

## HEBREWS 12:1 & 2

Sunday School lesson(s) starting September 2016  
By Ty Robinson

On a personal note, I started teaching the Adult Sunday School Class back in 1988. Back then I didn't have a computer to assist in my research, just a Scofield King James Bible, and several reference books, including a Strong's Concordance, both of which remain main staples in my studies today. So I could read my notes back then, I started typing them on an old typewriter my Mother used to use in my Dad's business. I got my first computer in 1995, a state of the art (back then) Macintosh 6160, which was very high speed in that day and age. I loaded several Bible programs on it, and was better able to research things at a much faster rate, and also had the capability to type my notes in a word program, and add scriptures with very little effort, once I learned how to use the computer. And I have since shared my notes with those who request them, which has helped many with their studies also. A very helpful part of having a computer was the ability to retrieve old notes, and copy and paste them into new thoughts in a current lesson. However my notes on lessons given prior to 1995 have not been added to my lessons found on my computer.

That being said, one of the very first lessons I was led to teach back in 1988 came from HEBREWS 12:1 & 2. That was twenty-eight years ago, and the Lord has led me back to that very same portion of scripture for additional teaching. I can assure you if you remember the lessons from twenty-eight years ago on HEBREWS 12:1 & 2, that the thoughts we will go over in this study will be fresh, and new, though some thoughts may be repeats from back then, and lessons given since that time. And that is how we learn as noted in ISAIAH 28:9 & 10 -- *Whom shall he teach knowledge? and whom shall he make to understand doctrine? them that are weaned from the milk, and drawn from the breasts. 10 For precept must be upon precept, precept upon precept; line upon line, line upon line; here a little, and there a little.* So let's begin.

To my way of thinking HEBREWS 12:1 & 2 is as important to us today as was the ninety-nine word sentence spoken to Saul of Tarsus on the road to Damascus, which is recorded for us in ACTS 26:16-18! Take a moment to reflect on the importance of this thought, HEBREWS 12:1 & 2 is as important to us today as was the ninety-nine word sentence spoken to Saul of Tarsus on the road to Damascus. These words of HEBREWS 12:1 & 2 should then should be highlighted upon our hearts just as much as the ninety-nine word sentence spoken to Saul of Tarsus on the road to Damascus recorded for us in ACTS 26:16-18 was highlighted, and refreshed daily in Paul's heart. We went over this ninety-nine-word sentence that was spoken to Saul of Tarsus by our precious Lord and forgiving Saviour Jesus Christ on the road to Damascus the very hour Saul of Tarsus was saved, and it took 62 pages of notes in our life of Paul study to discuss the far reaching elements found in this one sentence. We noted that as Saul of Tarsus was blinded by the glory of the Light of Jesus on the road to Damascus where the Lord Himself arrested him, that Saul of Tarsus' heart was crying out -- Lord you have my undivided attention, I have an ear to hear what you have to say, I will serve you forever, and verbally he cried out: *"...Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?"* The answer to this question is found in ACTS 26:16-18 The Hebrew Master's one sentence answer to Saul of Tarsus' question was as follows: *But rise, and stand upon thy feet: for I have appeared unto thee for this purpose, to make thee a minister and a witness both of these things which thou hast seen, and of those things in the which I will appear unto thee; 17 Delivering thee from the people, and from the Gentiles, unto whom now I send thee, 18 To open their eyes, and to turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins, and inheritance among them which are sanctified by faith that is in me.*

A lifetime of information, and instruction to Saul of Tarsus is found in this one sentence. This one sentence of heavenly advice changed Saul of Tarsus to the Apostle Paul. The Hebrew Master, who is Jesus Christ Himself, The Word of God, spoke a Masterpiece in this one sentence. In this one sentence we find Paul given instructions that would take him through every day for the rest

of his life. In this one sentence we find Paul made a minister and a witness for Jesus Christ. In this one sentence we find Paul anointed an Apostle! In this one sentence we find Paul is now wanted of the Jews! In this one sentence we find Paul also wanted of the Gentiles. In this one sentence we find Paul delivering others from darkness unto light; opening blind eyes that they may see. In this one sentence we find Paul learning of an inheritance among them, which are sanctified by faith in Christ Jesus! In this one sentence we find Paul a changed man forever. In this one sentence we find Paul being taken from the gutter most, to the utter most (as Brother Hill used to like to say). In this one sentence we find The Master giving instruction to His newest bondservant, and Paul gladly followed his Master's leading for the rest of his life! In one sentence Saul of Tarsus, whose name means, "requested," became Paul whose name means "little." Paul acknowledged his title as the "little" apostle, and wrote in 1 CORINTHIANS 15:9 *For I am the least of the apostles, that am not meet to be called an apostle, because I persecuted the church of God.* In one sentence Jesus changed the "requested" young Jewish leader, to a "little" teacher, minister, and preacher unto that lowly group collectively known as the Gentiles. Paul later wrote of that "little" place Jesus gave him in this one sentence on the road to Damascus, stating in EPHESIANS 3:8 *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... .* This one sentence from The Just One carried Saul of Tarsus forward on a profound earthly journey that lifted him to the loftiest of heights, even to a heavenly throne to rule and reign with Christ! This one sentence of powerful heavenly words changed the course of millions down through the centuries. This one sentence of Jesus put in motion a New Testament worthy of faith, who then lead and inspired thousands of others to follow Jesus as he followed Christ! This one powerful sentence spoken by the King of Kings was acted upon by the faith of Paul for more than twenty years before he could reveal the secrets of Jesus words, and when he did reveal the content of the Lord's instructions, it was before another king! Imagine carrying within you one sentence of words so profound, that you couldn't even speak of it for more than twenty years! How awesome is just one sentence spoken by our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ? I myself have thought long and hard about what Jesus told Paul on the road to Damascus, and I still can't fully wrap my arms around all that He can say in just one sentence! And we spent 62 pages of notes trying to get a better handle on these powerful words. No wonder then that Paul wrote in EPHESIANS 2:7 *That in the ages to come he might shew the exceeding riches of his grace in his kindness toward us through Christ Jesus.* Think about this too for a moment, how long did it take Jesus to change the course of the chiefest of sinners, and make him the chiefest Apostle? Just one sentence. Jesus can change any life in just one sentence, and it starts with believing His words of JOHN 3:7 *...Ye must be born again.* Saul of Tarsus spent the rest of his life, as the Apostle Paul, trying to exhaust all that Jesus told him he would do in this one sentence, and it took him over thirty years of daily pursuing to get to the place where he could say: *...I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith: Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give me at that day: and not to me only, but unto all them also that love his appearing... 2 TIMOTHY 4:7 & 8.*

Again the words of HEBREWS 12:1 & 2 are as important to us today as was the ninety-nine word sentence spoken to Saul of Tarsus on the road to Damascus, which is recorded for us in ACTS 26:16-18 that we looked briefly at above. Here is what the one sentence of HEBREWS 12:1 & 2 says: *Wherefore seeing we also are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset us, and let us run with patience the race that is set before us, 2 Looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith; who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God.* Here we find eighty words of Holy Ghost inspired words recorded in this one sentence, which is written to "we," and "us," of this yet present church age. Note this: that HEBREWS 12:1 & 2 is written to "us;" it is written to you, and me. HEBREWS 12:1 & 2 is written to encourage "our" faith, and draw "our" daily, and hourly, and minute by minute focus unto

“...*Jesus the author and finisher of our faith...*.” Let’s now begin to examine why these eighty words given us are so important to us.

First of all let’s define to whom this sentence is written unto. In the broadest of terms, HEBREWS 12:1 & 2 is written to all believers. The words written in HEBREWS 12:1 & 2 however do not apply to all believers simply because all believers are not racecourse runners, running to win Christ as their Bridegroom. We will spend much time discussing this further in this study, but for now note, and recall in your thinking that not all believers are going to be fully spiritually mature joint-heirs with Christ. In Paul’s teaching we find babes in Christ, children that are heirs with Christ, and joint-heirs with Christ as a husband with a very dearly beloved wife. HEBREWS 12:1 & 2 is Holy Ghost highlighted scripture written unto the potential full overcoming company of Philadelphian church age Saints that will be forever known as the Bride of Christ. HEBREWS 12:1 & 2 addresses the New Testament worthies of faith, just as HEBREWS 11 highlighted the Old Testament worthies of faith. HEBREWS 12:1 & 2 is written unto Bridal Saints!

Next, having noted the importance of these eighty words found in HEBREWS 12:1 & 2, let’s review the profound meaning of the number eighty. In our study on the meaning of Bible numbers we found that the number 80 pointed to STRENGTH. The emphasis in scripture of the number 80 pointed to the STRENGTH of God, not the STRENGTH of man. In fact when we find the STRENGTH of God, we cannot help but notice the weakness of man. Old Testament worthy of faith David wrote in PSALMS 18:2 *The LORD is my rock, and my fortress, and my deliverer; my God, my strength, in whom I will trust; my buckler, and the horn of my salvation, and my high tower.* Again in PSALMS 28:7 David wrote: *The LORD is my strength and my shield; my heart trusted in him, and I am helped: therefore my heart greatly rejoiceth; and with my song will I praise him.* Another means of expressing 80 is with the Biblical term “fourscore,” and in EXODUS 7:7 we read: *And Moses was fourscore years old, and Aaron fourscore and three years old, when they spake unto Pharaoh.* What did 80-year-old Moses say unto the most powerful man in the world, who at that time was Pharaoh? “Let my people go.” These were God’s words which 80-year-old Moses spoke, and by the STRENGTH of the Lord, and by many miracles, which the STRENGTH of God performed, including the crossing of the Red Sea, Pharaoh did let the children of Israel go. After crossing the Red Sea 80 year old Moses led out in singing a song of redemption unto the Lord, which is found in EXODUS 15, and in EXODUS 15:6 we read: *Thy right hand, O LORD, is become glorious in power: thy right hand, O LORD, hath dashed in pieces the enemy.* Later in DEUTERONOMY 7:8 Moses recalled the crossing of the Red Sea when he was 80 years old, and he told the children of Israel: *But because the LORD loved you, and because he would keep the oath which he had sworn unto your fathers, hath the LORD brought you out with a mighty hand, and redeemed you out of the house of bondmen, from the hand of Pharaoh king of Egypt.* That “mighty hand” was indeed the STRENGTH of the Lord.

In JUDGES 3:15-30 we have the story of the second Judge of Israel, a man named Ehud. Interestingly Ehud’s name has the meaning of “joined together,” or “strong,” which of course shows STRENGTH. Being joined together with the Lord shows maximum STRENGTH. It was by the STRENGTH of the Lord that Ehud was able to defeat Israel’s enemy, the Moabites, and JUDGES 3:30 records that the land of Israel had rest after that 80 years.

The Apostle Paul referenced the STRENGTH of the Lord many times in his epistles, and one portion of scripture that stands out is 2 CORINTHIANS 12:9 & 10 -- *And he said unto me, My grace is sufficient for thee: for my strength is made perfect in weakness. Most gladly therefore will I rather glory in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me. 10 Therefore I take pleasure in infirmities, in reproaches, in necessities, in persecutions, in distresses for Christ’s sake: for when I am weak, then am I strong.* If you have a red-letter edition Bible you will see that the words of the Lord spoken to Paul were: *My grace is sufficient for thee: for my strength is made perfect in weakness.* The emphasis to Paul was that the Lord’s grace, and the Lord’s STRENGTH was made perfect in Paul’s weakness, and that God’s interests should also be our chief concern, not our infirmities. This is why Paul later wrote in EPHESIANS 6:10 *Finally, my brethren, be strong in the*

**Lord, and in the power of his might.** Paul again wrote about the STRENGTH of God, and the weakness of man in 2 CORINTHIANS 13:4 where he wrote this concerning Jesus: *For though he was crucified through weakness, yet he liveth by the power of God. For we also are weak in him, but we shall live with him by the power of God toward you.* It is the power of God, the STRENGTH of God towards us that is emphasized in HEBREWS 12:1 & 2.

