

TRUTH FOR TODAY

RADIO ADDRESS  
by  
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## TRUTH FOR TODAY

It has been God's practice and rule thruout the ages to reveal truth to men WHEN and AS they need it: This revelation of truth has been progressive. The revelation of truth has as its center and theme the revelation of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. In every family of God, whether in heaven or on the earth, He is the hope. The Word of God testifies of Him. He cannot be known outside the Scriptures. He cannot be known from the Scriptures except by the enlightening and teaching of the Holy Spirit. He is the only one who could say, I AM THE WAY, THE TRUTH, AND THE LIFE.

In the beginning of the human family, certain truths were revealed to them for their particular hope and calling. As time went on and God's methods of dealing with mankind changed, new truth was added. Much of the new truth makes obsolete the old. Many things which were expected of men of old are not expected of men today. And the reverse is also true. The first chapter to the Romans gives us a little picture of man in the early stages of his history. Without any promptings whatsoever from Satan, man in his fleshly desires and lusts became so wicked that God gave him up to his lusts and desires. The story of Abraham in Genesis tells us how that after the nations have been given up, God chose another new nation in the person of Abraham. This new nation was to be a blessing to all the others and be the means of leading them from darkness to light, from sin to the knowledge of God again. These nations, when they knew God, did not glorify Him as God. They did not want to retain Him in their knowledge. So Israel was chosen to restore things on the earth. They were to be a priestly nation, a mediator between God and men, that men might be led back to God again. From Gen. 11 and on to the last of the book of Acts, we have a history of the failures of this chosen people. A few bright

highlights stand out here and there, but for the most part, it is a story of miserable failure.

At the end of the ministry of the apostles in Acts we find that this nation which has so signally failed, is set aside for a time and God reveals a new purpose which had been hid from ages and generations in God. This new purpose concerns you and me for we are Gentiles. This new truth is revealed to us by the Holy Spirit thru the apostle Paul who was a special apostle to us Gentiles.

This now leads me up to the topic I have chosen for this little study. Would you please take your Bible and turn to Col. 1:26,27. In those two verses are three expressions I would like to dwell on at some greater length. They are very important and stand right out from the context. They are; 1. HIS SAINTS. 2. TO WHOM GOD WOULD MAKE KNOWN. 3. THIS MYSTERY. Now it may be a good idea to read these two verses together so as to get all the words; in verse 24 Paul speaks of the church and in verse 25 he makes mention of the fact that he is made a minister of this church to fulfill or complete or fully preach the Word of God. Then quoting, EVEN THE MYSTERY WHICH HATH BEEN HID FROM AGES AND FROM GENERATIONS, BUT NOW IS MADE MANIFEST TO HIS SAINTS; TO WHOM GOD WOULD MAKE KNOWN WHAT IS THE RICHES OF THE GLORY OF THIS MYSTERY AMONG THE GENTILES; WHICH IS CHRIST IN YOU, THE HOPE OF GLORY.

As we look at the Scripture just read we are struck with the fact that it is God's will that a certain truth should be made known to His saints. The expression is, TO WHOM GOD WOULD MAKE KNOWN. Whom refers back to the word SAINTS. The word WOULD here means a wish or desire from a natural impulse. It has more to do with the heart than the mind. Then we must conclude that this is something that lies near to the heart of God. Of course this will be absolutely impossible to be understood by those who think of God as some mysterious influence a long distance away. But God is a person. He has wishes and desires.

They are wholly good. They are wholly good for those who are His. This is a day when God does not force His truth upon anyone. You can take it or leave it. You can also know that whatever course you may pursue, you will reap exactly what you sow. Those words are for believers, and not for unbelievers as so many fondly think and hope. Unbelievers do not reap. They simply collect their wages of sin which is DEATH. They get no more nor no less. Their accounts are not taken care of every Saturday nite either. They may go for a long time seemingly in good health and having much success in life (as the world sees it), but all the time they are dead. Dead people do not reap. They are even dead while they live and they know not that they receive wages.

But God does express His heart's desire, even tho He may not force His truth upon men. He does this so that those who earnestly seek to please Him might realize that there are things that He would have them to know. What things would He have His saints to know? This Scripture says, WHAT IS THE RICHES OF THE GLORY OF THIS MYSTERY.

