is making its last final futile struggle for existence or whether it will have a remarkable comeback and temporarily postpone its final doom until God completes His very definite, spiritual program of Ephesians 4:10 to 13, before "the times of the Gentiles" are fulfilled (Luke 21:24), and before the prophesied end of man's day and government.

God's purpose and program is declared in Ephesians 4:12 and 13.

"For the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the Body of Christ: Till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a Perfect Man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ:"

Then note Ephesians 1:14: "That we henceforth be no longer children, tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, and cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive."

If the child of God is willing to fall in completely with God in the specific work He is accomplishing in this present evil age, although that child may have to sail through some very rough seas and severe storms, he can be of good cheer because he can say, "for I believe God, that it shall be even as it was told me."

Note what was told: "For there shall be no loss of any man's life among you, but of the ship." Acts 27:22. "Wherefore I pray you to take some meat, for this is for your health; for there shall not a hair fall from the head of any of you." Acts 27:34.

POLITICAL AND RELIGIOUS BABYLON

There are two ships headed for disaster and wreck—man's Christless civilization and man's church organizations. Hear, in Matthew 12:25, the plain and true statement of Him Who spake as never man spake, the infallible Christ, Who spoke with Divine authority: "And Jesus knew their thoughts, and said unto them, Every kingdom divided against itself is brought to desolation; and, every city or house divided against itself shall not stand."

The writer of the new book "One World" has vividly described a very sick patient, although in his diagnosis of the disease he has utterly failed to locate the principal germ that has caused this serious, yea, fatal sickness. The writer is very much in earnest and truthful in his warnings, but his remedy will prove as futile as would that of a physician who attempted to cure a smallpox patient by scraping the pox marks off the sick man's body, instead of removing the inside cause. The writer should read and believe I Corinthians 1:20: "Hath not God made foolish the wisdom of this world?"

God is not interested in protecting and preserving and perpetuating, or blessing any enterprise, scheme, achievement, or organization of any man or any group of men in which His Son, Jesus Christ, is not honored. Note the words of Jesus Christ, in John 5:23: "That all men should honor the Son, even as they honor the Father. He that honoreth not the Son honoreth not the Father which hath sent Him."

Note this important statement concerning Christ, “that in all things He might have the preeminence.” Colossians 1:18.

The Lord Jesus Christ has no place whatever in “ One World's” panacea for this sick world. And surely the world's sickness today is just like Israel's sickness many centuries ago From the sole of the foot even unto the head there is no soundness in it; but wounds, and bruises, and putrifying sores: they have not been closed, neither bound up, neither mollified with ointment.” Isaiah 1:6.

The timid, diplomatic, fearful and often blind politicians—including those who know better are afraid and ashamed to mention the name of Jesus Christ in their reformation and healing schemes and philosophies. In this country they do not want to offend the Christ-rejecting Jews, so they make no reference to Christ. When they do refer to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ they refer to Him as “Divine Providence.” Those who do mention the name of God seem to be quite ignorant of God's ways with men and governments and armies as recorded in God's Book, the Bible. And as they cannot mention Christ in this land, on account of those who reject Christ, how can they give Him any place or even mention His name in an international brotherhood of nations made up of Mohammedans, Buddhists, Shintoists, Confuscians and other heathen?

CHRIST IS THE TRUE MEETING-PLACE

Let us read and carefully consider John 11:49 to 52:

“And one of them named Caiaphas, being the high priest that same year, said unto them, Ye know nothing at all, Nor consider that it is expedient for us, that one man should die for the people, and that the whole nation perish not. And this spake he not of himself; but being high priest that year, he prophesied that Jesus should die for that nation; And not for that nation only, but that also he should gather together in one the children of God that were scattered abroad.”

Note with this Matthew 17:5 and Acts 4:12 “. . . and behold a (God's) voice out of the cloud, which said, This is My beloved Son, in Whom I am well pleased. Hear ye Him.” “Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved.”

The only salvation for any American or European or Asiatic, Jew or Gentile, the only hope for any individual, nation or civilization is faith in the crucified and resurrected Son of God.

