

April 2011 Newsletter

We Walk By Faith

W. Walking By faith.

“(For we walk by faith, not by sight:)” 2 Corinthians 5:7 δια πιστεως γαρ περιπατουμεν ου δια ειδους

Verse seven is a parenthesis between verses six and eight, which is used to explain something, or to add something, to the passage and which also ties in with the context. And we might not understand how it does fit into the context unless we understand the parallelism.

We have believers living here on earth and we have Christ dwelling in heaven. Both live in two totally separate worlds, not only different from each other, but completely separate from each other. But Paul does not want us to think that just because we here live here in a different location, or dimension, from where Christ dwells in heaven, that we are cut off from him.

It is through faith in the Word that this gap between heaven and earth is bridged, not only in the matter of salvation, but in our daily spiritual communion with Christ. In heaven we have spiritual concepts. Here on earth we have physical concepts that we live our lives by in the material world. But when we live **by faith in the Word we bridge the gap** and are able to live a spiritual life in a material world!

The present active indicative of *peripateo* does mean to walk, but it is used figuratively to refer to one's walk in life. *Sight, eidos*, refers to physical sight, seeing, outward form, or appearance. Other concepts, such as, our journey through life and the path we are taking also fit into the overall concept.

We live in this life in the material world by sight in the sense of being able to comprehend to and relate to the things that exist around us. It is only through one or more of the five senses: sight, sound, touch, taste and smell, that our souls are able to relate to that which exists in the material world around us.

But to be able to relate to the things of heaven and to Christ, who dwells in the other *world* of heaven, we cannot live by physical sight. We must live by faith. Faith is the means by which we are able to *see* into heaven. Physically we are separated from heaven, seeing that we live in two totally different realms, but we are connected to heaven spiritually.

What's in view here is the soul. The soul, for the present time, is trapped in this physical body only to be released at physical death. It cannot see into heaven, it cannot see Christ, and it cannot see into all the wonderful things that await it in eternity. It is presently trapped in this dimension, in this physical world and in this physical body. **Only in heaven will we see Christ face to face**!

In fact, the soul's only contact it has with the outside physical world is through the five senses of the material body it is existing in! It is able to perceive that which is going on around it on the outside through sight, sound, smelling, touch and taste! We **see** trees and nature, we **smell** water and flowers, we **hear** the birds chirping, we **touch** the flowers and **taste** the fruit. From these five senses we are able to gather all the information that exists around us for our souls to be able to comprehend this life. But is by means of faith in Bible doctrine that we are able to see spiritually, not only so we can navigate in this life as we journey through it, but also to see into heaven!

X. The faith of Christ.

*“Knowing that a man is not justified by the works of the law, but **by the faith of Jesus Christ**, even we have believed in Jesus Christ, that we might be justified **by the faith of Christ**, and not by the works of the law: for by the works of the law shall no flesh be justified.” Galatians 2:16* ειδοτες οτι ου δικαιοιται ανθρωπος εξ εργαων νομου εαν μη **δια πιστεως ιησου χριστου** και ημεις εις χριστον ιησουν επιστευσαμεν ινα δικαιοθωμεν **εκ πιστεως χριστου** και ουκ εξ εργαων νομου διοτι ου δικαιοθησεται εξ εργαων νομου πασα σαρξ.

*“I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh **I live by the faith of the Son of God**, who loved me, and gave himself for me.” Galatians 2:20* χριστω συνεσταυρωμαι ζω δε ουκετι εγω ζη δε εν εμοι χριστος ο δε **νυν** ζω εν σαρκι **εν πιστει ζω τη του υιου του θεου** του αγαπησαντος με και παραδοντος εαυτον υπερ εμου.

Christ had to share in our humanity in every respect, except one; he did not sin. But he became sin for us, in that our sins were imputed to him on the cross and he paid the penalty for them. *“Forasmuch then as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, he also himself likewise took part of the same; that through death he might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil;” Hebrews 2:14*

In this sharing in our humanity he also had to live by the same *modus vivendi* as we are to live by and that is by faith in God. The genitive in Galatians 2:16 should be taken as a subjective genitive, the faith of Jesus Christ, rather than the objective genitive of faith in Jesus Christ. The same idea is found in the latter half of the verse where it says that we are justified by the faith of Christ, *ek pisteos christou*, that is, we owe our justification to the faith originating in Christ. **The one idea draws our attention to what we have done, our faith in Christ**, while the other, and the more proper, **draws our attention to what Christ has done, the faith of Christ!**

The same idea carries right on down into verse twenty where Paul writes, *“and the life which I **now** live in the flesh **I live by the faith of the Son of God**.”* He's talking about his post salvation experience and says that the life that he **now** lives in the flesh as a believer in Jesus Christ is due solely to the faith of Jesus Christ!