We might make a little parallel here to show forth this wondrous truth. In 2 Pet. 3:9 we find that God is not willing that any should perish. In 1 Tim. 2:4 in the RV we find, WHO WILLETH THAT ALL MEN SHOULD BE SAVED, AND COME TO THE KNOWLEDGE OF THE TRUTH. In comparing these two references we must come to the conclusion that it is not God's INTENTION that any should perish, but it is His DESIRE that all should be saved. So God has a desire for unsaved sinners. He likewise has a desire for the saints. The same word is used in both cases. It means that God just as strongly desires His saints to know the truth He has revealed as He desires the unsaved to be saved. How I wish that I could get God's children to realize this great truth! If they could only know His longing for them!

We must remember that it is the God and Father of our

Lord Jesus Christ that is speaking. He is the Father of glory. That might be said this way; THE GLORIOUS FATHER. It is before Him that all principalities and powers must bow some day. He it is that DESIRES that certain things be known to His saints. These things concern a mystery or secret. They concern the riches of the glory of the mystery. It is certain that if the saints could only realize the great desire God has for them, they would exclaim with Samuel of old, SPEAK, LORD, FOR THY SERVANT HEARETH.

How it saddens our hearts as we look about and see that this great desire of God is not being fulfilled. There is little enmity against it, but just plain indifference. Each little group is so busy playing the game of 'follow the leader' that they do not hear the voice of God. Today there is just as much lack of interest and concern in the will of God as ever. Many just plainly say that they do not want it. It would interfere too much with their own plans and pleasures. Then we have some very earnest ones who are very busy giving out the gospel of everlasting life to the lost and do not realize that there are some things that God would have them to know. It is fine to be zealous in preaching the gospel of salvation. It is a subject that is badly neglected today, too. But those who proclaim it should also go on unto perfection in the knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. God has expressed a desire for us. Let us keep that in mind and seek to find what that desire is. Surely that would please Him.

It just seems that the short statements with which we introduced this subject should make the average Christian stop and consider. But we know that they do not do it. However, we must not look too much at the shortcomings of others. Let us keep that in mind and seek to know what His desire is for us.

Paul knew God's purpose for today. He prayed and acted accordingly. Yes, Paul prayed. He has set a wonderful

example in that respect. He also acted on the truth he had. That is also a good example for us. We should praise God for this record of Paul, for it reveals a great deal to us. Just a study of his prayers for the saints is a great revelation itself. Try going thru your Bible and check the themes of the prayers of Paul. Note also how much space is required to record his prayers. He was indeed a praying man. But so was our Lord. And if He, the Son of God needed to pray, how much more then do you and I need to pray. Then how will our prayers compare with all these model prayers in the Word? Do we pray as we ought?

The prayers of Paul all reflect the desires of God for us today. Notice Eph. 6:18-20 for an example. It reads, PRAYING...FOR ALL SAINTS; AND FOR ME, THAT UTTERANCE MAY BE GIVEN UNTO ME, THAT I MAY OPEN MY MOUTH BOLDLY, TO MAKE KNOWN THE MYSTERY OF THE GOSPEL. FOR WHICH MYSTERY I AM AN AMBASSADOR IN BONDS; THAT IN THE MYSTERY I MAY SPEAK BOLDLY AS I OUGHT TO SPEAK. Paul had a great longing to be able to tell these things because he knew that it was God's will that we should know them. This is true of today. This prayer of Paul's is still echoing thru the heavens. There are many fine souls today who are eager, just as Paul was, to make known the mystery everywhere to all men. But the world does not give them much acclaim. For the most part, they are unknown. Now do you know what I mean by 'the world'? Most people think that it is the mass of people who never go to church. But in the times of our Lord, He said that the world hated Him and would also hate His disciples. Who crucified the Lord? The church leaders of His time. The Roman soldiers were only hirelings doing as they were told. The Roman government had no hatred for Christ. Pilate would gladly have let Him go free. He found no fault in Him. But the religious leaders of the day hated Him without a cause. They hated and persecuted His followers. Then the world that the Lord was

speaking about was the religious system of the day and not those outside the church. That is something we should soberly consider. Where do you find strife and hatred today about Christ? Most of it is in the organized churches. It is certainly an evil day when they get so busy with their programs and affairs that they no longer have time for Christ and His words. I have no desire to be critical, but I do see danger and would that I could sound a warning to all.

Did you ever think of the condition Paul was in when he expressed a desire to be able to speak boldly? He was in a Roman jail. He was not free to go out when and where he pleased. He had a Roman soldier at his side continually. There was a change of soldiers every few hours. That was not a very good atmosphere for one to do well in praying and speaking boldly the message that God had given. It is too bad that so many Christians today, who have never been in jail, still cannot speak boldly as they ought to speak. Many complain that they are handicapped and cannot do service for Christ. How foolish! Here was Paul in a Roman dungeon praying that he might be able to speak boldly for his Lord at every opportunity. We ought to be ashamed of ourselves! With all the freedom and advantages that we have today most Christians seem content to contribute a little to hire somebody to do their preaching and praying for them. Some seem to have the idea that their preacher can pray them right into heaven, while they themselves can go on and do as they please. But every one will have to give an account for himself. No one else can do it for him. You can't live a life for the devil and then have some preacher preach you into heaven at your funeral. Remember, you can't fool God.