How can any American, who claims to be a Christian, even foster the faintest hope that God will permit His Divine sanction and blessing to rest upon a brotherhood of American Christians and Asiatic heathen who hate the very name of the Lord Jesus Christ and worship some false prophet, demons, or an imaginary god who does not exist, except as the god of this age and the prince of this world?

A kingdom divided against itself cannot stand, neither can another tower of Babel of which God and His Son are not the foundation.

In this age when God gathers His children in Christ Jesus, He makes of them new creatures. II Corinthians 5:17 and Ephesians 2:10. He calls them out of the world into His Church which He purchased with His own blood. The word “church” means “called out.” That is

the meaning of the Greek word “ekklesia,” the one word translated “church” more than one hundred times in the Bible.

Note I Timothy 3:15: “But if I tarry long that thou mayest know how thou oughtest to behave thyself in the House of God, which is the Church of the Living God, the pillar and ground of the truth.”

Then note the difference between those who are saved Americans, Europeans, Asiatics, and Africans, in the Church, and the unsaved in all nations, not in God's one and only one true Bible Church of this age: “And we know that we are of God, and the whole world lieth in wickedness.” I John 5:19. God asks a very interesting and important question, “how can two walk together unless they be agreed?”

The only part of civilization that God will save during this present Divine economy is the Church composed of only saved people.

There are more than two hundred denominational churches in this country of ours. In many of them the unsaved members out-number the saved members. The test is, “Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new.” II Corinthians 5:17. “But we are bound to give thanks always to God for you, brethren, beloved of the Lord, because God hath from the beginning chosen you to salvation through sanctification of the Spirit and belief of the truth.” II Thessalonians 2:13.

Some of God's saved Church-members join a Baptist Church or a Methodist Church or a Presbyterian Church or a Lutheran Church or even a Catholic Church, but God does not place them in these denominations by the Divine operation of I Corinthians 12:13. Note the verse and see of what Church God does make the saved person a member: “For by one Spirit are we all baptized into one Body, whether we be Jews or Gentiles, whether we be bond or free; and have been all made to drink into one Spirit.”

THAT THERE BE NO DIVISIONS I Corinthians 12:25

According to Matthew 12:25, surely denominational churches are headed for a terrible fall. Does it not seem foolish and futile to support sectarian church organizations, whether or not they are preaching evangelical truth, if they are building in competition with God, Who is building a non-sectarian Church described in Ephesians 2:19 to 22 and Ephesians 4:11 to 13?

Perhaps the confusion and disunity and vagaries will increase and get worse rather than better until Christ comes for His Church. As for God's own children, who earnestly desire to stand faithful and obedient to Christ, true to Ephesians 4:3, meaning of course, that they are willing to sail and suffer with Paul, Paul's words are very timely and apropos: “Wherefore, sirs, be of good cheer, for I believe God, that it shall be even as it was told me.” Acts 27:25.

Even if we should see the wreck of man's civilization, under the prince of this world, and the visible church wrecked by sectarian Christians and the disguised apostles of Satan, operating as ministers of the Christian Church, in bringing in these damnable heresies (II Peter 2:1 to 3), spiritual, faithful saints, as they read of that awful disastrous storm at sea, of that ship going to pieces, can take to heart and put into practice these words of Paul: “Wherefore, sirs, be of good cheer; for I believe God, that it shall be even as it was told me.”

As we think of what is taking place, and is yet to take place on the battlefields on the ground and in the air, and on the seas, how many loved ones will not come home or will come back disfigured almost beyond recognition, and think of how helpless is the confused and divided Christian Church to bring the brutal war to an end, we might be inclined to give up in despair. But genuine, spiritual, faithful saints do not give up in despair.

To all Christians God's Word is, "believe God and be of good cheer." "It will be as was told us" God has told us all about the beginning and course and culmination of this age of Grace and concerning the age after this age. Note II Peter 1:19: "We have also a more sure word of prophecy; whereunto ye do well that ye take heed, as unto a light that shineth in a dark place, until the day dawn, and the day-star arise in your hearts."