There are two covenants in view here. The old covenant based upon keeping the Law and the new and better covenant that Christ was going to institute to replace the old one. The old covenant was based upon keeping the Law, while the new covenant was based solely on faith in God. If one kept the Law perfectly, which no man did except for Jesus Christ, then he or she would have a right standing with God. Which no one did, except for Christ. But under the new covenant there was the concept of faith. One would have to keep faith perfectly, to keep believing and trusting God each and every moment of their existence here on earth, no matter what happened, or what they had to go through, if they were to be considered righteous before a holy God. Which no one did, except Christ!

The Law was given to Israel, but it broke it over and over thereby breaking the covenant with God. But it still had to be kept! Now enter into the scene the Lord Jesus Christ, the faithful covenant partner, who was the only one to ever keep the Law perfectly. And his right standing before the Law, because he kept the Law, would be imputed to anyone who trusted him as their Savior. And a new and better covenant was brought in to replace it, after Christ fulfilled the conditions of the first covenant, and this covenant was based upon faith, which none of us ever kept – but Christ did! So his right standing before the new covenant, because of his faith, is now imputed to us.

Y. Blessed by faith.

“So then they which be of faith are blessed with faithful Abraham.” Galatians 3:9 ὥστε οἱ ἐκ πίστεως εὐλογούνται σὺν τῷ πιστῷ ἀβραάμ.

What this passage shows is that it is because of our faith that we are blessed by God. Faith in Christ as our Savior, which puts us in the place of blessing positionally, and then faith in the Word after we are saved, so that God can bless us in his grace.

The passage says, *ek pisteos*, or, *out of faith*, which shows that the origin from whence our blessings come is not because of our race, nor our sex, nor our “morality”, nor our works, nor our sincerity, our good intentions, religiosity, or personality – **but out of our faith!**

It also says that we are blessed in union with Abram. What is it, then, that unites us with Abram? It is our faith in the Lord! Abraham believed on the Lord Jesus Christ as his Savior, just as we do. So it is his faith and our faith in Christ that unites us!

There are two ways that God will deal with humanity, by **grace** or by his **justice**. Under **justice** God gives to man according as his actions deserve. But under **grace** God deals with us by his undeserved, unearned favor. When anyone seeks favor from God based upon his works, his morality, etc., then God's justice is brought into play. But under justice God will give him according to what he deserves. And in the case of sinful man there will be no blessing, only cursing because of his sinfulness.

But if anyone seeks the favor of God based solely upon God's **grace**, then God is free to deal with him according to his divine favor, which is to shower him with grace gifts from above. One of the blessings from God is that he will not deal with us as our sinful actions deserve. “*He hath not dealt with us after our sins; nor rewarded us according to our iniquities.*” Psalms 103:10

But what does there have to be in place in an individual's life for God to deal with him or her based upon his grace? The answer is **faith!** First of all, faith in Christ as one's Savior. And then living one's life based upon faith, faith in the Father, faith in his Word, faith in the promises of God. It is through faith that we now have access to this grace of God. “*By whom also we have access by faith into this grace wherein we stand, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God.*” Romans 5:2

Now when we look at the concept of faith, there is no merit in faith itself. The only merit found in the matter of exercising faith and faith's object is in the **object of faith, not in the subject** exercising faith! And the object of faith is always God and his Word. But when we look at the concept of grace, there is no merit in the object of grace. All merit lies in the one who is giving the grace! Which would be Christ as one's Savior and the Father giving us his grace blessings. So either way we look at it, whether looking at grace or faith, all merit lies in God! And God gets **all** the glory!

The Jews mistakenly thought that they were under the blessing of *Yahweh* because they had descended from Abraham. They thought because they were racial descendents of Abraham and had been circumcised they were entitled to God's blessing! Yet they had set aside the most important thing about Abraham and that was he was a man of faith. Faith in Jesus Christ as his Savior and faith in the promises that *Yahweh* had made to him. So here we are today. Do we want God's blessings on our lives? If we do, then we must see that his blessings only come to us through the exercising of faith in his Word. For it is only through faith that his grace blessings can flow to us.

