**How Do We Follow Jesus Today?**

So many people want to follow Jesus and live by the things that are written in the four gospel accounts of Jesus’ earthly ministry (Matthew, Mark Luke and John). But do those books record for us Gentiles the way to follow Jesus today in this dispensation of the grace of God?

(Romans 9:3-5 KJV) For I could wish that myself were accursed from Christ for my brethren, my kinsmen according to the flesh: {4} Who are Israelites; to whom pertaineth the adoption, and the glory, and the covenants, and the giving of the law, and the service of God, and the promises; {5} Whose are the fathers, and of whom as concerning the flesh Christ came, who is over all, God blessed for ever. Amen.

When Jesus was in the flesh, that is, during His earthly ministry, He came to Israel with a specific purpose.

(Romans 15:8 KJV) 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:

In His earthly ministry as recorded by Matthew, Mark, Luke and John, His purpose was to confirm the promises made unto the fathers and He was a minister of the circumcision. Circumcision has to do with the covenant God made with Abraham (see Genesis 17:10-14) where circumcision was a sign of that covenant. It was specifically for the nation Israel.

(Matthew 10:5-6 KJV) These twelve Jesus sent forth, and commanded them, saying, Go not into the way of the Gentiles, and into any city of the Samaritans enter ye not: {6} But go rather to the lost sheep of the house of Israel.

When Jesus first sent the twelve out, He told them not to go to the Gentiles. Also, in John 4:22, Jesus tells the Samaritan woman that salvation is of the Jews. In His earthly ministry, Jesus was letting Israel know without a doubt that God was going to fulfill His promises made to Abraham.

In the early Acts period, Peter preached Jesus according to prophecy, that which was spoken by the mouth of the prophets since the world began to the nation Israel:

(Acts 3:18-26 KJV) But those things, which God before had showed by the mouth of all his prophets, that Christ should suffer, he hath so fulfilled. {19} 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; {20} **And he shall send Jesus Christ, which before was preached unto you:** {21} 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**. {22} For Moses truly said unto the fathers, A prophet shall the Lord your God raise up unto you of your brethren, like unto me; him shall ye hear in all things whatsoever he shall say unto you. {23} And it shall come to pass, that every soul, which will not hear that prophet, shall be destroyed from among the people. {24} Yea, and all the prophets from Samuel and those that follow after, as many as have spoken, have likewise foretold of these days. {25} Ye are the children of the prophets, and of the covenant which God made with our fathers, saying unto Abraham, And in thy seed shall all the kindreds of the earth be blessed. {26} Unto you first God, having raised up his Son Jesus, sent him to bless you, in turning away every one of you from his iniquities.

In Acts 3:26, Peter tells Israel that it was "unto you first" the risen Lord Jesus Christ was sent. In time past, there was a distinction between Jew (the Circumcision) and Gentile (the Uncircumcision). In prophecy, the Gentiles will come to know God through Israel. Although when Jesus was in the flesh, that is in His earthly ministry, salvation was limited to the nation Israel, after His ascension the scope of the Israel's ministry has expanded and they are now to go to the nations. The blessing is first to Israel, then to the nations.

(Isaiah 60:1-3 KJV) Arise, shine; for thy light is come, and the glory of the LORD is risen upon thee. {2} For, behold, the darkness shall cover the earth, and gross darkness the people: but the LORD shall arise upon thee, and his glory shall be seen upon thee. {3} And the Gentiles shall come to thy light, and kings to the brightness of thy rising.

But during the Acts timeframe, Israel has not yet come to her fullness and when Paul writes to the Ephesians, he tells us Gentiles to remember our status in time past. (Genesis - mid Acts).

(Ephesians 2:11-12 KJV) Wherefore remember, that ye being in time past Gentiles in the flesh, who are called Uncircumcision by that which is called the Circumcision in the flesh made by hands; {12} That at that time ye 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:

Notice how Paul describes the Uncircumcision, Gentiles, in time past:

* Without Christ
* Aliens from the commonwealth of Israel
* Strangers from the covenants of promise
* Having no hope
* Without God in the world

Paul says that in time past, the Uncircumcision (Gentiles) were without Christ, having no hope and without God in the world. Paul describes how the Gentiles came to be in that condition in the first chapter of Romans:

(Romans 1:21-28 KJV) Because that, when they knew God, they glorified him not as God, neither were thankful; but became vain in their imaginations, and their foolish heart was darkened. {22} Professing themselves to be wise, they became fools, {23} And changed the glory of the uncorruptible God into an image made like to corruptible man, and to birds, and fourfooted beasts, and creeping things. {24} Wherefore *God also gave them up* to uncleanness through the lusts of their own hearts, to dishonour their own bodies between themselves: {25} Who changed the truth of God into a lie, and worshipped and served the creature more than the Creator, who is blessed for ever. Amen. {26} For this cause *God gave them up* unto vile affections: for even their women did change the natural use into that which is against nature: {27} And likewise also the men, leaving the natural use of the woman, burned in their lust one toward another; men with men working that which is unseemly, and receiving in themselves that recompense of their error which was meet. {28} And even as they did not like to retain God in their knowledge, *God gave them over* to a reprobate mind, to do those things which are not convenient;

In the beginning, mankind had the knowledge of God but they chose not to retain God in their knowledge and their foolish heart was darkened. Paul describes the first 2,000 years of man’s history in those 8 verses. We can read about it in the first 11 chapters of Genesis. In Genesis 12, God called out Abram from among the nations, changed his name to Abraham and established an everlasting covenant with Him and his seed. From that time forward, the Gentiles were left in a state of ignorance. It is not until the Apostle Paul did the Gentiles have a chance to recover the light of God’s truth. (See Acts 17:22-34) Beginning with the Apostle Paul, the times of that ignorance is now over. Paul is now the spokesman of God to the Gentiles.