The day will dawn. Note the words of Christ in Luke 21:27 and Matthew 25:31 and 32: "And then shall they see the Son of man coming in a cloud with power and great glory." "When the Son of man shall come in His glory, and all the holy angels with Him, then shall He sit upon the throne of His glory; And before Him shall be Gathered all nations: and He shall separate them one from another, as a shepherd divideth his sheep from the goats."

Therefore, Christians, believe I Timothy 1:14 to 16: "And the grace of our Lord was exceeding abundant with faith and love which is in Christ Jesus. This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptation, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners, of whom I am chief. Howbeit for this cause I obtained mercy that in me first Jesus Christ might show forth all long-suffering, for a pattern to them which should hereafter believe on Him to life everlasting."

SAILING WITH PAUL Believe God

First let us read the Lord's words given to Paul for saints: "Now the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, that Ye may abound in hope, through the power of the Holy" "Romans 15:13.

Then hear the words spoken by Christ on earth: "Verily, Verily, I say unto you, he that heareth My word, and believeth on Him that sent Me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation; but is passed from death into life." John 5:24.

Then hear these words in Romans 4:20 to 25: "He (Abraham) staggered not at the promise of God through unbelief; but was strong in faith, giving glory to God; And being fully persuaded, that what He had promised, He was able also to perform. And therefore it was imputed to Him for righteousness. Now it was not written for His sake alone, that it was imputed to him; But for us also, to whom it shall be imputed, if we believe on Him Who raised up Jesus our Lord from the dead; Who was delivered for our offenses, and was raised again for our justification."

If Christians are to be filled with joy and peace, and to abound in hope, it must be by believing, believing the God of hope. Yea, in the midst of darkness, sorrow and even persecution, they can be of good cheer, if they really and truly believe God and prove that they do.

Abram lived in a dark period of the world's history. Idolatry and awful sin filled the whole earth. God called Abram. Abram believed God. By believing God, Abram was changed from an unrighteous heathen to a righteous saint.

Any sinner on this earth today has the privilege of believing God and becoming a righteous saint. Christ said that, to believe God, meant to pass out of death into life. To believe God, is to believe that unbelievers will be eternally lost and that believers will be forever saved. To believe God, is to believe that eternal life is God's free gift through Jesus Christ our Lord. Romans 6:23. To believe God is to believe John 3:36: He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life: and he that believeth not the Son shall not see life; but the wrath of God abideth on him."

WHAT TO BELIEVE AFTER BELIEVING GOD FOR SALVATION

The dead sinner becomes a living saint by believing God. No dead sinner can be of good cheer, as long as he is without Christ. But to every living saint God says, "Be of good cheer." To be of good cheer, the saint must say sincerely and Honestly and with confidence, "I believe God," "that it shall be as it was told me."

Now the problem is what to believe. All of the Bible is God's own infallible Word. And there is a sense in which every living saint should say, and does say, "I believe all the Bible to be God's Word."

But the intelligent, prayerful and spiritual saint of God knows that these words were spoken to those who were sailing with Paul. Members of the Body of Christ are figuratively sailing with Paul.

God's people on this earth were once instructed to sail with Moses. Wonderful, inspired, God-given instructions to Israel are found in the Books written by Moses, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers and Deuteronomy. Israel was enroute from Egypt to Canaan. Moses was their pilot, taking direct orders from Israel's Pilot, Jehovah. Jehovah gave to Israel a full religious program for Israel, in addition to the "law" covenant. Sinai marked a radical change in Israel's history. Hebrews 9:10, Galatians 3:19.

As members of the Body of Christ, under grace, are not Israelites worshipping God in a portable tabernacle, under the law the Body-members must be exceedingly careful to appropriate and apply truth belonging to the law dispensation, in the light of truth revealed under the dispensation of the grace of God, and not mix in any of Israel's law and religion that will frustrate the grace of God.

As we think of Paul's ship with its two hundred and seventy-six passengers tossed to and fro, we might well think of about two hundred and seventy-six sectarian churches in our own land and in most of them are many sincere, saved and unsaved religious people as described in Ephesians 4:14: "That we henceforth be no more children tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, and cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive."