The 80 words of HEBREWS 12:1 & 2 thus point to STRENGTH, highlighting the STRENGTH of the Lord. We could go on giving examples concerning the STRENGTH of the Lord found in the number 80, but let's now look at 80 also as the product of 8 times 10. 10 is the number which points to RESPONSIBILITY ACCORDING TO ABILITY, and as we noted in our meaning of Bible numbers study, the Christians ability is only limited by his or her faith. The Apostle Paul wrote: *...the just shall live by faith...*, and he repeated this statement three times: ROMANS 1:17, GALATIANS 3:11 and HEBREWS 10:38. Also in HEBREWS 11:6 Paul wrote: *But without faith it is impossible to please him: {God} for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him.* A good example of how 10 is found to be the number which points to RESPONSIBILITY ACCORDING TO ABILITY is found in the four Hebrew children noted in DANIEL 1. These four, Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah knew their responsibility was to trust in God and His ability, and not the king, and for ten days they ate pulse (vegetables), and drank water, and were found "ten times better" than those who followed the king's orders as noted in DANIEL 1:6-20. Their RESPONSIBILITY ACCORDING TO ABILITY was to believe God, and they did. Our responsibility as a man is to believe God, and His ability, thus in so doing God becomes responsible to man. The Old Testament worthies of faith proved this true, and they did so by faith. ROMANS 8:38 & 39 shows 10 things that are powerless to the love of God: *For I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, 39 Nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.* Again 10 is the number of RESPONSIBILITY ACCORDING TO ABILITY.

80, which again means STRENGTH, is the product of 8 times 10 the number which means RESPONSIBILITY ACCORDING TO ABILITY. The number 8 we learned has five meanings: NEW CREATION; NEW BIRTH; NEW BEGINNING; RESURRECTION; and most profound, the number 8 also is a number that points to the BRIDE OF CHRIST. How we arrived at that conclusion is a whole other study in itself, but a couple of quick examples should suffice as to how the number 8 points to the BRIDE OF CHRIST. First in GENESIS 24 Rebekah is referred to as "wife" to Isaac 8 times, {see verses 3, 4, 7, 37, 38, 40, 51, and 67}. In GENESIS 24 we have one of our best pictures of the BRIDE OF CHRIST, for in GENESIS 24 Rebekah figures or is a type of the BRIDE OF CHRIST. Second, there are 8 women mentioned in ROMANS 16. In studying the meaning of these 8 women's names we find qualities that will also be found in the BRIDE OF CHRIST.

Now back to the 80 words that make up the one sentence of HEBREWS 12:1 & 2. Again HEBREWS 12:1 & 2 is as important to us today as was the ninety-nine word sentence spoken to Saul of Tarsus on the road to Damascus, which is recorded for us in ACTS 26:16-18. Here is what the one sentence of HEBREWS 12:1 & 2 says: *Wherefore seeing we also are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset us, and let us run with patience the race that is set before us, 2 Looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith; who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God.* These 80 words indeed focus upon the STRENGTH of the Lord, the author and finisher of our faith. It is the STRENGTH of the Lord that will translate us, or resurrect us from the dead! These 80 words also highlight His RESPONSIBILITY ACCORDING TO ABILITY, *...who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God.* His RESPONSIBILITY ACCORDING TO ABILITY was to give *...himself for our sins, that he might deliver us from this present evil world, according to the will of God and our Father:...* GALATIANS

1:4. The BRIDE OF CHRIST will have made herself ready by becoming a New Testament worthy of faith, which is accomplished by laying aside every weight, and the sin which does so easily beset each and everyone of us, and running with patience the rest of our life the race that is set before us, all the while looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith. Simply put, HEBREWS 12:1 & 2 defines what it takes to be a New Testament worthy of faith, who will be forever known as the BRIDE OF CHRIST. Again HEBREWS 12:1 & 2 is written unto Bridal Saints! Bridal Saints will indeed be the full overcomers from this church age, whose focus remains upon the STRENGTH of the Lord; the STRENGTH of the word of His grace, which is able to build you up, and to give you an inheritance among all them which are sanctified by faith in the Author and Finisher of our faith, who is Jesus Christ Himself. Let begin to explore the details of these 80 important words of His grace.

HEBREWS 12:1 *Wherefore seeing we also are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset us, and let us run with patience the race that is set before us, 2 Looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith; who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God.*

The words “wherefore,” and “therefore” Brother Hill taught us are very significant, and not to be taken lightly, or overlooked without some pause. “Wherefore,” and “therefore” should cause us to reflect on the thought just presented. These two words take all of what was said previously, and bring to the forefront, and place a bright spotlight on what is about to be said. In HEBREWS 12:1 the word “wherefore” is the first word found after the whole chapter of HEBREWS 11 is fully expounded. HEBREWS 11 considers the topic of the Old Testament worthies of faith; the Old Testament full overcomers, and collects all of their accounts of faith, and summarizes them into this one chapter. In essence the word “wherefore” in HEBREWS 12:1 references all of the Old Testament putting the emphasis on the Old Testament full overcomers! In HEBREWS 12:1 we find the spotlight now put on “we,” and “us,” the potential New Testament full overcomer when Paul uses the word “wherefore” in this verse.

The second word we find in our King James Version of HEBREWS 12:1 is the little word “seeing.” It is appropriate to note here that the original Greek doesn’t use the word “seeing” here, but rather states as a matter of fact that we do have “so great a cloud of witnesses lying around us.” Whether we see them by faith or not really matters not, for they are still there. The New Testament worthies of faith however truly see them with eyes of faith, and we will address this point directly. The first part of HEBREWS 12:1 in the original Greek translates like this; “So therefore we also, having so great a cloud of witnesses lying around us.... .” This is truly a matter of fact statement. The King James Version of this reads: HEBREWS 12:1 *Wherefore seeing we also are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses... .*

Having noted this difference in the original Greek, and the King James Version let’s discuss the question of how do we see? We see in the natural with our eyes, but not all have eyes to see. Helen Keller was both blind and deaf, yet God gave her the ability to perceive things. So the better question is how to we perceive things? We have got to start seeing things like God sees things, and the only way to do this is by having eyes of faith. All full overcomers must have eyes of faith. Furthermore all full overcomers will have eyes of faith. All of the Old Testament worthies of faith had eyes of faith, and that is why they are highlighted in HEBREWS 11. The New Testament full overcomers, who will be known forever as the Bride of Christ, will also have eyes of faith. REVELATION 4:6 and 8 also notes this very same fact, saying that these types like Jesus found in the midst of the throne, (who are indeed Bridal Saints from this church age), have “eyes before and behind, ...and within.” These are the eyes of faith that we will now discuss.

What then is “eyes of faith?” The term “eyes of faith” is not found in scripture, yet the teaching of having “eyes of faith” is found all throughout scripture. For example when the Apostle Paul prays in EPHESIANS 1:18 *The eyes of your understanding being enlightened,....* he is asking the Lord that our spiritual “eyes of faith” be opened to behold the things of the Lord in the same Light God sees things. Stated another way, we are to “behold” the things of God with our spiritual “eyes of faith,” enlightened by the Holy Ghost, and without our spiritual eyes being enlightened we can not “behold” the deeper things of God.

(On a side note, there are seven Hebrew words, and twelve Greek words, for a total of nineteen words of original scripture, that translate into our English “behold.” Nineteen is the number that has to do with FAITH. In other words when we read the word “behold” in scripture, especially when “behold” references the words of the Lord, He really wants us to see what is being said with our “eyes of faith.” The word “behold” in it’s different translations means for us to pause and look earnestly, to observe, to view with attention and earnestness, to survey with accuracy as from a high situation, (in other words, see things like God sees things), and to call to attention to what may be seen or heard or mentally or prophetically apprehended in any way. To have as the Apostle Paul wrote in EPHESIANS 1:18 *The eyes of your understanding being enlightened,....* .)

So we must realize that in order to be a full overcomer we have to start seeing things, begin to “behold” things, like God sees things, and the only way to do this is by having “eyes of faith.” “Eyes of faith” then are enlightened by the power of the Holy Ghost. Jesus told His disciples in JOHN 16:13 about the Spirit of Truth, who is the Holy Ghost, whose job it is to *...guide you into all truth,...* and to *...shew you things to come*. Stated another way, it takes the enlightened spiritual eyes of Holy Spirit filled believers for us to “behold” things like the Lord Jesus Christ sees things, and the Bride of Christ will see things like the Lord Jesus Christ sees things through her Holy Spirit filled dove “eyes of faith.”

One quick example of this fact that the “eyes of faith” are enlightened by the power of the Holy Ghost is found in LUKE 2, where we find a devout man named Simeon in the temple in Jerusalem. LUKE 2:25 *And, behold, there was a man in Jerusalem, whose name was Simeon; and the same man was just and devout, waiting for the consolation of Israel: and the Holy Ghost was upon him. 26 And it was revealed unto him by the Holy Ghost, that he should not see death, before he had seen the Lord's Christ. 27 And he came by the Spirit into the temple: and when the parents brought in the child Jesus, to do for him after the custom of the law, 28 Then took he him up in his arms, and blessed God, and said, 29 Lord, now lettest thou thy servant depart in peace, according to thy word: 30 For mine eyes have seen thy salvation, 31 Which thou hast prepared before the face of all people; 32 A light to lighten the Gentiles, and the glory of thy people Israel. 33 And Joseph and his mother marvelled at those things which were spoken of him. 34 And Simeon blessed them, and said unto Mary his mother, Behold, this child is set for the fall and rising again of many in Israel; and for a sign which shall be spoken against; 35 (Yea, a sword shall pierce through thy own soul also,) that the thoughts of many hearts may be revealed.* Simeon got to see with his own natural eyes “the Lord's Christ,” and with enlightened “eyes of faith” by the power of the Holy Ghost, Simeon saw Jesus Christ the risen Saviour, having already acknowledged in verse 30 that Jesus Christ was his salvation!

This story we just read from LUKE 2 concerning Simeon having enlightened “eyes of faith” enhanced by the power of the Holy Ghost, again aligns with Paul’s prayer referenced briefly above, a part of which is noted in EPHESIANS 1:17-20, that explains further how our “eyes of faith” are enlightened by the power of the Holy Ghost. EPHESIANS 1:17 *That the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give unto you the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of him: 18 The eyes of your understanding being enlightened; that ye may know what is the hope of his calling, and what the riches of the glory of his inheritance in the saints, 19 And what is the exceeding greatness of his power to us-ward who believe, according to the working of his mighty power, 20 Which he wrought in Christ, when he raised him from the dead... .* There is a lot of moving parts manifested in these four verses, all enhanced, and empowered by the Holy Ghost, “the

*God of peace, that brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus,*” according to HEBREWS 13:20. In EPHESIANS 1:17 Paul speaks of the spirit of wisdom, and revelation in the knowledge of Jesus Christ, whose job is the Holy Spirit’s to show us, as Jesus told His disciples above in JOHN 16:13. This revelation of Christ is only seen by our “eyes of faith” as they are enlightened by the power of the Holy Ghost. In EPHESIANS 1:18 Paul specifically prays that: *The eyes of your understanding being enlightened; that ye may know what is the hope of his calling, and what the riches of the glory of his inheritance in the saints.* Paul also wrote in 2 CORINTHIANS 4:18 *While we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen: for the things which are seen are temporal; but the things which are not seen are eternal.* “Eyes of faith” see eternal things.

A good example one who had “eyes of faith” is found in the life of Job. Job is not found mentioned by name in HEBREWS 11, but he certainly is found in scripture to be a man of faith. Sister Alice S. Mooneyhan wrote a pamphlet on her studies from the book of JOB, and also noted Job to be a man of faith. All of the worthies of faith had “eyes of faith,” and Job was no exception, though it took some time for him to behold all that God wanted him to see with his “eyes of faith,” (like it does for all of us). Brother Hill also liked to reference the life of Job, and I remember him three different times doing a series of Bible studies on the life of Job. Brother Hill summarized the book of JOB by noting the importance God places in just one man’s life, using these forty-two chapters to emphasize how God caused Job to better focus his “eyes of faith,” and behold the deeper things of God. Brother Hill also pointed out how the book of JOB was probably the oldest book in the Bible. Sister Mooneyhan put the time frame of JOB in perspective by noting that one of Job’s three friends was Eliphaz the Temanite, who was the eldest son of Esau, Jacob’s brother. Thus we see that Job lived in the four hundred year time frame between Abraham, and Moses. The Scofield reference Bible also notes that the events recorded in JOB cover a time period within one year.

God opened Job’s “eyes of faith” to clearly see His Almighty hand in everything, and in every detail of Job’s life, but it took some time for God to do this, and forty-two chapters to explain it in the book of JOB. Forty-two is the number pointing to HEAVENLY APPEARANCE. The Lord finally did make a HEAVENLY APPEARANCE to Job in chapters 38 through 41 of JOB, where the Lord answers Job out of a whirlwind, asking Job some eighty-three questions, which actually further opened Job’s “eyes of faith” to clearly see God’s Almighty hand in everything, and in every detail of Job’s life.