(Romans 15:15-16 KJV) Nevertheless, brethren, I have written the more boldly unto you in some sort, as putting you in mind, because of the grace that is given to me of God, {16} That I should be the minister of Jesus Christ to the Gentiles, ministering the gospel of God, that the offering up of the Gentiles might be acceptable, being sanctified by the Holy Ghost.

With the Apostle Paul, God began to do something new and something different. The Gentiles can now come to know God in spite of Israel’s failure to do what God would have her to do.

(Romans 11:11-15 KJV) I say then, Have they stumbled that they should fall? God forbid: **but rather through their fall salvation is come unto the Gentiles**, for to provoke them to jealousy. {12} **Now if the fall of them be the riches of the world, and the diminishing of them the riches of the Gentiles**; how much more their fulness? {13} For I speak to you Gentiles, inasmuch as I am the apostle of the Gentiles, I magnify mine office: {14} If by any means I may provoke to emulation them which are my flesh, and might save some of them. {15} **For if the casting away of them be the reconciling of the world**, what shall the receiving of them be, but life from the dead?

When Israel stoned Stephen in Acts 7 the very next thing that was to happen according to prophecy was Daniel’s 70th week. But that has not yet happened. Instead of the Lord Jesus Christ coming in wrath to make His enemies His footstool, He made an unpredicted appearance to the Apostle Paul (then known as Saul of Tarsus). Rather than pouring out His wrath, He reached down in longsuffering and saved the leader of the rebellion.

(1 Timothy 1:15-16 KJV) 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. {16} Howbeit for this cause I obtained mercy, that in me first Jesus Christ might show forth all longsuffering, for a pattern to them which should hereafter believe on him to life everlasting.

The manner in which Paul was saved was to be for a pattern. Not only was Paul saved after the fall of Israel, but the preaching about the Lord Jesus Christ is now different than it was before.

(Romans 16:25-26 KJV) 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, {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:

(Ephesians 3:1-5 KJV) For this cause I Paul, the prisoner of Jesus Christ for you Gentiles, {2} If ye have heard of the dispensation of the grace of God which is given me to you-ward: {3} **How that by revelation he made known unto me the mystery; (as I wrote afore in few words, {4} Whereby, when ye read, ye may understand my knowledge in the mystery of Christ) {5} Which in other ages was not made known unto the sons of men**, as it is now revealed unto his holy apostles and prophets by the Spirit;

There was some information about the Lord Jesus Christ that was given specifically to the Paul, the apostle of the Gentiles. It is only when we read his epistles we can understand his knowledge of the mystery of Christ, that is what was not made known unto men in other ages (before Acts 9).

(2 Corinthians 11:3-4 KJV) But I fear, lest by any means, as the serpent beguiled Eve through his subtlety, so your minds should be corrupted from the simplicity that is in Christ. {4} For if he that cometh preacheth another Jesus, whom we have not preached, or if ye receive another spirit, which ye have not received, or another gospel, which ye have not accepted, ye might well bear with him.

Paul wrote to the Corinthians that they would be corrupted in their minds from the simplicity that is in Christ. One of the ways that could be done was that someone would come along and preach "*another Jesus*", that is to preach Jesus in a way differing from the way the Apostle Paul preached Jesus.

This is not referring to someone denying the deity of the Lord Jesus Christ, but rather it means that someone will come along and preach Jesus according to prophecy. The twelve preached Jesus according to prophecy, that which was spoken by the mouth of the prophets since the world began:

(Acts 3:20-21 KJV) And he shall send Jesus Christ, which before was preached unto you: {21} 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.

Matthew, Mark, Luke and John all record the life of Jesus Christ when He was in the flesh. However, this is not how the Apostle Paul tells us we are to know the Lord Jesus Christ.

(2 Corinthians 5:15-16 KJV) And that he died for all, that they which live should not henceforth live unto themselves, but unto him which died for them, and rose again. {16} Wherefore henceforth know we no man after the flesh: yea, though we have known Christ after the flesh, yet now henceforth know we him no more.

Paul says from this time forward we are to no longer know Christ after the flesh. To know Christ after the flesh would mean to know Him according to what was written in Matthew, Mark, Luke and John. But now, we are to know the Lord Jesus Christ are according to the mystery, the information God kept secret until He chose to reveal it to the Apostle Paul who then gave us that information. Today, we are to follow Jesus Christ according to the revelation of the mystery as revealed to and through the Apostle Paul.

(1 Corinthians 14:37-38 KJV) If any man think himself to be a prophet, or spiritual, let him acknowledge that the things that I write unto you are the commandments of the Lord. {38} But if any man be ignorant, let him be ignorant.

(1 Corinthians 11:1 KJV) Be ye followers of me, even as I also am of Christ.

If you want to follow Jesus, then you need to make sure you are following Jesus in the manner in which God would have us to follow Him. Today, in the dispensation of the grace of God, we find that information in Paul’s writings: Romans - Philemon.

(1 Corinthians 4:15-17 KJV) For though ye have ten thousand instructors in Christ, yet have ye not many fathers: for in Christ Jesus I have begotten you through the gospel. {16} **Wherefore I beseech you, be ye followers of me**. {17} For this cause have I sent unto you Timotheus, who is my beloved son, and faithful in the Lord, who shall bring you into remembrance of my ways which be in Christ, as I teach every where in every church.