At this time when there is such utter confusion, disorder, hatred, crime, violence and blood-shed in this sin-cursed world, the Church of the Lord Jesus Christ should be united under one banner. under one Head, organized in accordance with Ephesians 4:3 to 7, and with God's

true gospel of grace, in the power of the Holy Spirit, Christians should be united as one Christian Church that will stand and go forward against a common enemy in the name of the crucified and glorified, omnipotent Christ. But among church-members, what do we behold? Discord, divisions, disunity, jealousy and even bitter controversies abound. As we seem to be headed for political Babylon and economic ruin, so we also seem to be making rapid strides toward religious Babylon. Think of the anti-Christian, metaphysical cults in this country propagating their satanic vagaries in the name of Bible Christianity! The great majority of their communicants and adherents were once members of some evangelical sect of the Christian Church. Of the millions, whom Satan, as an angel of light (II Corinthians 11:13 to 15), has deceived into these pseudo—Christian movements, the great majority, instead of having any desire to be delivered from their delusion, are propagating their soul-damning heresies with untiring energy, zeal, sincerity and determination that is rarely found among really saved members of the Body of Christ. What great and blessed thing would happen if true Christians would be evangelistic in their heads and hearts and evangelistic on their feet.

John the Baptist was a great man with a great message. Unlike the apostles of Christ, John performed no miracles. John 10:41. But John faithfully performed his duty as the forerunner of Israel's Messiah and King. He came in the spirit of Elijah and strange words were uttered by Christ concerning John, words which take us back to Malachi 3:7 and Malachi 4:5 and Matthew 11:10. Note Christ's words in Matthew 11:14: “ And if ye will receive it, this is Elijah which was for to come.”

As members of the Body of Christ, under grace, we live in an entirely different dispensation that did John. John was the Lord's messenger to Israel. Acts 13:24 and Luke 1:16 and 80. What folly to interpret Luke 16:16 to mean that the “law” dispensation ended when John arrived. Read Matthew 23:1 to 3 and Matthew 8:2 to 4. John baptized Israelites with water that Christ might be made manifest to Israel. John 1:31. John's message to Israel was a kingdom message, “baptism unto repentance for the remission of sins.” And although the twelve apostles preached this same message to Israel on the day of Pentecost (Acts 2:38), it is different from the one baptism mentioned with the dispensation of the grace of God for Gentiles. Ephesians 4:5 and Ephesians 3:1 and 2.

SHALL WE SAIL WITH PETER?

The fisherman who became Simon Peter was saved in the days of the Son of man, before the holy spirit was sent down from heaven. John 7:36 to 38 and John 16:1 to 8. He became a disciple of Christ during the years that Christ was a minister of the circumcision, made under the law. Romans 15:8 and Galatians 4:4. Christ declared that He was sent only to Israel (Matthew 15:24) and He therefore gave strict orders to Peter and the Eleven, “go not into the way of the Gentiles, but go rather to Israel.” Matthew 10:5 and 6.

After Peter had preached the kingdom gospel for some months he knew not that Christ was going to die and be raised from the dead. Luke 18:31 to 34. In fact; Peter did not want to know this gospel or even believe it, for he said. “be it far from Thee, Lord: this shall not be unto Thee.” Matthew 16:22.

So unto Peter was committed the gospel of the kingdom. Then the keys of the kingdom of heaven. Matthew 16:16 to 19. Then the gospel of the circumcision. Galatians 2:7, Peter received the Holy Spirit many months after he received the message of baptism unto repentance for the remission of sins. Acts 1:5 and Acts 2:1 to 18. Peter never received what some call, "Christian" Water baptism. When Peter was baptized with water he certainly did not witness to the world that he was dead and buried and raised with Christ. Shortly before Pentecost, months after he was baptized with water, Peter did not even know the Scriptures, that Christ was to be raised from the dead. John 20:9. He did not believe it when it was told him by a faithful witness. Luke 24:10 and 11.