HEBREWS 11:6 states: *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.* Job was such a man even though Job had no Bible to reference, and no scripture to back him up, but Job did have a knowledge of God, and believed that no man could approach God, except on the basis of blood sacrifice, which is explained in JOB 1:1-5, a summary of which follows. JOB 1:1 *There was a man in the land of Uz, whose name was Job; and that man was perfect and upright, and one that feared God, and eschewed evil.* “Eschewed” is not a common word we use in today’s English, so we may not be familiar with its meaning. “Eschewed” means to depart from evil; to avoid evil; to abstain from all wrong. This concept is quite the opposite of our world today where it seems more and more evil is presented to us every day, and the scripture also verifies that this will be the case at the end of this church age during which we are still living. The Apostle Paul wrote in 2 TIMOTHY 3:13 *But evil men and seducers shall wax worse and worse, deceiving, and being deceived.* Paul also wrote in 1 THESSALONIANS 5:22 *Abstain from all appearance of evil.* This is exactly what Job did, *Abstain from all appearance of evil.* And again in EPHESIANS 5:16 Paul added this encouragement: *Redeeming the time, because the days are evil.* We do not have to participate in the evil things presented to us in this present evil world, and the full overcomers will be men and women like Job, who eschewed evil. Verses 2-4 of JOB 1 tells of Job’s seven sons, and three daughters, and his substance of animals, and servants. In JOB 1:5 we read: *And it was so, when the days of their feasting were gone about, that Job sent and sanctified them, and rose up early in the morning, and offered burnt offerings according to the number of them all: for Job said, It may be that my sons have sinned, and cursed God in their hearts. Thus did Job continually.* God saw the heart of faith in

Job, and when Satan came before God later in JOB 1:8 ...*the LORD said unto Satan, Hast thou considered my servant Job, that there is none like him in the earth, a perfect and an upright man, one that feareth God, and escheweth evil?* God permitted Satan to test Job, and in the remaining verses of JOB 1, Job lost his sons and daughters, and all his herds, but Job's faith in God did not waiver, and we read in JOB 1:20 *Then Job arose, and rent his mantle, and shaved his head, and fell down upon the ground, and worshipped, 21 And said, Naked came I out of my mother's womb, and naked shall I return thither: the LORD gave, and the LORD hath taken away; blessed be the name of the LORD. 22 In all this Job sinned not, nor charged God foolishly.* Job continued to put his faith and trust in God despite being placed in dire circumstance.

In JOB 2 we find that Satan wasn't yet satisfied with all that God had permitted him to do to Job, so we read again of another day when Satan presented himself before the Lord, and the following discourse took place, a discussion of which Job knew nothing about: JOB 2:3 *And the LORD said unto Satan, Hast thou considered my servant Job, that there is none like him in the earth, a perfect and an upright man, one that feareth God, and escheweth evil? and still he holdeth fast his integrity, although thou movedst me against him, to destroy him without cause. 4 And Satan answered the LORD, and said, Skin for skin, yea, all that a man hath will he give for his life. 5 But put forth thine hand now, and touch his bone and his flesh, and he will curse thee to thy face. 6 And the LORD said unto Satan, Behold, he is in thine hand; but save his life.* Of course Job knew none of this, but the Lord knew Job's heart, and that he was a man of faith, who, with his "eyes of faith" continued to look unto the Lord. JOB 2:7 & 8 describes what happened next: *So went Satan forth from the presence of the LORD, and smote Job with sore boils from the sole of his foot unto his crown. 8 And he took him a potsherd to scrape himself withal; and he sat down among the ashes.* Note that Job has now lost all of his substance, all of his children, and has suffered additional great affliction in his health, having been given boils from the top of his head down unto the sole of his feet. Yet we don't read of Job wavering in the measure of faith that he had been given so far. JOB 2:9 & 10 tells what took place next: *Then said his wife unto him, Dost thou still retain thine integrity? curse God, and die. 10 But he said unto her, Thou speakest as one of the foolish women speaketh. What? shall we receive good at the hand of God, and shall we not receive evil? In all this did not Job sin with his lips.*

Let's pause here for a moment and reflect on the importance of these two verses. In verse 9 we find Job's wife acknowledging that Job was indeed a man of integrity. Integrity means the quality or state of being complete; of sound moral principle; sound, honest, sincere; unimpaired; the state of being whole and undivided. The word "integrity" is found sixteen times in our King James Version of the Bible. Sixteen is the number of LOVE. Certainly Job was a man of love. The Hebrew word translated "integrity" here in JOB is tummah, number 8538 in the Strong's Hebrew Concordance, and is used in five (GRACE) verses of Old Testament scripture, four of which are found in JOB. {JOB 2:3; 2:9; 27:5; and 31:6.} Five is the number of GRACE, and certainly "integrity" is a quality of a full overcoming grace Saint that is pictured in the life of Job. The one time tummah translated "integrity" is not found in JOB is in PROVERBS 11:3, which defines Job's character. PROVERBS 11:3 *The integrity of the upright shall guide them...* . God pointed out to Satan in JOB 2:3 the "integrity" of Job: *And the LORD said unto Satan, Hast thou considered my servant Job, that there is none like him in the earth, a perfect and an upright man, one that feareth God, and escheweth evil? and still he holdeth fast his integrity, although thou movedst me against him, to destroy him without cause.* Satan twice answered God with similar words: JOB 1:11 *But put forth thine hand now, and touch all that he hath, and he will curse thee to thy face. JOB 2:5 But put forth thine hand now, and touch his bone and his flesh, and he will curse thee to thy face.* God's answer to Satan in the second chapter of JOB is found in verse 6: *And the LORD said unto Satan, Behold, he is in thine hand; but save his life.* Obviously neither Job nor his wife knew anything about the conversations between God and Satan that took place both in JOB chapters 1 & 2, but God knew Job's heart of "integrity." Who do you suppose inspired the words Job's wife spoke in verse 9? JOB 2:9 *Then said his wife unto him, Dost thou still retain thine integrity? curse God, and die.*

No one on the earth knew Job better than his wife, and she knew him to be a man of “integrity,” and that was his testimony to her. She knew nothing of the test God was putting Job through, nor did Job, but Job’s wife was influenced by Satan to speak: *Dost thou still retain thine integrity? curse God, and die.* Let’s don’t be too quick to judge Job’s wife here either, for she had just lost her seven sons, and three daughters too! She was being tested too, but Job, this man of “integrity,” a quality of a full overcomer, in all of his pain and suffering was able to encourage her to continue to look unto the Lord with a thanksgiving heart. So we read in JOB 2:10 *But he said unto her, Thou speakest as one of the foolish women speaketh. What? shall we receive good at the hand of God, and shall we not receive evil? In all this did not Job sin with his lips.* Study and ponder these verses until you too realize the “eyes of faith” manifested here by Job, a man who at this time had every reason to complain, but he retained his faith in God, and ...*In all this did not Job sin with his lips.* Keep in mind as you ponder all of this that God knew Job’s heart, and saw in him ...*that there is none like him in the earth, a perfect and an upright man, one that feareth God, and escheweth evil, and still he holdeth fast his integrity, although thou movedst me against him, to destroy him without cause...* JOB 1:8 & 2:3.

JOB chapters 3 through 31 consists of Job’s discourse with his three friends. Chapters 32 through 37 contains the official report of Job as given by Elihu, whom Sister Mooneyhan noted to be “a divinely appointed observer who discerned by the inspiration of the Almighty, and spoke by the Spirit of God who made him.” In these chapters 3 through 31 Brother Hill notes that Job spoke of God 54 times; made referenced to himself over 700 times; told of wanting to die 13 times, and spoke of death 96 times; and never once did he speak of life. Again we must remember during these chapters of Job’s life, he had no knowledge of the conversation that took place between God and Satan, nor that God saw him as a man of faith, and that God had told Satan in JOB 1:8 ...*Hast thou considered my servant Job, that there is none like him in the earth, a perfect and an upright man, one that feareth God, and escheweth evil?* In JOB chapters 3 through 31 we also find several statements of Job showing his “eyes of faith.”

In JOB 13:15 Job proclaims: *Though he slay me, yet will I trust in him:...* . This is a most noble and remarkable statement of faith, for the Old Testament word “trust” equates to the New Testament words “faith,” or “believe.” Interestingly the phrase “trust in him” is found fourteen times in scripture, fourteen being the number associated with DELIVERANCE or SALVATION. PROVERBS 30:5 states: *Every word of God is pure: he is a shield unto them that put their trust in him.* This statement also proves that Job knew the word of God even though it hadn’t been penned yet, and he knew the word of God by the hearing of the ear. Again we find this thought in ROMANS 10:17 *So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.* Also in JOB 13:18 Job adds this statement: *I know that I shall be justified.*

We see in this next statement of Job’s some more of what he believed, and already saw with his “eyes of faith.” JOB 19:25 *For I know that my redeemer liveth, and that he shall stand at the latter day upon the earth: 26 And though after my skin worms destroy this body, yet in my flesh shall I see God: 27 Whom I shall see for myself, and mine eyes shall behold, and not another; though my reins be consumed within me.*

Another profound statement of Job’s showing what he was able to see through his “eyes of faith” is found in JOB 23, where he expresses what he sees, and what he doesn’t yet see with his “eyes of faith.” JOB 23:8 *Behold, I go forward, but he is not there; and backward, but I cannot perceive him: 9 On the left hand, where he doth work, but I cannot behold him: he hideth himself on the right hand, that I cannot see him: 10 But he knoweth the way that I take: when he hath tried me, I shall come forth as gold.* If this is not a statement of faith, then what is? The Hebrew word translated “tried” here means: to examine; to scrutinize; to try; to prove; to test; to investigate; and a trial. Job had “eyes of faith” that perceived the end result. Though it had not yet been written, Job knew in his heart the words Peter later wrote under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit in 1 PETER 1:6–9 *Wherein ye greatly rejoice, though now for a season, if need be, ye are in heaviness through manifold temptations: 7 That the trial of your faith, being much more precious than of gold that*

*perisheth, though it be tried with fire, might be found unto praise and honour and glory at the appearing of Jesus Christ: 8 Whom having not seen, ye love; in whom, though now ye see him not, yet believing, ye rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory: 9 Receiving the end of your faith, even the salvation of your souls.*

In JOB 31:6 Job makes this statement: *Let me be weighed in an even balance, that God may know mine integrity.* Of course God already knew Job's integrity as we noted above in JOB 2:3 where God told Satan *...he holdeth fast his integrity...* . Later in JOB 31:40 we read: *...The words of Job are ended.* Five verses prior to this Job exclaims: JOB 31:35 *Oh that one would hear me! behold, my desire is, that the Almighty would answer me, and that mine adversary had written a book.* In JOB chapters 38 through 41 the Lord does answer Job out of a whirlwind, asking Job some eighty-three questions, which actually opened Job's "eyes of faith" to clearly see God's Almighty hand in everything, which in turn revealed God's mighty working in every detail of Job's life. Job saw this with his "eyes of faith," and expressed this in JOB 42:1-5. JOB 42:1 *Then Job answered the LORD, and said, 2 I know that thou canst do every thing, and that no thought can be withholden from thee. 3 Who is he that hideth counsel without knowledge? therefore have I uttered that I understood not; things too wonderful for me, which I knew not. 4 Hear, I beseech thee, and I will speak: I will demand of thee, and declare thou unto me. 5 I have heard of thee by the hearing of the ear: but now mine eye seeth thee.*

Truly Job now saw with his "eyes of faith" what the Lord was doing in his life. In this processes Job learned the principle of what Paul wrote about in 2 CORINTHIANS 4:17 *For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory; 18 While we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen: for the things which are seen are temporal; but the things which are not seen are eternal.* We must see the things that are eternal with our "eyes of faith."