Z. The Messiah will live by faith.

“Now the just shall live by faith: but if any man draw back, my soul shall have no pleasure in him.”
Hebrews 10:38 ο δε δικαιος εκ πιστεως ζησεται και εαν υποστειληται ουκ ευδοκει η ψυχη μου εν αυτω.

The standard approach on this passage is that it refers to believers in Christ. Now it is true that it applies to believers, but the direct interpretation of this passage is that it refers to Jesus the Messiah. Now the Righteous One, *ho de dikaios*, shall live by faith.

If we back up to the context of verse 37, we have, “And he that shall come will come”, ο ερχομενος ηξει, *ho erchomenos hexei*. “He who is coming” is the present active participle of *erchomai* used with the definite article and could be rendered, “*The Coming One*”. By the use of the definite article, “*The Coming One*”, instead of the indefinite article, a Coming One, the Holy Spirit leaves no doubt as to who is in mind – the Messiah of Israel, the Lord Jesus Christ! The term, *the Coming One*, is a familiar usage in the OT to the coming Messiah, so we know that we're talking about the Messiah here.

The Israelites, both in the OT and in the first century, knew who the phrase referred to, “*The Coming One*” referred to Israel's Messiah; he who would rule over the nation. Often when the Rabbis would try to teach patience to the people, they would refer to the Messiah as “The Coming One”. They would say, “The Coming One” will come and all must wait patiently for him. But for the believer in Christ we know that **He** is this “*Coming One*” and we must wait patiently for his return!

The first word for **come** is *erchomai*, but now the text switches over to a different word for **come**, *heko*. *Heko* was primarily used in the mystery religions to denote the coming of a deity from the heavens to man who lived on the earth! It was an entrance statement where the god of that particular religion was now coming into the world of man. So what this is stating is that Jesus Christ, who is *The Coming One*, and the Messiah of Israel, is **God!** And that **he is coming back to earth as God!**

The translators failed to bring out the significance of the present active participle of *erchomai* and should have translated it as “*the Coming One*”. The second thing the KJV missed out on is the shift of words from *erchomenos*, “*The Coming One*”, to *heko*, “*will come*”. *Erchomai* simply brings out the idea that someone is coming to see you. While *heko* brings out the added idea that not only is this person coming to see you, but he is God!

This is a reference to Christ's first entrance into the world and also pointing out his return to earth, but one has to ask himself why? Why is the writer bringing it up here at this point? **The reason why he brings up this reference to Christ is that he is making a case for the absolute importance of living by faith, and he is bringing up the important point that even *The Coming One* had to live by faith while he was here in the world!**

The KJV has it as, “*Now the just shall live by faith:*” When translated like this it can lead one to interpret this as a reference to all believers in Christ, but it isn't! It is solely a reference to Jesus Christ, but the writer is giving it to us for application. **If Jesus Christ had to live by faith on earth in his humanity, and he did, then we have to live by faith also!**

But as we can clearly see it is, “*But the Righteous (One) will live by faith*”. Now one can say that this is a reference to believers in Christ, as mentioned before, for the Scriptures often refer to them as such, “*The just shall live by faith.*”, Galatians 3:11 “*The just shall live by faith.*”, Romans 1:17

All of these references in the Bible to Christians living by faith have the same thing in common and that is they were taken out of Habakkuk 2:4, which is rendered in the Greek as, ο δε δικαιος εκ πιστεως ζησεται, “*But my righteous (one) will live by faith*”, and that passage refers to Jesus Christ!

Now when we go down through history we find that there has only been one truly righteous man that has lived on earth and belonged solely to God, and that was his Son, Jesus Christ. All of God's people on earth, both OT and NT, are referred to as the righteous, or the just, but there is only one person on earth that has carried the title of being **God's Righteous One**. The Apostle John refers to him as the Righteous One, “*My little children, these things write I unto you, that ye sin not. And if any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ **the righteous (one)**.” 1 John 2:1*

Now **the Righteous One** in this verse is **the Coming One** in the preceding verse, stating once again that this is a reference to Jesus Christ. So what we have here is not a direct reference to believers in Christ, but to Christ himself, and by way of **application**, it refers to believers in that they have to live by faith.