Read what Paul testified concerning his Water baptism: "And now why tarriest thou?" arise, and be baptized, and wash away thy sins, call on the name of the Lord." Acts 22:16. Not by any stretch of the imagination should any one say that Paul was buried in water as a witness to the world that he had been crucified, buried and risen. The language is very plain, "be baptized and wash away thy sins." So let us not follow the blind leaders who teach that Peter received kingdom water baptism and Paul's writer baptism was the one baptism of Ephesians 4:5.

But let its see how far we can sail with Peter. The Lord Jesus on earth said to Peter and the Eleven:

"And as ye go, preach, saying, The kingdom of heaven is at hand. Heal the sick, cleanse the lepers, raise the dead, cast out devils: freely ye have received, freely give." "But when they persecute you in this city, flee ye into another: for verily I say unto you, Ye shall not have gone over the cities of Israel, till the Son of man be come." Matthew 10:7, 8 and 23.

Then note Peters Pentecost message:

"Then Peter said unto them, Repent and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit." "And all that believed were together and had all things common; And sold their possessions and goods, and parted them to all men, as every man had need." Acts 2:38, 44 and 45.

"Repent ye therefore, and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out, when the times of refreshing shall come from the presence of the Lord, And He shall send Jesus Christ, Which before was preached unto you: Whom the heaven must receive until the times of restitution of all things, which God hath spoken by the mouth of all His holy prophets since the world began." "Yea, and all the prophets from Samuel and those that follow after, as many as have spoken, have likewise foretold of these days." Acts 3:19 to 21 and 24.

"Him hath God exalted with His right hand to be a Prince and a Saviour, for to give repentance to Israel, and forgiveness of sins. And we are His witnesses of these things; and so is also the Holy Spirit, Whom God hath given to them that obey Him." Acts 5:31 and 32.

"And he said unto them, Ye know how that it is an unlawful thing for a man that is a Jew to keep company, or come unto one of another nation; but God hath showed me that I should not call any man common or unclean" Acts 10:28.

"And when James, Peter and John, who seemed to be pillars, perceived the grace that was given unto me, they gave to me and Barnabas the right hands of fellowship; that we should go unto the heathen, and they unto the circumcision." Galatians 2:9.

First, let us note that if we sail with Peter, according to the Four Gospels and Acts, we will stay near the sea of Galilee unless we transfer to the ship of tradition or man's church history and then we may land at St. Peter's and the vatican.

In these Divine Records Peter remained in the land of the Jews as a minister of the circumcision. Acts 8:1 and Acts 15:1 to 19 and Galatians 2:1 to 7. He preached to a company of Godfearing Gentiles in the land of the Jews and then refused to eat with some saved God-fearing Gentiles outside of the land of the Jews. Acts 10:34 to 16 and Galatians 2:10 to 13.

Carefully study the last sixteen chapters of Acts and locate yourself, if you have sailed with Peter. Not a sailing or missionary journey of Peter away from the sea of Galilee is mentioned. But Paul did some sailing and in those sixteen chapters we find the records of several of Paul's sea voyages and missionary journeys, "far Hence to the Gentiles." Acts 22:17 to 21.

Every Christian should be of good cheer, because he says from a sincere heart, "I believe God." But does he believe that God has told him what was told Peter in Matthew 10:23, "Ye shall not have gone over the cities of Israel till the Son of man be come?" Does he so believe God that he is expected to obey Matthew 10:7 and 8 and Mark 16:17 and 18: "And as ye go, preach, saving The kingdom of heaven is at hand." "heal the sick, raise the dead, etc." "And these signs shall follow them that believe; In My name shall they cast out devils; they shall speak with new tongues; they shall take up serpents; and if they drink any deadly thing, it shall not hurt them; they shall lay hands on the sick and they shall recover"

Does he so believe God that he is to preach what Peter preached in Acts 2:38 and Acts 3:19 to 24, in Acts 5:29 to 32 and in Acts 10:34 to 37? Is he to so believe God that he feels he is led by the Holy Spirit to sell all his earthly possessions and give the money to church leaders? Is he to so believe God that he will be visited by the angel of the Lord to direct his ministry or miraculously deliver him from jail?