So where were we when we stopped and examined some things concerning the Old Testament worthy of faith Job? We are considering the eighty important word sentence written to us in HEBREWS 12:1 & 2, which reads: *Wherefore seeing we also are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset us, and let us run with patience the race that is set before us, 2 Looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith; who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God.* Specifically we are examining the second word of this sentence, "seeing," and probing the depths of how we see with "eyes of faith" the handiwork God is doing in the lives of the full overcomers during this yet present church age. Job is just one example of what it takes to be a worthy of faith in the first place. And again Job had no Bible to back him up, but he did have a knowledge of God, and believed that no man could approach God, except on the basis of blood sacrifice, and God saw him as a man of integrity like none other in the earth during his day, a perfect and an upright man that feared God, and eschewed evil as noted in JOB 1:1 and 2:3. After being proved and tested for 41 chapters, God blessed Job in JOB 42. You can study this out further on your own, but for now let's look at two verses from JOB 42. JOB 42:10 *And the LORD turned the captivity of Job, when he prayed for his friends: also the LORD gave Job twice as much as he had before. ...12 So the LORD blessed the latter end of Job more than his beginning...* . So we find many lessons in studying JOB, and Job was an Old Testament worthy of faith, whom God felt it necessary to write a forty-two chapter book about. And we study the likes of Job knowing what HEBREWS 11:40 says: *God having provided some better thing for us, that they without us should not be made perfect.* Your life, and my life, and the life of every child of God are just as important in God's sight as was Job's, and more importantly, we have been given an opportunity that Job, nor any of the Old Testament worthies of faith were given, and that opportunity is to be the Lamb's wife. She indeed will have beautiful dove eyes, "eyes of faith."

We spent a lot of time above considering just one Old Testament worthy of faith, Job. Every one of the Old Testament worthies of faith mentioned in HEBREWS 11 also had "eyes of faith," which facts you can further research out for yourself. We won't spend as much time reviewing some

of the other Old Testament worthies of faith, noting specifically their seeing “eyes of faith” as we did with Job, but we must consider Abraham, the father of the faithful as noted in ROMANS 4:16 & 17, and GALATIANS 3:7-9. We are told in HEBREWS 11:10 that Abraham indeed ...*looked for a city which hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God.* How did Abraham look for this heavenly city? Abraham beheld this city with his “eyes of faith.” Study the life of Abraham and see how this icon of faith became the father of the faithful. Certainly Abraham had “eyes of faith.” For example in GENESIS 22 we find the incredible story of how Abraham had “eyes of faith” to clearly see where a burnt-offering would come from when he took his only son Isaac with him to offer him for a burnt-offering. In GENESIS 22:7 & 8 we read: *And Isaac spake unto Abraham his father, and said, My father: and he said, Here am I, my son. And he said, Behold the fire and the wood: but where is the lamb for a burnt offering? 8 And Abraham said, My son, God will provide himself a lamb for a burnt offering: so they went both of them together.* Isaac was to be the burnt offering, but Abraham had “eyes of faith” to believe that God would indeed provide himself a lamb for a burnt offering, and we read in GENESIS 22:10 *And Abraham stretched forth his hand, and took the knife to slay his son. 11 And the angel of the LORD called unto him out of heaven, and said, Abraham, Abraham: and he said, Here am I. 12 And he said, Lay not thine hand upon the lad, neither do thou any thing unto him: for now I know that thou fearest God, seeing thou hast not withheld thy son, thine only son from me. 13 And Abraham lifted up his eyes, and looked, and behold behind him a ram caught in a thicket by his horns: and Abraham went and took the ram, and offered him up for a burnt offering in the stead of his son. 14 And Abraham called the name of that place Jehovahjireh: as it is said to this day, In the mount of the LORD it shall be seen.* Jehovahjireh means: “God will provide,” and those with “eyes of faith” can truly believe, and see that “God will provide” for them whatever the need.

Another example of this is found in GENESIS 24 where Abraham had “eyes of faith” to see where a bride for his son Isaac would come from, and he instructed his servant as to how this would happen in GENESIS 24. Abraham was a hundred and forty years old at this time, and had decades under his belt in living by faith, and trust in God. GENESIS 24:2 *And Abraham said unto his eldest servant of his house, that ruled over all that he had, Put, I pray thee, thy hand under my thigh: 3 And I will make thee swear by the LORD, the God of heaven, and the God of the earth, that thou shalt not take a wife unto my son of the daughters of the Canaanites, among whom I dwell: 4 But thou shalt go unto my country, and to my kindred, and take a wife unto my son Isaac. ...7 The LORD God of heaven, which took me from my father’s house, and from the land of my kindred, and which spake unto me, and that sware unto me, saying, Unto thy seed will I give this land; he shall send his angel before thee, and thou shalt take a wife unto my son from thence.* Now Abraham’s servant, who was no doubt Eliezer of Damascus spoken about in GENESIS 15:2, he had no choice but to follow Abraham’s instructions, and he did. And Eliezer was encouraged of Abraham to have “eyes of faith” to see where a bride for Abraham’s son Isaac would come from also, so when Eliezer came into the land of Mesopotamia, unto the city of Nahor as instructed by Abraham, Eliezer prayed this prayer found in GENESIS 24:12-14 *...O LORD God of my master Abraham, I pray thee, send me good speed this day, and shew kindness unto my master Abraham. 13 Behold, I stand here by the well of water; and the daughters of the men of the city come out to draw water: 14 And let it come to pass, that the damsel to whom I shall say, Let down thy pitcher, I pray thee, that I may drink; and she shall say, Drink, and I will give thy camels drink also: let the same be she that thou hast appointed for thy servant Isaac; and thereby shall I know that thou hast shewed kindness unto my master.* As you read further in GENESIS 24 on your own take note that Eliezer did find this bride for Isaac that Abraham first saw by faith. During each step of this process we find Eliezer worshipping the Lord in thanksgiving as he witnessed first hand the things that Abraham had “eyes of faith” to see long before they happened. As you study GENESIS 24 on your own notice verses 26, 48, and 52 where Eliezer *bowed down his head, and worshipped the LORD.* The phrase “**worshipped the Lord**” is only found in eight scriptures. Eight has among its various meanings the meaning of BRIDE, as in the Bride of Christ. The full overcomers from this church age, the bridal

rank, will be worshippers, who during their time here on earth **“worshipped the Lord.”** With his heart full of praise and worship unto the Lord, Eliezer delivered Rebekah to Isaac, and GENESIS 24:67 reads: *And Isaac brought her into his mother Sarah’s tent, and took Rebekah, and she became his wife; and he loved her: and Isaac was comforted after his mother’s death.* In GENESIS 24 Rebekah is also referred to as “wife” to Isaac eight times, that bridal number, {see verses 3, 4, 7, 37, 38, 40, 51, and 67}.

Twelve verses in HEBREWS 11 highlight the faith of Abraham, so his **“eyes of faith”** are certainly worthy of more study on your own. Seven verses in HEBREWS 11 discuss the **“eyes of faith”** that Moses also had, so he certainly is prominent among those of faith referenced in HEBREWS 12:1 for our consideration. Job had one book of forty-two chapters devoted to his life. Moses had EXODUS, LEVITICUS, NUMBERS, and DEUTERONOMY, a hundred and thirty-seven chapters of scripture that explain the **“eyes of faith”** that Moses had. Moses was eighty years old the angel of the Lord appeared unto Moses in a burning bush, and essentially told him that he was now to go and deliver the children of Israel from the bondage of Egypt. A couple of chapters in EXODUS tell us how Moses told God he couldn’t do this thing. God assured Moses he could, by faith in God. In EXODUS 5:1 we read of how Moses went unto Pharaoh for the first of nine times asking Pharaoh to “Let my people go.” Pharaoh then made life more miserable for the children of Israel, and the following then took place. EXODUS 5:22 *And Moses returned unto the LORD, and said, Lord, wherefore hast thou so evil entreated this people? why is it that thou hast sent me? 23 For since I came to Pharaoh to speak in thy name, he hath done evil to this people; neither hast thou delivered thy people at all. 6:1 Then the LORD said unto Moses, Now shalt thou see what I will do to Pharaoh: for with a strong hand shall he let them go, and with a strong hand shall he drive them out of his land. 2 And God spake unto Moses, and said unto him, I am the LORD: 3 And I appeared unto Abraham, unto Isaac, and unto Jacob, by the name of God Almighty, but by my name JEHOVAH was I not known to them. 4 And I have also established my covenant with them, to give them the land of Canaan, the land of their pilgrimage, wherein they were strangers. 5 And I have also heard the groaning of the children of Israel, whom the Egyptians keep in bondage; and I have remembered my covenant. 6 Wherefore say unto the children of Israel, I am the LORD, and I will bring you out from under the burdens of the Egyptians, and I will rid you out of their bondage, and I will redeem you with a stretched out arm, and with great judgments: 7 And I will take you to me for a people, and I will be to you a God: and ye shall know that I am the LORD your God, which bringeth you out from under the burdens of the Egyptians. 8 And I will bring you in unto the land, concerning the which I did swear to give it to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob; and I will give it you for an heritage: I am the LORD.* Moses had **“eyes of faith”** to believe all of this. There are a couple of more verses to note here in EXODUS 6 that set the tone for things only **“eyes of faith”** could see. In EXODUS 6:13 *And the LORD spake unto Moses and unto Aaron, and gave them a charge unto the children of Israel, and unto Pharaoh king of Egypt, to bring the children of Israel out of the land of Egypt.* The next verses in EXODUS records the heads of the families of Israel that Moses and Aaron went unto with this charge from the Lord. Then in EXODUS 6:26 & 27 we read: *These are that Aaron and Moses, to whom the LORD said, Bring out the children of Israel from the land of Egypt according to their armies. 27 These are they which spake to Pharaoh king of Egypt, to bring out the children of Israel from Egypt: these are that Moses and Aaron.*

Let’s note something here also that only **“eyes of faith”** could see, and that is the **armies** of Israel, whom the Lord referenced in EXODUS 6:26. Now we also know that the children of Israel had been slaves in the land of Egypt for over four hundred years at this time, and that they didn’t have organized **armies**, but that is not how God saw them, for He saw them by their **armies**, and God wanted Moses to see them this way also. So in EXODUS 7:1- 4 we read the following: *And the LORD said unto Moses, See, I have made thee a god to Pharaoh: and Aaron thy brother shall be thy prophet. 2 Thou shalt speak all that I command thee: and Aaron thy brother shall speak unto Pharaoh, that he send the children of Israel out of his land. 3 And I will harden Pharaoh’s heart, and multiply my signs and my wonders in the land of Egypt. 4 But Pharaoh shall not hearken unto*

*you, that I may lay my hand upon Egypt, and bring forth mine **armies**, and my people the children of Israel, out of the land of Egypt by great judgments.* EXODUS chapter 12 is one of many high water marks of Old Testament scripture, for in this chapter we find the story of the Passover, and the urgent release of the children of Israel in the middle of the night from the land of Egypt. In this chapter we find these words of God spoken to Moses prior to the children of Israel being set free from Egypt. EXODUS 12:17 *And ye shall observe the feast of unleavened bread; for in this selfsame day have I brought your **armies** out of the land of Egypt: therefore shall ye observe this day in your generations by an ordinance for ever.* These words were the words of the Lord spoken to Moses in EXODUS 12, but the children of Israel were not yet redeemed from the land of Egypt until later! The Lord saw the children of Israel redeemed from the land of Egypt before it ever happened! The Lord clearly sees things the way they are. Moses had to see the children of Israel by their **armies** redeemed out of the land of Egypt by faith, because it had not happened yet! This is faith, for *...faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen...* HEBREWS 11:1. The children of Israel followed the instructions given by the Lord in this chapter, and in EXODUS 12:51 we read: *And it came to pass the selfsame day, that the LORD did bring the children of Israel out of the land of Egypt by their **armies**.* Thus ends the 12<sup>th</sup> chapter of EXODUS.

How did these untrained **armies** of the children of Israel accomplish this feat? EXODUS 13 gives the answer in three verses: EXODUS 13:4 *And Moses said unto the people, Remember this day, in which ye came out from Egypt, out of the house of bondage; for by strength of hand the LORD brought you out from this place: there shall no leavened bread be eaten. ...14...By strength of hand the LORD brought us out from Egypt, from the house of bondage. ...16...for by strength of hand the LORD brought us forth out of Egypt.* The Lord did in fact bring the children of Israel out of the land of Egypt by their **armies**, even though they really had no organized **armies** in the sense we view **armies**, and God did accomplish this feat by **the strength of His Almighty hand!** The children of Israel followed the command of Moses, as is told in EXODUS 12, and fled Egypt, about 600,000 foot men, plus women and children, and flocks and herds, and cattle. The bottom line is that they believed God, and He delivered them from the land of bondage! Can you see this picture with your “eyes of faith?” We read next in EXODUS 13:17 & 18 -- *And it came to pass, when Pharaoh had let the people go, that God led them not through the way of the land of the Philistines, although that was near; for God said, Lest peradventure the people repent when they see war, and they return to Egypt: 18 But God led the people about, through the way of the wilderness of the Red sea: and the children of Israel went up harnessed out of the land of Egypt.* This word “harnessed” that is found in verse 18 comes from a Hebrew word “chamush” {khaw-moosh'} (number 2571 in Strong's Hebrew Concordance), and is a military term meaning: in battle array, arrayed for battle by five's, armed; by five in a rank; and thus shows us that it was by GRACE that the children of Israel were redeemed by the mighty hand of the Lord out of the land of bondage in Egypt, just like it is by GRACE that we were redeemed from the life of sin that we were conceived in. One commentator noted that if the 600,000 footmen literally marched by five in a rank, that the length of the procession would have been 68 miles!