Now let us think over the condition of Paul and let it become real to us. His prison was a real one and not a comfortable one at that. No modern conveniences then. It may be that this seems so far off and long ago that we

lose the reality of it all. I do not believe that it was a mere chance that Paul was in bonds when the commission of the mystery was given to him. This was an important stewardship. Near the end of Acts we find that he was in chains for the hope of Israel. After Acts he says that he is a prisoner of the Lord for us Gentiles. Was this another imprisonment? Or was it the same imprisonment, but Paul's purpose and message had changed? It must have been the latter. For after the all day meeting in Acts 28, Paul continued for at least two years in a hired house of his own, but still a prisoner. His teaching of that time was concerning the things of God or the kingdom of God, in relation to the Lord Jesus Christ. The title THE LORD JESUS CHRIST is most significant. It is a title that is used in relation to Gentiles. It is not the title of the King of the Jews or the Messiah of Israel. We do well to use that title of Him today. Certainly it is not honoring Him to call Him by His earthly name Jesus, as so many do. Such a title does not confess and own His deity. Of course it is the style today to deny the deity of Christ. It is the style to omit His redeeming blood from all teaching. To many He is no more than an unfortunate martyr who died too soon.

But back to the thread of argument. The bonds and the ministry of the mystery have a very close relationship. We cannot get away from that. That this change in aspect of his imprisonment was true cannot be passed over lightly. I know that many try to go back before this period of being in bonds for us Gentiles to find truth for today. It cannot be done. Such a view brings in only confusion.

There can be no doubt that the truths which Paul preached before the end of Acts were concerning the kingdom and the King Who was to come. There was no mystery about that part. It was the subject of the prophets and Moses. It was also the subject of the 12 apostles. Right at the very end of Acts Paul was still able to say that



he had preached none other things than what were in Moses and the prophets. He had been accused of preaching a new doctrine, but he denied it and went to the Scriptures to prove it. Just a short time before the close of Acts Paul had written the epistle to the Romans. It is one of his latest. In the 11th chapter Paul describes the position of the Gentiles in relation to Israel. They were as a grafted in wild olive branch. Today men graft in a branch in order that it might bear fruit, in fact better fruit than the old stock. But this grafting in Rom. 11 was one that was contrary to nature and the usual practice. The wild olive branch did not bear fruit. It was not expected to. But it would cause the old olive tree to bear fruit again. That was the purpose. Now in the latter part of the Acts period when Gentiles were being added to the church, it was not primarily for the salvation of the Gentiles, but that Israel might become fruitful. Read that 11th chapter of Romans carefully and see for yourself. This grafting in of the Gentiles had been prophesied. It was no mystery. Furthermore these Gentiles, according to the edict of the council at Jerusalem were not subject to the law. They were not to be circumcised, keep the Lord's supper, nor any of the Jewish feasts. They also could not minister the Word in public. See Rom. 9:4. However, they were baptized in water, for that was the sign that they were identified with repentant Israel. It was all during this time of Acts that the Jew was first. The coming of the Messiah and the things that should accompany that coming was all depending on the repentance of the nation. That repentance never came. The olive tree no longer exists. A Jew today must be saved the same as anybody else. He can claim absolutely no priority in any respect. It might be well if you would make a little diagram for yourself in this connection. Israel became a nation with the call of Abraham from Ur. Israel became a kingdom with the reign of David. Israel ceased to be a

kingdom at the Babylonian captivity. Israel ceased to be a nation at the end of Acts. Israel will again become a nation whenever that prophet and/or Elijah comes to restore all things. Israel will again become a kingdom when the Lord comes and sets it up in person. This diagram will help you. But the point that we were making was that there was no trace of the dispensation of the mystery at any time during the Acts period of time. It was something that was revealed to Paul when the Jews were set aside at the end of Acts.

Let me add a few points here that may help you to clear this up. It was no mystery that Gentiles should be saved along with Israel. It was no mystery that a group of believers should be called a body. It was no mystery that believers should be sealed by the Holy Spirit. It was no mystery that a group of believers should be called a church. It was no mystery that people should be saved by the grace of God. There are more things that I might add to the list. There are many characteristics that are common to various dispensations. But then there are also some distinguishing characteristics that are not common, but peculiar to only one.