If Peter was saved months before he received Holy Spirit baptism, because the Holy Spirit had not yet been sent down from heaven, surely we cannot have such an experience as Peter had on the day of Pentecost. There is no Pentecost except when Israel is in Jerusalem and Canaan.

In John 14:12 Christ said, "greater works than these shall he do, because I go to my Father."

There are many sincere Christians who have not learned to sail with Paul and they are striving and oft times agonizing, even unto the point of a mental collapse, trying to perpetuate or duplicate the miracles of Christ and Peter and the other apostles.

God desires that His messengers should be of power and love and a sound mind and be vessels of honor in a great House, sanctified and meet for the Master's service. II Timothy 1:7 and 2:21. Now note the instructions in between II Timothy 1:7 and II Timothy 2:21: "Study to show thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the Word of truth." "Nevertheless the foundation of God standeth sure, having this seal, The Lord knoweth them that are His. And, Let every one that nameth the name of Christ depart from iniquity." II Timothy 2:15 and 19.

What a wonderful combination: "Name the name of Christ" and, with this naming, "depart from iniquity" and "rightly divide the Word of truth." What could not Almighty God do with the Church on this earth, if the members of Christ's Body would follow these instructions.

There is a tremendous need for consecrated, separated, Spirit-filled Christians. But they must not be workmen who need to be ashamed, because they do not rightly divide the Word of truth. To rightly divide the Word of truth means to sail with Paul, first from Acts 9:1, about ten years to Acts 13:2. In Acts 13:2 Paul receives orders for his new ministry. In sailing these ten years with Paul we read Galatians 1:11 to 22. It is important to read Paul's testimony in this chapter.

Leaving Antioch with Paul we stop at Acts 13:46: "Then Paul and Barnabas waxed bold, and said, It was necessary that the Word of God should first have been spoken to you: but seeing ye put it from you, and judge yourselves unworthily of everlasting life, LO, WE TURN TO THE GENTILES." Then we sail to Acts 18:6: "And then they opposed themselves, and blasphemed, he shook his raiment, and said unto them, your blood be upon your own heads; I am clean: FROM HENCEFORTH I WILL GO TO THE GENTILES." Then we sail to Acts 19:9 and 10: "But when divers were hardened and believed not, but spake evil of that way before the multitude. he departed from them, and separated the disciples, disputing daily in the school of one Tyranus. And this continued by the space of two years; so that all they which dwelt in Asia heard the word of the Lord Jesus, both Jews and Greeks." Think of Paul for two years in a Gentile's school.

We stop here for a little while as we read I Corinthians 12:8 to 11 and 28 and I Corinthians 14:39

"For to one is given by the Spirit the word of wisdom; to another the word of knowledge by the same Spirit; to another faith by the same Spirit; to another the gifts of healing by the same Spirit; to another the working of miracles; to another prophecy; to another discerning of spirits; to another divers kinds of tongues; to another the interpretation of tongues; But all these worketh that one and the selfsame Spirit, dividing to every man severally as he will." "And God hath set some in the Church, first apostles, secondarily prophets, thirdly teachers, after that miracles, then gifts of healings, helps, governments, diversities of tongues." "Wherefore, brethren, covet to prophesy, and forbid not to speak with tongues."

But let us always read with these verses some other verses in the same Epistles: "Charity never faileth: but whether there be prophecies, they shall fail; whether there be tongues, they shall cease; whether there be knowledge, it shall vanish away." "When I was a child, I spake as a child, I understood as a child, I thought as a child: but when I became a man, I put away childish things." "And now abideth faith, hope, love, these three; but the greatest of these is love." I Corinthian 13:8, 11 and 13.

If we are to sail with Paul, shall we forbid Christians to speak with tongues or exercise the gift of miracles or healing?

Then in our voyage, sailing far hence with Paul, we arrive at II Corinthians 5:16 to 21 and Romans 5:9 to 12 and Romans 11:8 to 15 and 30. Get out your Bible and read these Scriptures.