EXODUS 14 is another high water mark portion of scripture that is still talked about today in Christian churches all over the world. EXODUS 14 tells of the crossing of the Red Sea. And the Red sea is found mentioned twenty-eight times in twenty-eight scriptures. Twenty-eight the number that points to ETERNAL LIFE, and the crossing of the Red Sea is typical of our salvation. Israel only crossed the Red Sea once, and we are only saved once, once and for all. We are born only once, and we are born again only once. When we get saved what do we have? ETERNAL LIFE. JOHN 3:15 & 16 speaks of Jesus stating: *That whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have eternal life. 16 For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.* Jesus also said in JOHN 10:27 *My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me: 28 And I give unto them eternal life; and they shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of my hand. 29 My Father, which gave*

*them me, is greater than all; and no man is able to pluck them out of my Father's hand. The Father's hand is the same **strong and mighty hand** that delivered Israel out of the land of Egypt.*

By faith in God Moses goes on and did some impossible things, and becomes for us one of the greatest examples of an Old Testament full overcomer. If you will take the time to study the life of Moses you will find that he was given many things of God to overcome, and none of these things were really of Moses choosing. None of these things Moses was given to overcome were easy to accomplish. None of these things Moses was given to overcome were things that Moses really of himself wanted to do, nor things that he could do by himself. It was only by putting his faith and trust completely in God that he was able to do the overcoming things given of him to do.

Moses "beheld" many important things of God by his "eyes of faith," and passed these encouraging words along to the children of Israel as he spake to them in DEUTERONOMY. As we read this recall in your thinking that the words recorded in DEUTERONOMY are the final counsels of Moses delivered unto the children of Israel before they went on to cross the Jordan River and began to possess the promise land. Moses speaks the words the Lord gave him in DEUTERONOMY 1:8 *Behold, I have set the land before you: go in and possess the land which the LORD sware unto your fathers, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, to give unto them and to their seed after them. 9 And I spake unto you at that time, saying, I am not able to bear you myself alone: 10 The LORD your God hath multiplied you, and, behold, ye are this day as the stars of heaven for multitude. 11 (The LORD God of your fathers make you a thousand times so many more as ye are, and bless you, as he hath promised you!) ...21 Behold, the LORD thy God hath set the land before thee: go up and possess it, as the LORD God of thy fathers hath said unto thee; fear not, neither be discouraged. Moses continues in DEUTERONOMY 20:1 *When thou goest out to battle against thine enemies, and seest horses, and chariots, and a people more than thou, be not afraid of them: for the LORD thy God is with thee, which brought thee up out of the land of Egypt. 2 And it shall be, when ye are come nigh unto the battle, that the priest shall approach and speak unto the people, 3 And shall say unto them, Hear, O Israel, ye approach this day unto battle against your enemies: let not your hearts faint, fear not, and do not tremble, neither be ye terrified because of them; 4 For the LORD your God is he that goeth with you, to fight for you against your enemies, to save you. Then in DEUTERONOMY 31 Moses hits another high point in his final speech to Israel: DEUTERONOMY 31:1 *And Moses went and spake these words unto all Israel. 2 And he said unto them, I am an hundred and twenty years old this day; I can no more go out and come in: also the LORD hath said unto me, Thou shalt not go over this Jordan. 3 The LORD thy God, he will go over before thee, and he will destroy these nations from before thee, and thou shalt possess them: and Joshua, he shall go over before thee, as the LORD hath said. 4 And the LORD shall do unto them as he did to Sihon and to Og, kings of the Amorites, and unto the land of them, whom he destroyed. 5 And the LORD shall give them up before your face, that ye may do unto them according unto all the commandments which I have commanded you. 6 Be strong and of a good courage, fear not, nor be afraid of them: for the LORD thy God, he it is that doth go with thee; he will not fail thee, nor forsake thee. 7 And Moses called unto Joshua, and said unto him in the sight of all Israel, Be strong and of a good courage: for thou must go with this people unto the land which the LORD hath sworn unto their fathers to give them; and thou shalt cause them to inherit it. 8 And the LORD, he it is that doth go before thee; he will be with thee, he will not fail thee, neither forsake thee: fear not, neither be dismayed. These words of Moses, and especially the words found in verses 6 through 8 did not fall on deaf ears, and in a moment we will consider a little of the "eyes of faith" Joshua had, but before we get there recall that Moses was one of our great examples of an Old Testament worthy of faith mentioned by name in HEBREWS 11, a book which the Apostle Paul was inspired by the Holy Ghost to write. With years of experience in trusting the Lord himself, Paul latched on to this theme of Moses, and wrote in HEBREWS 13:5 & 6 *...for he hath said, I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee. 6 So that we may boldly say, The Lord is my helper, and I will not fear what man shall do unto me.****

We read in EXODUS 24:13 and JOSHUA 1:1 that Joshua was Moses' minister. JOSHUA 1:1 *Now after the death of Moses the servant of the LORD it came to pass, that the LORD spake unto Joshua the son of Nun, Moses' minister, saying, 2 Moses my servant is dead; now therefore arise, go over this Jordan, thou, and all this people, unto the land which I do give to them, even to the children of Israel. 3 Every place that the sole of your foot shall tread upon, that have I given unto you, as I said unto Moses. 4 From the wilderness and this Lebanon even unto the great river, the river Euphrates, all the land of the Hittites, and unto the great sea toward the going down of the sun, shall be your coast. 5 There shall not any man be able to stand before thee all the days of thy life: as I was with Moses, so I will be with thee: I will not fail thee, nor forsake thee. 6 Be strong and of a good courage: for unto this people shalt thou divide for an inheritance the land, which I sware unto their fathers to give them. 7 Only be thou strong and very courageous, that thou mayest observe to do according to all the law, which Moses my servant commanded thee: turn not from it to the right hand or to the left, that thou mayest prosper whithersoever thou goest. 8 This book of the law shall not depart out of thy mouth; but thou shalt meditate therein day and night, that thou mayest observe to do according to all that is written therein: for then thou shalt make thy way prosperous, and then thou shalt have good success. 9 Have not I commanded thee? Be strong and of a good courage; be not afraid, neither be thou dismayed: for the LORD thy God is with thee whithersoever thou goest.*

Let's pause here for a moment, and recall what we are studying here in our lessons from HEBREWS 12:1 & 2. HEBREWS 12:1 & 2 again says: *Wherefore seeing we also are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset us, and let us run with patience the race that is set before us, 2 Looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith; who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God.* HEBREWS 12:1 & 2 is eighty words of Holy Ghost inspired words recorded in one sentence, which is written to "we," and "us," of this yet present church age. Note this: that HEBREWS 12:1 & 2 is written to "us;" it is written to you, and me. HEBREWS 12:1 & 2 is written to encourage "our" faith, and draw "our" daily, and hourly, and minute by minute focus unto "...Jesus the author and finisher of our faith..." In our study on the meaning of Bible numbers we found that the number 80 pointed to STRENGTH. The emphasis in scripture of the number 80 pointed to the STRENGTH of God, not the STRENGTH of man. It is the power of God, the STRENGTH of God towards us that is emphasized in HEBREWS 12:1 & 2. It was the STRENGTH of God that Moses emphasized to the children of Israel above in DEUTERONOMY 31:6-8 that we just read: *Be strong and of a good courage, fear not, nor be afraid of them: for the LORD thy God, he it is that doth go with thee; he will not fail thee, nor forsake thee. 7 And Moses called unto Joshua, and said unto him in the sight of all Israel, Be strong and of a good courage: for thou must go with this people unto the land which the LORD hath sworn unto their fathers to give them; and thou shalt cause them to inherit it. 8 And the LORD, he it is that doth go before thee; he will be with thee, he will not fail thee, neither forsake thee: fear not, neither be dismayed.* It was the STRENGTH of God that the Lord Himself once again emphasized to Joshua in JOSHUA 1:9 that we also just looked at above, where the Lord said: *Have not I commanded thee? Be strong and of a good courage; be not afraid, neither be thou dismayed: for the LORD thy God is with thee whithersoever thou goest.* Centuries later the Holy Ghost inspired our Apostle Paul to encourage us with similar STRENGTH of God words, which are found in EPHESIANS 6:10 *Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might.*

Now back to Joshua, and what the Lord told him that portion of scripture we read above in JOSHUA 1. JOSHUA 1:5 *There shall not any man be able to stand before thee all the days of thy life: as I was with Moses, so I will be with thee: I will not fail thee, nor forsake thee. 6 Be strong and of a good courage: for unto this people shalt thou divide for an inheritance the land, which I sware unto their fathers to give them. ...9 Have not I commanded thee? Be strong and of a good courage; be not afraid, neither be thou dismayed: for the LORD thy God is with thee whithersoever thou goest.* We just once again reviewed how it is the STRENGTH of God towards us that is emphasized in HEBREWS 12:1 & 2, just as it was the STRENGTH of God that was emphasized to Moses, and

Joshua in the scriptures we quoted above. Again in JOSHUA 1:9 we find the Lord telling Joshua: Be strong and of a good courage; be not afraid, neither be thou dismayed: for the LORD thy God is with thee whithersoever thou goest. Note these words too: ...neither be thou dismayed... . Let's look into the depths of this word "dismayed" that is used here. The Hebrew word translated "dismayed" here is chathath, number 02865 in The Strong's Hebrew Concordance, and has the following meanings: to be dismayed, to be shattered, to be broken, to be scared, to be terrified, to be afraid, confounded, amazed, discouraged, beaten down, and be broken in pieces. The Lord instructed Joshua to be strong in the Lord, to be of a good courage, which can only come from the Lord, not not be afraid, and to not be dismayed, or scared, to not be discouraged, or beaten down, and broken in pieces.

Think about this for a minute; what is it that we are not to be "dismayed" about? In the big picture of things, which we are in the midst of discussing from HEBREWS 12:1 & 2, we are considering things only seeing "eyes of faith" can perceive. The Old Testament worthies of HEBREWS 11 became the hero's of faith because their "eyes of faith" believed that God could do anything, but fail. *Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen...* HEBREWS 11:1 tells us. We could say it this way; **faith is being not dismayed.** Noah had never seen rain, or a flood, nor had anyone else on the earth while he was 120 years in building the ark that God told him to build. Noah had a lot of time during that 120 years to be discouraged, and dismayed, yet he continued to follow God's instructions, *...being warned of God of things not seen as yet...* (HEBREWS 11:7), and in the end Noah was not "dismayed" when only he, and seven others in his family floated in the ark of safety while the whole world drowned in the flood! Noah believed in rain, and floods before there was rain, and floods because he had "eyes of faith" to believe God, and too ...neither be thou dismayed... about, thus being a testimony to us that **faith is being not dismayed.**

Go back to EXODUS 14 for a moment, and find Moses and the children of Israel in an impossible situation. Webster's Dictionary defines impossible as: "not capable of being, being done, or happening." In the Bible we find many such examples of impossible situations, *...but not with God: for with God all things are possible...* MARK 10:27 tells us. LUKE 1:37 goes on to further inform us: *For with God nothing shall be impossible.* Now here in EXODUS 14 we find Moses and the children of Israel in an impossible situation, that is as far as man is concerned. They faced the un-crossable Red Sea in front of them, and Pharaoh, and his Egyptian army behind them. No way of escape could they see, for there was none. Now let's read starting in EXODUS 14:13 And Moses said unto the people, Fear ye not, stand still, and see the salvation of the LORD, which he will shew to you to day: for the Egyptians whom ye have seen to day, ye shall see them again no more for ever.