It might surprise you to know that no family of God ever hoped to go to heaven, or was anything like that taught till we get into Eph. All other families of the earth have only an earthly hope. I mean by that that they will inhabit the earth after resurrection. So there is one secret that was hid. Another that is closely related is the fact that a believer could be identified with Christ in being raised and seated with God in Christ. Up to the end of Acts all identification with Christ was in His death, burial, and resurrection. Nothing further was held out to them as a possibility. Another phase of the secret was the fact that Gentiles could be blest thru Christ aside from any relationship to Abraham and his promises. During Acts Gentiles who believed were called children of

Abraham by faith. It was because they partook of the gospel to Israel and by doing so became heirs of the promises to Abraham. The members of the dispensation of the mystery have no relationship whatsoever to Abraham except that they too are Gentiles and they are justified by faith. For the church of the mystery there is one baptism, identification with Christ in His death. There is no law of Sabbath keeping. There are no feasts or ordinances of any kind to be observed. There are no church officials or powers that be. All must be on an equality. Every member is the equal of every other member and Christ is the Head. Read Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians, and 2 Timothy and see if these things are so.

You may ask just where we can find this special revelation that concerns us today. I have just told you. You may add to this group of epistles, Titus, 1 Timothy, and Philemon. The latter do not have much doctrine in them, but are more personal letters. But it is in the first four mentioned that we find the mystery of which Paul was a special minister after the Acts period was over.

There is one great truth that we must keep in mind as we read and study the Word of God. That truth is that God has been progressive in His revelation of truth to His own. We should bear in mind that it is the latest truth that is the most important and which supercedes all other truth that may be in conflict with it. It is the same with the laws of our country. It is the latest law on any subject that has the precedence. A new law may repeal an old one. Let us take a couple of examples from the Word to show what I mean. In the beginning man was to be strictly a vegetarian, for it says in Gen. 1:29, AND GOD SAID, BEHOLD, I HAVE GIVEN YOU EVERY HERB BEARING SEED, WHICH IS UPON THE FACE OF ALL THE EARTH, AND EVERY TREE, IN THE WHICH IS THE FRUIT OF A TREE YIELDING SEED; TO YOU IT SHALL BE FOR MEAT. But after the flood we find that meat was added to the diet of man, as well of the animals; for

to Noah God said, EVERY MOVING THING THAT LIVETH SHALL BE MEAT FOR YOU; EVEN AS THE GREEN HERB HAVE I GIVEN YOU ALL THINGS. Now you can see that if Noah had continued as a vegetarian after the flood, he would have come short of what God had intended for him. In fact, you can find from the Scriptures that abstaining from meats today is connected with doctrines of demons.

Another clear example of this principle may be found when the Lord sent out the first band of disciples. He instructed them to...TAKE NOTHING FOR YOUR JOURNEY. NEITHER STAVES, NOR SCRIPT, NEITHER BREAD, NEITHER MONEY; NEITHER HAVE TWO COATS APIECE. But later He modified these instructions and said to them, WHEN I SENT YOU WITHOUT PURSE, AND SCRIP, AND SHOES, LACKED YE ANYTHING? AND THEY SAID, NOTHING. THEN SAID HE UNTO THEM, BUT NOW, HE THAT HATH A PURSE, LET HIM TAKE IT, AND LIKEWISE HIS SCRIP... Now suppose the disciples should refuse to heed the latter command and try to keep following the former? That would have been out and out disobedience. If they would have disregarded the words BUT NOW and continued their earlier practice, they would have dishonored their Lord. Also it is certain that they would not have had the former provision, but would have lacked something. Today people have been very inattentive to the latest revelation and the result is a great lack on the part of many. Instead of being occupied with the great truths and riches of the mystery committed to Paul to tell to us, many have still been zealous in trying to preach the kingdom and practice the ordinances that were connected with it. The result has been barrenness of labors and leanness of soul. If God's people would spend as much time and money in trying to exalt the name of Christ as they do in trying to build up their denominations, there would be more stir these days. It is true that the Scriptures are a complete revelation from God, but we must not be inattentive to the latest unfolding of God's purposes. The words BUT NOW

occur more than once in the Scriptures. In our reference at the beginning of this lesson we find those same words, **BUT NOW**. EVEN THE MYSTERY WHICH HATH BEEN HID FROM AGES AND GENERATIONS, **BUT NOW** IS MADE MANIFEST TO HIS SAINTS. So the examples of Noah and of the disciples should enable us to realize more fully the importance of giving heed to the latest word as far as revelation from God is concerned. If we reverse the divine order, we may find ourselves mixed up with the doctrines of demons.