We have come to a great mystery: "For I would not, brethren, that ye should be ignorant of this mystery, lest ye should be wise in your own conceits, that blindness in part is happened to Israel, until the fulness of the Gentiles be come in." Romans 11:25.

Israel has rejected the Lord in resurrection and the program of Acts 3:19 to 21 has been postponed. Although the times of refreshing, prophesied by Israel's prophets, will not come until

the fulness of the Gentiles be come in, a very favorable season has begun for Gentiles. Note the NOW'S in Ephesians 2:12 and 13 ; Romans 16:25 and 26; Romans 5:9 and 11; Colossians 1:20 and 21; Romans 11:30; Ephesians 2:19. The Gentiles could truly say, "it is all different now." These "NOW'S" not only marked radical changes in the lives of individual Gentiles, but dispensational changes in God's dealings with the Gentiles. To fail to see this, is to fail to obey II Timothy 2:15, "rightly dividing."

Note the contrast between Matthew 10:5, "go not into the way of the Gentiles"; Matthew 15:24, "I am sent only to Israel"; Acts 10:28, "It is unlawful to go to Gentiles"; and the blessed truth of Titus 2:11, "For the grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared unto all men. "

Surely every intelligent, spiritual student of the Scriptures must, and does, recognize the principle of progressive revelation. Compare the statement of Christ in Matthew 10:5, "go not into the way of the Gentiles" with Ephesians 3:1 to 3 and 3:8: "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: as I wrote afore in few words"; "Unto me, who am less than the least of all saints, is this grace given, that I should preach among the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ."

Now compare Romans 15:8 and Ephesians 3:8:

"Now I say that Jesus Christ was a minister of the circumcision for the truth of God, to confirm the promises made unto the fathers."

"Unto me, who am less than the least of all saints, is this grace given, that I should preach among the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ."

Christ on earth was a minister of the circumcision sent only to Israel (Matthew 15:24), sent to fulfill the law and the prophets (Matthew 5:17 and 18). He came unto His own (Israel). John 1:11 and Acts 13:23. He came with a ministry of confirmation, that is, a prophesied message and program.

After Christ went back to heaven He sent Paul by revelation, to Jews and to Gentiles. Paul went first with a message and ministry of confirmation; then he went with the "unsearchable riches of Christ" for the Gentiles.

There is a great difference between these two ministries and it behooves every workman of God who wants to obey I Corinthians 4:1 to 4 and be a faithful steward of the mysteries of God to not only progress from Matthew 15:24 to Acts 2:38; Acts 3:19 to 21 and Acts 10:34 to 46, but to sail with Paul from his ministry of confirmation to his revelation ministry which is so frequently designated as "the mystery." Ephesians 3:3 and 4; 6:19 and 20; Ephesians 1:9; Ephesians 3:9; Colossians 1:26 and Colossians 4:3 and 4.

BEFORE AND AFTER ACTS 28

It is more than interesting to study the difference between Paul's message and ministry before the close of the Book of Acts and after the close of the Book of Acts. There are enough real differences Without permitting our imagination to suggest some differences that are not real.

Some men of God have imagined that after the close of Acts God began an entirely New Church. They teach that Paul wrote his First Epistle to Timothy before the close of Acts and his Second Epistle to Timothy after the close of Acts. According to this, Timothy belonged to two

different Bodies and in some mysterious way he was transferred from Body Number One into Body Number Two. Well, Paul and Luke must have been included in the transfer. Such an interpretation is anything but rightly dividing the Word of truth; it is unsound thinking.

But, for some reason, God closed the Book of Acts several years before Paul said, "I have finished my course." Why? Luke, the beloved physician, was with Paul to the end. II Timothy 4:11. Luke wrote Acts. Acts is the acts of the apostles. The last sixteen chapters of Acts record the acts of Paul. But with Acts 28:31 Paul did not cease his acts. He acted several years thereafter and included in those acts Paul wrote Ephesians, Philippians, Philemon, Titus, II Timothy and Colossians, and possibly I Timothy.