14 The LORD shall fight for you, and ye shall hold your peace. Let's clearly see something here: Moses here had "eyes of faith" to believe God, and too ...neither be thou dismayed... about the present dire seemingly impossible situation that he, and the children of Israel were now faced with. He believed that God was a rewarder of them that diligently seek Him, (HEBREWS 11:6), and had just expressed what his "eyes of faith" saw: ... Fear ye not, stand still, and see the salvation of the LORD, which he will shew to you to day: for the Egyptians whom ye have seen to day, ye shall see them again no more for ever. 14 The LORD shall fight for you, and ye shall hold your peace. 15 And the LORD said unto Moses, Wherefore criest thou unto me? speak unto the children of Israel, that they go forward: 16 But lift thou up thy rod, and stretch out thine hand over the sea, and divide it: and the children of Israel shall go on dry ground through the midst of the sea. 17 And I, behold, I will harden the hearts of the Egyptians, and they shall follow them: and I will get me honour upon Pharaoh, and upon all his host, upon his chariots, and upon his horsemen. 18 And the Egyptians shall know that I am the LORD, when I have gotten me honour upon Pharaoh, upon his chariots, and upon his horsemen. 19 And the angel of God, which went before the camp of Israel, removed and went behind them; and the pillar of the cloud went from before their face, and stood behind them: 20 And it came between the camp of the Egyptians and the camp of Israel; and it was a cloud and darkness to them, but it gave light by night to these: so that the one came not near the other all

*the night. 21 And Moses stretched out his hand over the sea; and the LORD caused the sea to go back by a strong east wind all that night, and made the sea dry land, and the waters were divided. 22 And the children of Israel went into the midst of the sea upon the dry ground: and the waters were a wall unto them on their right hand, and on their left. 23 And the Egyptians pursued, and went in after them to the midst of the sea, even all Pharaoh's horses, his chariots, and his horsemen. 24 And it came to pass, that in the morning watch the LORD looked unto the host of the Egyptians through the pillar of fire and of the cloud, and troubled the host of the Egyptians, 25 And took off their chariot wheels, that they drave them heavily: so that the Egyptians said, Let us flee from the face of Israel; for the LORD fighteth for them against the Egyptians. 26 And the LORD said unto Moses, Stretch out thine hand over the sea, that the waters may come again upon the Egyptians, upon their chariots, and upon their horsemen. 27 And Moses stretched forth his hand over the sea, and the sea returned to his strength when the morning appeared; and the Egyptians fled against it; and the LORD overthrew the Egyptians in the midst of the sea. 28 And the waters returned, and covered the chariots, and the horsemen, and all the host of Pharaoh that came into the sea after them; there remained not so much as one of them. 29 But the children of Israel walked upon dry land in the midst of the sea; and the waters were a wall unto them on their right hand, and on their left. 30 Thus the LORD saved Israel that day out of the hand of the Egyptians; and Israel saw the Egyptians dead upon the sea shore. 31 And Israel saw that great work which the LORD did upon the Egyptians: and the people feared the LORD, and believed the LORD, and his servant Moses.*

Again let's consider the question: what is it that we are not to be "dismayed" about? Above we read in JOSHUA 1:9 that the Lord told Joshua: Be strong and of a good courage; be not afraid, neither be thou dismayed: for the LORD thy God is with thee whithersoever thou goest. Again we repeat **faith is being not dismayed**. Joshua had the seeing "eyes of faith" to believe the Lord, and **was not dismayed** with the steps fore-ordained for him to walk going forward, and we have left for us in scripture 24 chapters entitled THE BOOK OF JOSHUA. Within these 24 chapters we find highlighted some of those "*Who through faith subdued kingdoms, wrought righteousness, obtained promises, stopped the mouths of lions, Quenched the violence of fire, escaped the edge of the sword, out of weakness were made strong, waxed valiant in fight, turned to flight the armies of the aliens...*" as noted in HEBREWS 11:33 & 34. Within these 24 chapters we also are told the stories of the seeing "eyes of faith" of Joshua, Rahab, and Caleb, who too **were not dismayed** knowing that it was the Lord their God who went with them whithersoever they went. Joshua, Rahab, and Caleb are just a few out of all the Old Testament worthies of faith of whom HEBREWS 12:1 records that *...we also are compassed about...* with, as examples to us of what a full overcomer is. That is why we are reviewing their seeing "eyes of faith" so that we too can see with our own "eyes of faith," and **be not dismayed** with the things God wants to accomplish in our lives also.

In JOSHUA 2 & 6 we read the story of Rahab. *By faith the harlot Rahab perished not with them that believed not, when she had received the spies with peace...* HEBREWS 11:31 tells us, and confessed to the spies in JOSHUA 2:11 *...the LORD your God, he is God in heaven above, and in earth beneath.* In short she believed on the Lord Jesus Christ and she was saved along with her house. She had accepted the messengers sent from Joshua, and believed their message that Joshua was coming soon. Since she mightily believed in the LORD God of Israel, she was allowed, by the grace of God, to remain alive, and to become an important part in the history of Israel, and an outstanding example of a worthy of faith. We should note that **by faith Rahab was not dismayed**. How did Rahab become an important part in the history of Israel? She married a prominent man of the children of Israel named Salmon, and through this union according to MATTHEW 1:5 came Boaz, who married Ruth, and from that union came Obed the grandfather of David, through which lineage came Jesus Christ! Rahab thus was one of the great-grandmothers of Jesus! And the reason for this was that she believed in the LORD God of Israel. Rahab had "eyes of faith."

In JOSHUA 3 we read the story of the crossing of the Jordan River by children of Israel into the promised land of Canaan. Joshua had seeing "eyes of faith" to believe that this would take place as the Lord had told him it would. We read in JOSHUA 3:7 *And the LORD said unto Joshua, This*

day will I begin to magnify thee in the sight of all Israel, that they may know that, as I was with Moses, so I will be with thee. 8 And thou shalt command the priests that bear the ark of the covenant, saying, When ye are come to the brink of the water of Jordan, ye shall stand still in Jordan. 9 And Joshua said unto the children of Israel, Come hither, and hear the words of the LORD your God. 10 And Joshua said, Hereby ye shall know that the living God is among you, and that he will without fail drive out from before you the **Canaanites**, and the **Hittites**, and the **Hivites**, and the **Perizzites**, and the **Girgashites**, and the **Amorites**, and the **Jebusites**. DEUTERONOMY 7:1 records that these are the ...seven nations greater and mightier than thou. Read the rest of JOSHUA 3 on your own to see that the children of Israel did follow Joshua's instructions, and in verse 17 we read: ...and all the Israelites passed over on dry ground, until all the people were passed clean over Jordan. Obviously Joshua followed the instructions of the Lord we read in JOSHUA 1:9, (...Be strong and of a good courage; be not afraid, neither be thou dismayed: for the LORD thy God is with thee whithersoever thou goest...), and was **not dismayed** when ...all the Israelites passed over on dry ground, until all the people were passed clean over Jordan.

The crossing of the Red Sea pictures to us our salvation. Sister Bodie stated it like this: "We have already learned that the Red Sea crossing figures not only Christ's death, but our death with Him -- death to sin and the law." 2 CORINTHIANS 5:17 reads: *Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new.* Sister Bodie continues: "...it is resurrection with Christ and our heavenly place that are strikingly portrayed in the crossing of the Jordan." Sister Bodie further notes that "...only of the Church has it been written, that God *...hath raised us up together, and made us sit together in the heavenlies in Christ Jesus...*" EPHESIANS 2:6. (End of quoting Sister Bodie). The crossing of the Jordan River and the conquering of the seven nations pictures to us the rich inheritance that is ours in Christ Jesus if we will only by faith apprehend it. The crossing of the Jordan River and the conquering of the land of Canaan shows to us the steps of faith that a believer must take to become a full overcomer in Christ Jesus, thus we should **be not dismayed** with the things God wants to accomplish in our lives also as we are brought on our race course to face things greater than us also.

There is another point here in JOSHUA 3 concerning the seeing "eyes of faith" Joshua had, and the fact that he was **not dismayed** by the seven greater nations that currently possessed the land that lay before the children of Israel as they crossed the Jordan river. We find these seven nations mentioned together in only three scriptures: DEUTERONOMY 7:1; JOSHUA 3:10; and JOSHUA 24:11. By faith Joshua proclaimed in JOSHUA 3:10 before it ever happened ...Hereby ye shall know that the living God is among you, and that he will without fail drive out from before you the **Canaanites**, and the **Hittites**, and the **Hivites**, and the **Perizzites**, and the **Girgashites**, and the **Amorites**, and the **Jebusites**. If you think about it this is really quite a statement of faith, and a point we shouldn't pass over lightly. As far as we are concerned there shouldn't be any mystery to us as to why there are seven nations mentioned here, for seven is the number that points us to SPIRITUAL PERFECTION, or SPIRITUAL COMPLETION, and we will see how this concerns us in a moment.

Moses in his final councils to Israel also made note of these very same seven nations in DEUTERONOMY 7, and certainly the whole chapter of DEUTERONOMY 7 explains why, but we will only concentrate on verse 1. DEUTERONOMY 7:1 *When the LORD thy God shall bring thee into the land whither thou goest to possess it, and hath cast out many nations before thee, the **Hittites**, and the **Girgashites**, and the **Amorites**, and the **Canaanites**, and the **Perizzites**, and the **Hivites**, and the **Jebusites**, seven nations greater and mightier than thou.* Brother Hill probably did at least a couple of Bible studies from this one verse, and he expounded here upon some research done by E. L. Sexton, a man who lived more than three hundred years ago. Brother Hill noted that these seven nations figure the propensities of the flesh. Propensity is a big word not commonly used in every day language, and simply means the tendencies, or natural inclination, thus the reference Brother Hill was making was to the natural tendencies, or inclination of the flesh. Here is what E. L. Sexton found:

**HITTITE:** Awe, fear, trembling, terror, timidity. These nations represent the harassment God's people have today. They are the direct cause of discouragement. They tell you it is impossible to be an overcomer or conquer the weakness of the flesh. They will keep Saints occupied with their failures and weakness. They are like a club preventing one from witnessing of the saving grace of the LORD JESUS CHRIST. They prevent Saints from knowing the Divine Liberty of the Saviour.

**GIRGASHITE:** Strangers, dwellers on sandy land, i.e. unfruitfulness. These traits cause that hard, cold, proud and aloof spirit. People who allow these traits to work see no need of sweet communion and unity among the people of God, or the dear Son of God Himself. Hence instead of fellowship one with another, they allow the least little insignificant thing to mar the thing most needed among God's dear people today.... fellowship and unity.

**AMORITE:** Sayer, (to say), talker babbler, rebel. These are the cause of all the gossip. The hard, mean, nasty, bitter, unkind and untrue talk about other Saints and friends. They prevent fruit bearing in the lives of Saints. Instead they rave, rant, rage, and rebel against love, tenderness and meekness in manner and habit. They are strong talkers against everything.

**CANAANITE:** Trader, merchant, peddler, trafficker. These are the dispositions or characteristics which work in the mind, thoughts, wills affections and senses. These cause Saints to go out of bounds, to do things that are unscriptural and indulge in excessive demonstrations, and enter into things in which God does not approve. There are things not actually sinful or evil, yet do not feed the new man or help him to grow or be profitable and a blessing to others.

**PERIZZITE:** Inhabitant of the open country, squatter, rustic, villager. These are the cause of indifference, unconcern, half-hearted attitudes towards going on with God and growing up into perfection. They will open a big door into a vast realm of false liberty and error. They will keep one from observing their own conduct and keep them busy watching others. If allowed to grow they will keep one in a place of indifference about judging ones self, and keeping ones body under, (1 CORINTHIANS 9:27 *But I keep under my body, and bring it into subjection: lest that by any means, when I have preached to others, I myself should be a castaway.*), bringing every thought into obedience to Christ.

**HIVITE:** Show-ers of life, livers or show-offs; in a word this is a spirit of self-righteousness. They will cause one to feel and think "I am right, even perfect, others are wrong." In themselves they see no need or lack, causing one to tell loud and long of their own sayings or accomplishments. No personal victory, no power in prayer, no influence with others, while at the same time they have no real hunger for the word of God. They have no time for study or prayer, but feel they are being about the Lord's business. They are only showing off to attract people unto themselves instead of Jesus.

**JEBUSITE:** Treader down, despiser, disdain, a place of message trodden down. These do not need much explaining. These cause Saints to slight, scoff, sneer and belittle others. They will keep one picking at the other fellow, while they do not see their own shortcomings.

Today we have other terms that are used to describe these very same propensities of the flesh, but the underlying point remains the same: we can, and must get the victory in our own lives over these kind of conditions if we are ever going to attain unto the SPIRITUAL PERFECTION, or SPIRITUAL COMPLETION that is required to become a full overcomer in Christ Jesus. Thus as we turn these things over to the Lord, we by faith should be **not dismayed** with the things God can accomplish in our lives also.