Now that we know that this refers to Jesus Christ, the next thing that we need to see is that he also lived by faith. The word for to *live* is *zao* and it meant to pass time or life in a particular manner, to subsist in life, to exist, or to have being. Life, the noun, is the **state** of existing; living, the verb, tells us something about the **manner** in which we exist.

This does not tell us that Christ was alive, for we know that. If he simply wanted to denote his existence he would say, “*I am*”. From the OT background of the term, “*I am*”, it tells us that he had always existed. But with the verb *zao* it tells us something about the manner in which Christ lived his life here on earth. **He lived by faith!**

By faith, ek pisteos, is the ablative of means, which gives us the source and means by which an act occurs. Christ lived his life from the source of faith, or by means of faith in the Father's Word, doctrines and promises. The noun, faith, denotes a state of anything. It tells us that Christ lived in the state of faith. That is, he lived believing the Father's promises that he had made to him; he relied on the Father's power and grace provisions; he was confident in the Father's will and plan; and his trust was completely in the Father.

Now some may have a problem with the fact that Christ lived his life here on earth by faith, but the Scriptures have a lot to say about that. We must remember that we are not talking about the deity of Christ, but Christ living life in his **humanity! Now how could one originate this faith concept and bring it to its completion if he did not live by the same faith himself?**

One passage concerning Christ's faith is Matthew 17:20, “*And Jesus said unto them, Because of your unbelief: for verily I say unto you, If ye have **faith** as a grain of mustard seed, ye shall say unto this mountain, Remove hence to yonder place; and it shall remove; and nothing shall be impossible unto you.*” Another passage is Matthew 21:21, “*Jesus answered and said unto them, Verily I say unto you, If ye have **faith**, and doubt not, ye shall not only do this which is done to the fig tree, but also if ye shall say unto this mountain, Be thou removed, and be thou cast into the sea; it shall be done.*”

And another passage is Hebrews 12:2a, “*Looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our **faith**;*”, αφωρωντες εις τον της πιστεως αρχηγον και τελειωτην ιησου. Now the word for author is archegos and can be rendered as: **Author, Prince, Captain, Pioneer and Founder**. It signified one who took the lead in something, its originator, the source from which something came, his supremacy in it and his personal participation in it.

It was also used of a **trail blazer**, as well as a **pioneer**. It had a military application referring to the one who went out marking or blazing a trail for the others who were following behind could see the marks he left behind and follow his path. Another application of it along that line was that it referred to the one who cleared all the obstacles so that the main body could follow the trail and get to their destination.

So looking at *archegos* from the standpoint of a pioneer or **trail blazer**, Christ would be the one blazing the trail for us to follow and we are in the main body. We might stray off the path to the left or to the right, but come back to the marks he left for us along the trail. The marked trail tells us that this is the path to follow.

Archegos was also used of “**The Hero**”. Now the classical hero was the one who overcame all obstacles and adversities to found a city and then named the city after himself. Many cities throughout the middle east and Europe were named along this line. Even today we name cities in America after their founders.

Jesus Christ, **our hero**, has built a city in heaven for us to live in; he came to earth to gather out a people for himself; he went back to this city; and has blazed the trail of faith for us to follow. It begins by us believing in him as our Savior.

Now it says that Christ was the *Author* or Originator of this faith that we are to live by. **He began it, he lived by it himself and he brought it to completion.** Now the concept of living by faith wasn't new to the people of God. They lived by faith before the flood and after the flood. This new kind of faith that Christ initiated is the spiritual dynamic of faith in the Word/BD under the filling of the Holy Spirit. It is a spiritual dynamic that only exists for Church Age believers.

There are several references in the Bible to faith in Christ that could be translated as the faith of Christ, such as, “*Knowing that a man is not justified by the works of the law, but by the faith of Jesus Christ, even we have believed in Jesus Christ, that we might be justified by the faith of Christ, and not by the works of the law: for by the works of the law shall no flesh be justified.*” Galatians 2:16 “*I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me.*” Galatians 2:20 “*But the scripture hath concluded all under sin, that the promise by faith of Jesus Christ might be given to them that believe.*” Galatians 3:22 “*Even the righteousness of God which is by faith of Jesus Christ unto all and upon all them that believe: for there is no difference:*” Romans 3:22 “*In whom we have boldness and access with confidence by the faith of him.*” Ephesians 3:12 “*And be found in him, not having mine own righteousness, which is of the law, but that which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith:*” Philippians 3:12

There is some debate as to whether these passages refer to faith in Christ, or the faith of Christ, but in general Greek usage the genitive, when used with faith is subjective, that is, the faith of someone. If the idea of faith in someone is to be emphasized, the objective genitive, then often the prepositions eis, en, peri, or sometimes *tini* are used.