Here is one thing we must be very careful about. We must not think for a moment that we can read the things, that were later revealed to Paul as a secret that had been hid from ages and generations, into Paul's ministry during Acts. For then he was able to declare that he had preached none other things than what was in Moses and the prophets. To say that the church which is the body of Christ in the dispensation of the mystery began at Pentecost is like trying to say that man could eat meat from the beginning. It is merely the expression of an opinion that is false rather than conceding to Biblical facts.

To try to get the doctrine for the church today from the epistles written during Acts, such as 1 & 2 Cor., 1 & 2 Thess. and others, would be just as bad as for the disciples to have disobeyed the injunction **BUT NOW** and to have continued on their journey without any provisions. I hope that I have made this point clear, for here is the reason and basis for all the confusion and running to and fro, and the various sects and isms today. If they would only stop their mad rush and consider the Word of God and take the latest instructions, the differences would disappear overnight. But in spite of the fact that God gave a new command to Noah, there are many who still today insist on being vegetarians and so connect themselves with doctrines of demons. In spite of the Lord's latest instructions as to provision for the missionary journey, there are some today who try to follow the former

instructions and so they come to poverty and want. The most of Christendom today has disregarded the BUT NOW of Col. 1 and are trying in vain to live according to the doctrines and instructions of a dispensation which is past and gone. Then like the prophets of Baal, they whip themselves into a frenzy and make vain repetitions and prayers trying to work up a faith that will bring to pass those things which are not God's will for today. Oh yes, they want to go to heaven, but they mind the things which belong to an earthly people and an earthly kingdom. Oh yes, they would like to be members of the body, but they insist on practicing the ordinances of the earth people, Israel. They make organizations here on earth as miniature replicas of the millennial kingdom which is to be an example to the nations of the earth, instead of taking by faith a place in the heavenly temple which is being formed in the heavens and is to be an example to the principalities and powers of the heavenly places. And so we have confusion piled upon confusion until we have Babylon revived in our own day as is prophesied. The simple solution to it all is found in the two little words BUT NOW.

If you have power to reason and to discern the things that differ, you can readily see from these Scriptural examples that I am not advocating any new and strange method of Bible study, but am following only what God and the Lord Jesus Christ have set before us in the Scriptures. It is my purpose and desire to find the manner in which God's revealed will for man has been changed at times, modified, or augmented, as the case may be, in the unfolding of His purposes. The method is reasonable, for God never does the unreasonable thing. The method is logical, for God always deals in a logical way with man, never expecting the knowledge of things not yet revealed or disregarding of the latest orders. This method of Bible study can also be called the scientific method. It takes into consideration all the facts before coming to a

conclusion. It is unscientific, unreasonable, and illogical to get a notion and then pick out isolated texts from the Bible to prove it. Yet that seems to be the popular game today!

Do not expect to find truth for today any place in the Word at any time or place before it has been revealed. We find it where it is plainly stated that it is made known. In speaking of the church, Paul says, WHEREOF I AM MADE A MINISTER, ACCORDING TO THE DISPENSATION OF GOD WHICH IS GIVEN TO ME FOR YOU, TO FULFIL (or complete) THE WORD OF GOD; EVEN THE MYSTERY WHICH HATH BEEN HID FROM AGES AND GENERATIONS, BUT NOW IS MADE MANIFEST TO HIS SAINTS; TO WHOM GOD WOULD MAKE KNOWN WHAT IS THE RICHES OF THE GLORY OF THIS MYSTERY AMONG THE GENTILES; WHICH IS CHRIST IN YOU, THE HOPE OF GLORY. The next few verses make clear that it is this knowledge that will make perfect every man in Christ Jesus. Paul feels the seriousness of this great responsibility so much that he speaks of warning every man, and teaching in all wisdom. This is the knowledge that was connected with his being a prisoner of Jesus Christ for us Gentiles. And what is it to me and to you? Why should we read and study it? For the simple reason that it is verily,

TRUTH FOR TODAY.

Dear Reader:~

Some time after this material was used for a radio study, we made a tape recording from the script. Several listeners liked it and requested that it be printed.

We hope that it will help you in your study of the Word. We pray that you may be able to see what are God's plan and purpose for today, so that you may find your place in His program.

Your joy will be the measure of your devotion to God and His Word.

If you desire further help and information, ask for our monthly magazine, Truth For Today. It is free. Also ask for book and Bible lists, as well as studies and tape recordings. We have several tracts for free distribution.

Sincerely in Him,

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