It is interesting to study these last Epistles, having in mind I Corinthians 13:8 and 11 and 13. Certain things were to pass away. Certain things were to abide. The Lord wants His servants to know the difference between the sign-gifts in I Corinthians 12:8 to 11, I Corinthians 12:28 and the gifts mentioned in Ephesians 4:10 to 12, so that members of Christ's Body should no longer be children tossed to and fro but to progress with Paul and put away childish things.

Have you not wondered why God by the hands of Paul healed an idolatrous heathen before the close of Acts (Acts 28:8) whereas after the close of Acts Paul wrote that he left a faithful saint sick? II Timothy 4:20.

Have you not wondered why, before the close of Acts we read in the Four Gospels and the Book of Acts concerning five or six baptisms and after the close of Acts we read "there is one baptism" Ephesians 4:5.

Certainly in the Post-Acts Epistles of Paul we find the Body of Christ in a signless period, signs and religion gone. This was not a New Church or Body, but the Same. Body with a change in its spiritual program.

MESSAGES OF GRACE AND ETERNAL LIFE

We are sending out the first edition of our 24 page publication in newspaper form, entitled "MESSAGES OF GRACE AND ETERNAL LIFE."

We specialize in the gospel of the grace of God. We are positive that the greatest need of humanity, not excepting the return of the Lord Jesus Christ, is the gospel of the grace of God. This is another way of saying that man's superlative need is the Lord Jesus Christ, without religion. This is the very essence of the gospel of the grace of God.

What wonderful news for the human race in Romans 3:21: "BEING DECLARED RIGHTEOUS WITHOUT A CAUSE BY HIS GRACE THROUGH THE REDEMPTION THAT IS IN CHRIST JESUS."

Think of it! When God wants every man on this earth to know that He can be declared righteous without a cause by His grace, by faith in His redemptive work, why will man refuse this "grace" salvation, or insist on mixing legalism, religion and religious ceremonies, or sectarian churchianity, in with God's perfect work?

Hear again II Timothy 1:9 and 10:

"Who hath saved us, and called us with an holy calling, not according to our works, but according to His own purpose and grace, which was given us in Christ Jesus before the world

began; But is now made manifest by the appearing of our Saviour Jesus Christ, Who hath abolished death, and hath brought life and immortality to light through the gospel.”

Hear again Ephesians 2:8 to 10:

“For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: Not of works lest any man should boast. For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them.” Hear again Romans 6:14: “For sin shall not have dominion over you; for ye, are not under the law, but under grace.”

Hear again Romans 5:20: “Moreover the law entered, that the offense might abound. But where sin abounded, grace did much more abound.”

Hear again Acts 13:39: “And by Him all that believe are justified from all things, from which ye could not be justified by the law of Moses.”

What a crime for any religious Christian preacher to tell any man to believe that his goodness or good works or religious deeds can in any way contribute one iota to his salvation. “Not of works lest any man should boast.”

The good works have their proper Scriptural place in the life of the believer who is saved by God's good work without any religious help from man.

Christ was the perfect God and perfect Man and He did a perfect work. By faith in the perfect work of the perfect Christ, man is eternally saved, declared righteous, and stands in the presence of the holy, righteous God as though he had never sinned even once. Is it not wonderful? Yes, and positively true.

But this unmixed reign of grace did not begin while Christ was on earth or during the first chapters of Acts which record the mixed message and program of the twelve apostles. Yes, there are wonderful words of grace in the Gospel of John, in Luke, Mark and Matthew, but hear this word from the pen and heart of Christ's special grace messenger:

“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 to me the mystery; (as I wrote afore in few words; Whereby, when ye read, ye may understand my knowledge in the mystery of Christ.) Ephesians 3:1 to 4. “But I certify you, brethren, that the gospel which was preached of me is not after man. For I neither received it of man, neither was I taught it, but by the revelation of Jesus Christ.” Galatians 1:11 and 12. The unmixed reign of grace began after God's religious nation (Israel) was set aside, which certainly was not before Acts 13:40 to 46. As many “grace” messengers have truly said, “this is a signless and a timeless age.” It is also a “religionless” age, so far as God's will is concerned.