Hebert said that the genitive after pistis is usually subjective, not objective. Kittel argued in 1906 that Paul used the subjective genitive in Romans 3:3, the “*faith of God*”, την πιστιν του θεου, and with the exact same construct in Romans 4:16, “*the faith of Abraham*”, εκ πιστεως αβρααμ. He said that he would be confusing his readers unless he intends the same grammatical construction in Romans 3:22.

Goodenough, in a posthumous essay, held that **the faith of Jesus closely paralleled the faith of Abraham, in that, the faith of Christ was Christ trusting the Father in the matter of his death, that death would not be the end for him, but that the Father would keep his promise to him and raise him from the dead.** Acts 2:26,27

There is no case of *pistis* with an objective genitive cited in the 9th edition of Liddell and Scott. No case of *pistis* with the objective genitive in the Septuagint. The objective genitive is usually used with *eis, en, peri, tini*, or sometimes with the accusative object. Howard claims that *pistis* followed by the genitive of a person or a personal pronoun occurs 24 times in the NT, not counting the times where *pistis Christou* and its equivalents appear, and that in all 24 cases the phrase refers to the faith of the person, never faith *in* the person. So when we take the subjective sense of the faith of Jesus Christ in Galatians 2:16 it all makes sense.

But all arguments that might arise by men for or against the idea of Christ's faith are quickly and completely dismissed when we read of his own words on the cross. *“Therefore did my heart rejoice, and my tongue was glad; moreover also my flesh shall rest in hope: Because thou wilt not leave my soul in hell, neither wilt thou suffer thine Holy One to see corruption.”* Acts 2:26, 27

These words are the expression of the faith of Jesus Christ as he was hanging there on the cross. He had studied these passages in the Scriptures when he was a young man and believed them! And having believed them, and believed they applied to him, they became a part of his soul that he was now applying to the crucible of testing that he was going through on the cross. We have Christ's faith in the Father's plan, the Father's provision and in the Father's power in the intake of the Word and faith in its application while on the cross.

In Psalm 22:5 we see once again that Christ trusted the Father, *“They cried unto thee, and were delivered: they **trusted** in thee, and were not confounded.”* And again in Psalm 22:8, *“He **trusted** on the LORD that he would deliver him: let him deliver him, seeing he delighted in him.”* John 18:11 brings out Christ's faith and trust in the Father's will and plan, *“Then said Jesus unto Peter, Put up thy sword into the sheath: the cup which my Father hath given me, shall I not drink it?”* Christ was not only obedient to the Father, he trusted him as these passages show.

Jesus Christ lived his life by faith, faith in the Father's will and **plan**, faith in the **power** of the Father and faith in the Father's **provisions** for his life. He believed the Father's promises; and he followed the Father's will for his life by faith all the way to the cross where his faith in the Word sustained him and by it gave him and us the victory! **And it is this same faith that he originated and brought to perfection that he gave to all Church Age believers to live by!**

Christ was indeed our Pioneer and Trailblazer; he began our brand of faith and his and he brought it to perfection. And what makes this faith so different than the other concepts of faith? **It is faith in God as we would have faith in a father.** It is faith in our heavenly Father **and he truly is our Father because he created our human spirits!**

Now Christ had created the earth, as well as man, and he had been here before many times, but not as a man. He had come from heaven to earth and back to heaven again as deity, and while here on earth he took the form of a man, but now he would have to go back to heaven as a man. How would this work out? This was going to be something all together new for him.

Deity comes from heaven to earth and deity goes from earth back to heaven. But now deity is going to become a man forever, **now how is he going to get back to heaven as a man?** This is where the Father's plan comes in. It's one thing to get him here, but it's another thing to get him back, because he's going to be different now – a man! And this is where Christ's faith comes in, faith in the Father's plan to get him back to heaven. And not only to get him back, but to blaze a trail of faith for the main body to follow, that main body of believers in Christ who are going to the city he has prepared for them.

Then the passage goes on to say, “*But if any man draw back*” - και εαν υποστειληται. *Ean plus the subjunctive mood of hupostello* introduces a third class condition of *if*. If something is true, maybe it is, maybe it isn't, but if it is true, then something else will occur. “*And if he shrinks back*”. The just will live by faith, now maybe they will and maybe they won't, and if he doesn't, then my soul will have no pleasure in him. This isn't looking at the *iffiness* as to whether Christ would live by faith, but at the aspect of the Father being displeased over the concept of unbelief.

I don't think that most Christians are aware of Christ's work on earth outside the cross. They are all aware, somewhat, of Christ's atoning work on the cross, (even if they don't understand or recognize how completely it dealt with their sins), but there was that aspect of Christ's work that dealt with fully **keeping the Law of God**, and there was also that aspect of **the faith that Christ lived by!** And as the Father would not be pleased with him, if he did not keep all the Law, neither would he have been pleased with him if he had wavered in faith!

To *shrink back*, *hupostello*, meant to withdraw, to shrink back, to retreat, to not go on your assignment, to not perform your duty. In a military application of an **army** out on the battlefield it meant to withdraw from the battle, to retreat, to stop fighting, to leave the scene of the battle.

In a **naval** application it meant to lower or strike the sails, to withdraw from the battle, to slacken the course, to come to a stop, as well as to break away from the contest, to surrender. **Instead of sailing into harm's way to engage the enemy, the ship sails off in another direction. Or, if one is already engaged in the battle, then it meant to break off and turn away from the fight. And it also meant to surrender.**

At sea, sails are generally not lowered for any reason, even in a storm some sails have to be left up to have forward motion to provide steerage. Without forward motion the ship will flounder and capsize. The only time that a ship's sails are lowered is when it is finally in port and is safely anchored inside the breakwater.

In a **naval** application *hupostello* spoke of a situation where two or more combat vessels are fighting each other and one vessel leaves the battle; it withdraws from the conflict. This speaks of one who has had enough and no longer wants to fight, so he leaves the scene of the battle. And in another application, when the ship lowered his sails, it said that the captain had given up; he is now surrendering. The ship comes to a stop, (our forward faith momentum has stopped), the enemy ship pulls up alongside, and it now boards the vessel taking the captain and his crew as prisoners.

By way of reference to application, this is referring to believers in Christ who turn away from sticking with Bible Doctrine, grace and faith living in the angelic conflict to go back into the world system. It speaks of the AWOL believer or the deserter. Like Demas who forsook Paul, “*For Demas hath forsaken me, having loved this present world, and is departed unto Thessalonica;*” 2 Timothy 4:10a

In the application for the individual Christian it speaks of our warfare in the angelic conflict in its many aspects. We are the captains of our own spiritual *vessels*. If we are married, then the husband is the captain of his own family *vessel*. And in the local church the Pastor-Teacher is the captain of the church *vessel*. He actually carries the present day naval rank of Captain or Commander. When a believer joins a local church, what they are doing in effect is *coming on board* his vessel as part of the crew.

In this angelic conflict we, individually, are like ships of war out at sea, each on board our own vessel, each under orders from the fleet, each believer being a crewman aboard his church vessel, each having a particular role to play at sea in God's overall strategy. **Christ** is the Admiral of the entire navy, the **Apostles** were admirals over certain fleets, like our Navy's 6th fleet, 7th fleet, 4th fleet, etc., speaking of certain geographical areas on the globe, and the **Pastor-Teachers**, with their rank of Commander or Captain, serving as the captains of their own ships of their own local church.

As in the naval metaphor, each aspect speaks of a parallel aspect in the spiritual realm of the angelic conflict; the **sails** speak of the believer's faith; the **helm and rudder** speaks of the volitional decisions he makes; the **galley and ship's stores** speaks of the grace provisions that God has supplied for the journey. All the food necessary to sustain captain and crew are already on board ship; the **weapons** needed to engage and defeat the enemy are already in the armory; the **compass** is our orientation to God's grace and his plan, which is always oriented to magnetic north, and *Yahweh* is the God of the north; the **charts** are God's Word; the **course** we head on is God's will and plan for our lives; the **wind** refers to the Holy Spirit giving us his power as it is transmitted to us through the sails of faith; the **hull and vessel** in its entirety, (being made of the finest material), speaks of the new man, which can handle any sea and any storm at sea; our **orders** are to sail to the next faith/grace objective.

There are other things that God has provided for all ship's crew and that is things such as medicine, doctors, dentists, chaplains, exercise rooms, entertainment, food for our nutrition, other crewmen to visit with, and even a ship's store for some luxury items! God has already provided for us everything that we will need for our journey here on the *high seas* of this world system, not only to sustain us, but for us to fight in the angelic war.

So here we are out at sea, our hulls laden with food and ammunition stores, we've cast off the lines, we've weighed the anchors, we've set our sails of faith and the wind has caught our sails and now we are sailing off into the high seas. And out at sea we open up our orders to find that God wants us to sail to the next faith objective in his will for our lives. Perhaps it's a ministry, or to go into business, or attend school, a job, marriage, a move to a new town, growth, service, etc.. And if our orders are to "*sail into harm's way*" in the angelic conflict, then Christ will be there to lead the fleet. Sometimes we have to defend when attacked; sometimes we have to "*sail into harm's way*".

We can put our next destination as an island out at sea, or our orders could be to just sail to a certain place in the ocean and wait there for a certain time and purpose. **Sometimes in life we have to be in a certain place, and at a certain time, and it is then and there when God will show us what he wants us to do next in our lives.**

Maybe out at sea the orders are to team up with another ship. This is like going to a certain place where you will meet up with your new mate, or a ministry, etc.. To accomplish this we will have to check our charts and orders to find that we will have to sail in a certain heading to get there. So we reach our objective, accomplish what it is that we are supposed to do there, then move on to the next one. And we keep doing this all our lives until we reach our final destination - the Port of Heaven!

Our orders direct us to the next objective. Each new place that we arrive at will be somewhat different than the old one, and what we will be doing will differ somewhat from what we did at the old objective. Our orders will also include what God wants us to do when we get there. When we began our voyage as Christians, God did not tell us what our orders were on that day we were saved as to where we will be, what we will do, etc., these things will be revealed to us by the Holy Spirit once underway in our lives. But we have to get underway.

We may have only been given orders to get underway at a certain time and set a certain course; the rest of our orders are sealed only to be opened up **while** underway in the plan of God. Once we get out at sea, and are at a certain place and at a certain time, then we open up the next part of our orders to find out what God wants us to do next. **God's will for our lives is revealed to us day by day in his *Plan of the Day* as we are underway in his will.**

But there's something else to keep in mind, and that is as we are sailing from one grace object in God's will for our lives to the next **we will encounter the *enemy at sea***. And because we fly the home colors of our king and nation, we can be sure the enemy will engage us in battle! This is where one will really appreciate the quality of the ship, weapons and provisions that our king has issued us. And this is where we will have to rigidly follow the battle protocol for engaging the enemy, if we want to be victorious. By following Christ's battle plan, (applying Bible Doctrine), we will gain the victory that day, but we cannot rest on our laurels for there will be other days, other ships and other battles to fight in the service of our God and king. Then one day we sail off to our home port in heaven.

Another thing that **we will encounter at sea are the *storms, the trials of life***, some of them so severe that we think our hulls will be crushed and the ship swamped. But never fear! Because our king has issued us ships whose hulls are so strong, that they can stand up to any *storm in life*, that is, any trial in life that we will go through! We just have to keep steering the ship into the wind, **to face the storm**, so that we don't capsize. This is totally focusing on faith in the Word when going through a trial, **and we have to face the trial, not run from it!**

Sometimes the storms of life are so severe and so long, it's all we can do to stay afloat and survive. Our concern, then, is not maintaining the heading to our next destination that we were on, but heading into the wind just to ***weather the storm*** and stay afloat. Some churches, people and Pastors are really battered by the storms of the angelic conflict. Often a ship will be blown miles off course after the storm. This is understandable and acceptable, because at least **the captain and crew are still alive and the ship is still afloat, seaworthy and ready to do battle again.**

Now the passage says, "*Now the just shall live by faith: but if any man draw back, my soul shall have no pleasure in him.*", telling us that God will not be pleased if any believer shrinks back, *hupostello*, from the life of faith. He also makes this very clear in Hebrews 11:6, "*But without faith it is impossible to please him: for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him.*"

We must keep pressing forward by faith in the will and plan of God for our lives. Perseverance is that aspect of the soul where we have forward momentum while going through a trial. And we are able to have forward momentum as we are strengthened by faith in the Word of God. And so the Messiah did not shrink back from the Father's plan for his life. "*For the Lord GOD will help me; therefore shall I not be confounded: therefore have I set my face like a flint, and I know that I shall not be ashamed.*" Isaiah 50:7