Now back to Joshua here concerning his seeing "eyes of faith," and the fact that he was **not dismayed** by the seven greater nations that currently possessed the land that lay before the children of Israel as they crossed the Jordan river as he spoke in JOSHUA 3:10 *...Hereby ye shall know that the living God is among you, and that he will without fail drive out from before you the Canaanites, and the Hittites, and the Hivites, and the Perizzites, and the Girgashites, and the Amorites, and the Jebusites.* These seven nations have the typical meaning to us that we just covered, but to Joshua, and the children of Israel, these were the *...seven nations greater and mightier than thou...* that

Moses also referenced in DEUTERONOMY 7:1 who now lay before Joshua, and the children of Israel. Joshua continued to encourage the children of Israel to believe God to drive out these nations that lay before them. Read the rest of JOSHUA, and see how this happened. We find these seven nations mentioned together one last time in Joshua's final words to Israel found in JOSHUA 24. JOSHUA 24:11 *And ye went over Jordan, and came unto Jericho: and the men of Jericho fought against you, the Amorites, and the Perizzites, and the Canaanites, and the Hittites, and the Girgashites, the Hivites, and the Jebusites; and I delivered them into your hand.* How did Joshua achieve this seemingly impossible feat? By believing what the Lord told him back in JOSHUA 1:9 *Be strong and of a good courage; be not afraid, neither be thou dismayed: for the LORD thy God is with thee whithersoever thou goest.*

One final example concerning the "eyes of faith" of Joshua takes us back to JOSHUA 5. JOSHUA 5:13 *And it came to pass, when Joshua was by Jericho, that he lifted up his eyes and looked, and, behold, there stood a man over against him with his sword drawn in his hand: and Joshua went unto him, and said unto him, Art thou for us, or for our adversaries? 14 And he said, Nay; but as captain of the host of the LORD am I now come. And Joshua fell on his face to the earth, and did worship, and said unto him, What saith my lord unto his servant? 15 And the captain of the LORD'S host said unto Joshua, Loose thy shoe from off thy foot; for the place whereon thou standest is holy. And Joshua did so.* Who is the captain of the Lord's host? Is it not our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ Himself? Jesus wanted Joshua to see that ...*we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them...* EPHESIANS 2:10. The Lord wanted Joshua here to see things the same way that God sees things. Another thing, among many other things, that Joshua realized here was that if God be for him, who could be against him, and the children of Israel? The full overcomer in this present church age, potentially you and me, before we even overcome anything must realize, like Joshua did, who it is that is going to fight for us, and be with us. ROMANS 8:31-39 explains it like this: *What shall we then say to these things? If God be for us, who can be against us? 32 He that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not with him also freely give us all things? 33 Who shall lay any thing to the charge of God's elect? It is God that justifieth. 34 Who is he that condemneth? It is Christ that died, yea rather, that is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us. 35 Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? 36 As it is written, For thy sake we are killed all the day long; we are accounted as sheep for the slaughter. 37 Nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him that loved us. 38 For I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, 39 Nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.*

Again we repeat **faith is not being dismayed** as to what one man with faith in God can do. Joshua had the seeing "eyes of faith" to believe the Lord, and **was not dismayed** with the steps fore-ordained for him to walk going forward, and we have left for us in scripture 24 chapters entitled THE BOOK OF JOSHUA that again tells how he conquered those ...*seven nations greater and mightier than thou.*

We find another Old Testament worthy of faith mentioned in the book of JOSHUA, who is Caleb, one of the two spies also noted in NUMBERS 13 & 14, who gave Moses and the children of Israel a good report, that they could go in and conquer the land that God had promised to give them. Caleb had first hand experience in viewing these seven nations greater than Israel, and after hearing the gloom and doom report of ten of the spies in NUMBERS 13:26-29, we read this of Caleb: NUMBERS 13:30 *And Caleb stilled the people before Moses, and said, Let us go up at once, and possess it; for we are well able to overcome it.* Caleb had seeing "eyes of faith," and **was not dismayed** with what he knew the Lord could do. The other spy that gave a good report was Joshua. In JOSHUA 14 Caleb was 85 years old, and we read the following starting in verse 6. JOSHUA 14:6 *Then the children of Judah came unto Joshua in Gilgal: and Caleb the son of Jephunneh the*

*Kenezite said unto him, Thou knowest the thing that the LORD said unto Moses the man of God concerning me and thee in Kadeshbarnea.*

Let's stop right here for a moment because names mean something in scripture, and we can oftentimes get some deeper meaning by reviewing the meaning of names. Caleb means: whole-hearted. This name was given Caleb by the Lord in NUMBERS 14:24, which reads: *But my servant Caleb, because he had another spirit with him, and hath followed me fully, him will I bring into the land whereinto he went; and his seed shall possess it.* Similar words were later repeated by Moses in DEUTERONOMY 1:34-36 where we read: *And the LORD heard the voice of your words, and was wroth, and sware, saying, 35 Surely there shall not one of these men of this evil generation see that good land, which I sware to give unto your fathers, 36 Save Caleb the son of Jephunneh; he shall see it, and to him will I give the land that he hath trodden upon, and to his children, because he hath wholly followed the LORD.* This particular whole-hearted man named Caleb was noted fifteen times in scripture to be the son of Jephunneh. Fifteen is the number pointing to REST, showing that we can REST with confidence when we have our faith and hope placed solely in the Lord, and the power of His might, as did Caleb. Caleb's father's name Jephunneh means: "he will be prepared." To be prepared means to be ready as in "...His wife hath made herself ready..." REVELATION 19:7. As we read above in NUMBERS 13:30 Caleb was ready, and prepared to go in at once and possess the land of Canaan forty-five years before the time frame of JOSHUA 14, and he was ready, and prepared because he wholly followed the Lord, and by faith he relied upon the Lord's help to accomplish this seemingly impossible task. At age 85 Caleb was still very much whole-heartedly following the Lord, and still relying upon the Lord to help him conquer the mountain that lay before him in JOSHUA 14! Besides as we read in NUMBERS 14:24 the Lord had told Moses that Caleb had another spirit with him, *...and hath followed me fully, him will I bring into the land whereinto he went; and his seed shall possess it.* Caleb had seeing "eyes of faith," and was not dismayed with what he knew the Lord could do, and with what the Lord had already told him He would do!

Also before we move on here in seeing what whole-hearted Caleb did here in JOSHUA 14, let's review one more portion of scripture found in NUMBERS 32 where we once again find Moses reminding the tribes of Gad and Reuben of the events some 38 years before at Kadesh-barnea. NUMBERS 32:7 *And wherefore discourage ye the heart of the children of Israel from going over into the land which the LORD hath given them? 8 Thus did your fathers, when I sent them from Kadeshbarnea to see the land. 9 For when they went up unto the valley of Eshcol, and saw the land, they discouraged the heart of the children of Israel, that they should not go into the land which the LORD had given them. 10 And the LORD'S anger was kindled the same time, and he sware, saying, 11 Surely none of the men that came up out of Egypt, from twenty years old and upward, shall see the land which I sware unto Abraham, unto Isaac, and unto Jacob; because they have not wholly followed me: 12 Save Caleb the son of Jephunneh the Kenezite, and Joshua the son of Nun: for they have wholly followed the LORD. 13 And the LORD'S anger was kindled against Israel, and he made them wander in the wilderness forty years, until all the generation, that had done evil in the sight of the LORD, was consumed.* Note the phrase "wholly followed the LORD" that is first found in scripture here in NUMBERS 32:12 in reference to Caleb, and Joshua. The phrase "wholly followed the LORD" is found five (GRACE) times in scripture, all in reference to Caleb, who is left us in scripture as an example of what it takes to be a full overcoming worthy of faith.

Now let's finish our thoughts concerning this whole-hearted Old Testament full overcomer Caleb. JOSHUA 14:6 *Then the children of Judah came unto Joshua in Gilgal: and Caleb the son of Jephunneh the Kenezite said unto him, Thou knowest the thing that the LORD said unto Moses the man of God concerning me and thee in Kadeshbarnea. 7 Forty years old was I when Moses the servant of the LORD sent me from Kadeshbarnea to espy out the land; and I brought him word again as it was in mine heart. 8 Nevertheless my brethren that went up with me made the heart of the people melt: but I wholly followed the LORD my God. 9 And Moses sware on that day, saying, Surely the land whereon thy feet have trodden shall be thine inheritance, and thy children's for ever, because thou hast wholly followed the LORD my God. 10 And now, behold, the LORD hath kept me*

alive, as he said, these forty and five years, even since the LORD spake this word unto Moses, while the children of Israel wandered in the wilderness: and now, lo, I am this day fourscore and five years old. 11 As yet I am as strong this day as I was in the day that Moses sent me: as my strength was then, even so is my strength now, for war, both to go out, and to come in. 12 Now therefore give me this mountain, whereof the LORD spake in that day; for thou heardest in that day how the Anakims were there, and that the cities were great and fenced: if so be the LORD will be with me, then I shall be able to drive them out, as the LORD said. 13 And Joshua blessed him, and gave unto Caleb the son of Jephunneh Hebron for an inheritance. 14 Hebron therefore became the inheritance of Caleb the son of Jephunneh the Kenazite unto this day, because that he wholly followed the LORD God of Israel. Again whole-hearted Caleb was **not dismayed** when all of this happened, because he had "eyes of faith" to see in advance what God would do.

We noted above that all full overcomers must have "eyes of faith," and that we have got to start seeing things like God sees things, and the only way to do this is by having eyes of faith. Full overcomer Elisha learned to have "eyes of faith," and learned to see things by faith the same way God sees things. In 2 KINGS 6:15-17 the servant of Elisha woke up one day to find that they were surrounded by a large host with both horses and chariots, ...*And his servant said unto him, Alas, my master! how shall we do? And he answered, Fear not: for they that be with us are more than they that be with them. And Elisha prayed, and said, LORD, I pray thee, open his eyes, that he may see. And the LORD opened the eyes of the young man; and he saw: and, behold, the mountain was full of horses and chariots of fire round about Elisha.* Here we see that Elisha was **not dismayed** either, because Elisha's eyes were not focused upon the circumstance, but rather were clearly focused upon the Lord, as must be the case with all full overcomers, who then see victory rather than defeat. All full overcomers learn to see things the way God sees things, and the only way to do this is with "eyes of faith."

We have mentioned several times in this study so far some impossible situations, and we read in LUKE 1:37 that: *For with God nothing shall be impossible.* We also read earlier in HEBREWS 11:6 what Paul wrote: *But without faith it is impossible to please him: {God} for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him.* Those with seeing "eyes of faith" behold the impossible. In other words they are **not dismayed** with what the Lord can do. Once again we repeat that **faith is not being dismayed** as to what one man with faith in God can do.

Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego are mentioned together fourteen times in the book of DANIEL. Fourteen is the number that points to DELIVERANCE or SALVATION. In DANIEL 3 we find the story of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego being delivered into, and from Nebuchadnezzar's fiery furnace. As you know Nebuchadnezzar the king had decreed that everyone in his kingdom was to worship his gods, and the golden image he set up. What you may not recall is that Nebuchadnezzar the king was the first emperor of the times of the Gentiles. Then beginning in DANIEL 3:12 word came to king Nebuchadnezzar that: *There are certain Jews whom thou hast set over the affairs of the province of Babylon, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego; these men, O king, have not regarded thee: they serve not thy gods, nor worship the golden image which thou hast set up. 13 Then Nebuchadnezzar in his rage and fury commanded to bring Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego. Then they brought these men before the king. 14 Nebuchadnezzar spake and said unto them, Is it true, O Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, do not ye serve my gods, nor worship the golden image which I have set up? 15 Now if ye be ready that at what time ye hear the sound of the cornet, flute, harp, sackbut, psaltery, and dulcimer, and all kinds of musick, ye fall down and worship the image which I have made; well: but if ye worship not, ye shall be cast the same hour into the midst of a burning fiery furnace; and who is that God that shall deliver you out of my hands? 16 Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, answered and said to the king, O Nebuchadnezzar, we are not careful to answer thee in this matter. 17 If it be so, our God whom we serve is able to deliver us from the burning fiery furnace, and he will deliver us out of thine hand, O king. 18 But if not, be it known unto thee, O king, that we will not serve thy gods, nor worship the golden image*

which thou hast set up. We see here that Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego had “eyes of faith” to behold the impossible as we read in verse 17 to believe that ...our God whom we serve is able to deliver us from the burning fiery furnace, and he will deliver us out of thine hand, O king. In essence they believed EPHESIANS 3:20 even though it hadn’t be yet written: *Now unto him that is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that worketh in us.* And further more they had also made their mind up that even if God didn’t deliver them out of the fiery furnace, ...be it known unto thee, O king, that we will not serve thy gods, nor worship the golden image which thou hast set up. These words obviously got Nebuchadnezzar’s undivided attention! Let’s let the scripture tell the rest of this story. DANIEL 3:19 *Then was Nebuchadnezzar full of fury, and the form of his visage was changed against Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego: therefore he spake, and commanded that they should heat the furnace one seven times more than it was wont to be heated. 20 And he commanded the most mighty men that were in his army to bind Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, and to cast them into the burning fiery furnace. 21 Then these men were bound in their coats, their hosen, and their hats, and their other garments, and were cast into the midst of the burning fiery furnace. 22 Therefore because the king’s commandment was urgent, and the furnace exceeding hot, the flame of the fire slew those men that took up Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego. 23 And these three men, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, fell down bound into the midst of the burning fiery furnace. 24 Then Nebuchadnezzar the king was astonished, and rose up in haste, and spake, and said unto his counsellors, Did not we cast three men bound into the midst of the fire? They answered and said unto the king, True, O king. 25 He answered and said, Lo, I see four men loose, walking in the midst of the fire, and they have no hurt; and the form of the fourth is like the Son of God. 26 Then Nebuchadnezzar came near to the mouth of the burning fiery furnace, and spake, and said, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, ye servants of the most high God, come forth, and come hither. Then Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, came forth of the midst of the fire. 27 And the princes, governors, and captains, and the king’s counsellors, being gathered together, saw these men, upon whose bodies the fire had no power, nor was an hair of their head singed, neither were their coats changed, nor the smell of fire had passed on them. 28 Then Nebuchadnezzar spake, and said, Blessed be the God of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, who hath sent his angel, and delivered his servants that trusted in him, and have changed the king’s word, and yielded their bodies, that they might not serve nor worship any god, except their own God. 29 Therefore I make a decree, That every people, nation, and language, which speak any thing amiss against the God of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, shall be cut in pieces, and their houses shall be made a dunghill: because there is no other God that can deliver after this sort. 30 Then the king promoted Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, in the province of Babylon.*

Here again we find a good example of the fact that **faith is being not dismayed** at what God can do. Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego obviously knew JOSHUA 1:9 *Have not I commanded thee? Be strong and of a good courage; be not afraid, neither be thou dismayed: for the LORD thy God is with thee whithersoever thou goest.* Note a couple of things here, the first being that Nebuchadnezzar promoted Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego. The second thing that jumps off the page in verses 28 & 29 is the effect the testimony of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego had on Nebuchadnezzar. Nebuchadnezzar *...said, Blessed be the God of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, who hath sent his angel, and delivered his servants that trusted in him, and have changed the king’s word, and yielded their bodies, that they might not serve nor worship any god, except their own God. Therefore I make a decree, That every people, nation, and language, which speak any thing amiss against the God of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, shall be cut in pieces, and their houses shall be made a dunghill: because there is no other God that can deliver after this sort.* And before we move on note also Nebuchadnezzar’s next proclamation in DANIEL 4:1 *Nebuchadnezzar the king, unto all people, nations, and languages, that dwell in all the earth; Peace be multiplied unto you. 2 I thought it good to shew the signs and wonders that the high God hath wrought toward me. 3 How great are his signs! and how mighty are his wonders! his kingdom is an everlasting kingdom, and his dominion is from generation to generation.* Nebuchadnezzar’s proclamation is further proof that

those with “eyes of faith,” who trust in the Lord with the heart attitude requested by the Lord in JOSHUA 1:9, like Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego did, should not be dismayed by the far reaching long term effects of what God can do. Sister Bodie wrote in her notes on the book of DANIEL that Nebuchadnezzar was “...the first emperor of the times of the Gentiles. He himself is a witness of God’s marvelous dealing with him. It is a notable testimony, powerful and pertinent for men of all time; but especially for the kings and national Gentile rulers. They ought to take heed to the words of this man who because of his exalted position, royal authority and world-wide dominion, has left an effective report. He himself wanted to give publicity to Jehovah’s marvelous condescension toward him and his acknowledgment and admiration of Jehovah, the Most High God. He had proved Himself the supreme One, able to conquer and subdue the greatest among men. Nebuchadnezzar desires to pay Him tribute and honor. He desired that the name of the first king of Gentile times should go on record as acknowledging and worshipping the true and living God, the God of the Jew. He boldly testified that it was He that has given him dominion, authority and power. He fully owned what God had done for him. He took not glory to himself as being king of the great kingdom of Babylon, but gave all the glory to God.” {End of quoting Sister Bodie.}

One more point concerning Nebuchadnezzar before we move on. Twice Nebuchadnezzar in the above scriptures references God as “**high God**.” In DANIEL 3:26 we read: *Then Nebuchadnezzar came near to the mouth of the burning fiery furnace, and spake, and said, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, ye servants of the most high God, come forth, and come hither.* And in DANIEL 4:2 Nebuchadnezzar again uses the term “**high God**” in reference to Jehovah, the Most High God saying: *I thought it good to shew the signs and wonders that the high God hath wrought toward me.* The phrase “**high God**” is only found in fourteen scriptures, and again fourteen is the number that points to DELIVERANCE or SALVATION. Study again the whole of DANIEL 3, and DANIEL 4 and find highlighted two stories of DELIVERANCE or SALVATION. Note now how Nebuchadnezzar’s words are found at the conclusion of DANIEL 4. DANIEL 4:34 *And at the end of the days I Nebuchadnezzar lifted up mine eyes unto heaven, and mine understanding returned unto me, and I blessed the most High, and I praised and honoured him that liveth for ever, whose dominion is an everlasting dominion, and his kingdom is from generation to generation: 35 And all the inhabitants of the earth are reputed as nothing: and he doeth according to his will in the army of heaven, and among the inhabitants of the earth: and none can stay his hand, or say unto him, What doest thou? 36 At the same time my reason returned unto me; and for the glory of my kingdom, mine honour and brightness returned unto me; and my counsellors and my lords sought unto me; and I was established in my kingdom, and excellent majesty was added unto me. 37 Now I Nebuchadnezzar praise and extol and honour the King of heaven, all whose works are truth, and his ways judgment: and those that walk in pride he is able to abase.* These words of Nebuchadnezzar highlight the DELIVERANCE and SALVATION of the most **high God**.

Daniel was another Old Testament notable whom we know had “eyes of faith” that were **not dismayed** at what God could do. In DANIEL 6 we find Darius the Median was now king, and he *...set over the kingdom an hundred and twenty princes, which should be over the whole kingdom; And over these three presidents; of whom Daniel was first: that the princes might give accounts unto them, and the king should have no damage...* verses 1 & 2. DANIEL 6:3 records: *...Daniel was preferred above the presidents and princes, because an excellent spirit was in him; and the king thought to set him over the whole realm.* What we don’t read in scripture here is the fact that Daniel was around 90 years old during the events recorded in DANIEL 6! And Daniel had wholly followed the Lord God his whole life just as had Caleb centuries before. In DANIEL 6:4 & 5 we read: *Then the presidents and princes sought to find occasion against Daniel concerning the kingdom; but they could find none occasion nor fault; forasmuch as he was faithful, neither was there any error or fault found in him. 5 Then said these men, We shall not find any occasion against this Daniel, except we find it against him concerning the law of his God.* Obviously 90-year-old Daniel had a wonderful testimony, but the presidents and princes didn’t appreciate the fact that this old devout Christian was promoted above them, so they came up with a plan to get rid of Daniel. Their plan was presented to

king Darius, and they caused the king to sign an unchangeable decree stating that no man was to make *...a petition of any God or man for thirty days, save of thee, O king, he shall be cast into the den of lions...* verse 7. We read in DANIEL 6:10 *Now when Daniel knew that the writing was signed, he went into his house; and his windows being open in his chamber toward Jerusalem, he kneeled upon his knees three times a day, and prayed, and gave thanks before his God, as he did aforetime.*

Before we continue this story make a special note here to appreciate in the man Daniel a high quality that will be found in all full overcomers, and that is he was a worshipper who *...kneeled upon his knees three times a day, and prayed, and gave thanks before his God...* . Daniel took the time in his so called busy schedule to drop everything, and kneel upon his knees three times a day, and pray, and give God thanks for everything that was presented upon the course that was set before him! How is it in your daily walk with the Lord? Be a Daniel.

Brother Hill made special note of DANIEL 6:10 in his Bible of five kinds of devotion displayed by Daniel in this verse. Brother Hill noted that Daniel had “fearless devotion” in his prayer life, *...his windows being open...* . Daniel wasn’t afraid of who would hear him pray, and he wasn’t going to let anything come between him, and his daily devotion to God, not a king’s decree, not even a closed window. Secondly Brother Hill noted that Daniel had “praying devotion” as he *...kneeled upon his knees...* . Thirdly Brother Hill underlined the fact that Daniel had “constant devotion” as he prayed *...three times a day...* . The fourth thing Brother Hill here highlighted was that Daniel had “rejoicing devotion and defiance” (against the decree) as he *...gave thanks before his God...* . And the fifth point emphasized, and underlined in Brother Hill’s Bible here concerned Daniel’s “unalterable devotion” in his prayer life that continued on unabated *...as he did aforetime.*

Back to our story of Daniel in DANIEL 6. The presidents and princes get what they wanted when they caught Daniel making prayers and supplications before God, so they went to the king in verse 12, and said: *...Hast thou not signed a decree, that every man that shall ask a petition of any God or man within thirty days, save of thee, O king, shall be cast into the den of lions? The king answered and said, The thing is true, according to the law of the Medes and Persians, which altereth not. 13 Then answered they and said before the king, That Daniel, which is of the children of the captivity of Judah, regardeth not thee, O king, nor the decree that thou hast signed, but maketh his petition three times a day. 14 Then the king, when he heard these words, was sore displeased with himself, and set his heart on Daniel to deliver him: and he laboured till the going down of the sun to deliver him.*

Again it’s obvious that Daniel also had the respect of king Darius, and we see that the king was sore displeased with himself, and wished he could deliver Daniel from the lion’s den. ROMANS 8:28 had not yet been written, but Daniel knew the principles of this verse, *And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose.* It also seems that king Darius also was encouraged of the Lord to believe the very same principles of ROMANS 8:28 as we see in the next verses of DANIEL 6. DANIEL 6:15 *Then these men assembled unto the king, and said unto the king, Know, O king, that the law of the Medes and Persians is, That no decree nor statute which the king establisheth may be changed. 16 Then the king commanded, and they brought Daniel, and cast him into the den of lions. Now the king spake and said unto Daniel, Thy God whom thou servest continually, he will deliver thee. 17 And a stone was brought, and laid upon the mouth of the den; and the king sealed it with his own signet, and with the signet of his lords; that the purpose might not be changed concerning Daniel.*

Two men were being tested that night, Daniel, and king Darius. Daniel no doubt knew the words of JOSHUA 1:9 *Be strong and of a good courage; be not afraid, neither be thou dismayed: for the LORD thy God is with thee whithersoever thou goest.* We do not read of Daniel being afraid as he was cast into the den of lions, nor do we read of Daniel being in the least bit **dismayed** with the test put before him. Daniel had seeing “eyes of faith” to behold the impossible, and knew in his heart that **faith is not being dismayed** as to what one man with faith in God can do. King Darius on the other hand had a restless night as we read in the following verses. DANIEL 6:18 *Then the king*

went to his palace, and passed the night fasting: neither were instruments of musick brought before him: and his sleep went from him. 19 Then the king arose very early in the morning, and went in haste unto the den of lions. 20 And when he came to the den, he cried with a lamentable voice unto Daniel: and the king spake and said to Daniel, O Daniel, servant of the living God, is thy God, whom thou servest continually, able to deliver thee from the lions? Note here that king Darius couldn't eat or sleep that night, nor do we read of him praying either. He had no assurance as to the outcome of Daniel, and came to the lion's den crying with a "lamentable voice." This is the only time we find the word "lamentable" in scripture, and it means to be pained, to grieve, to be mournful, and to be troubled. Perhaps king Darius doubted the words he spoke to Daniel the night before in verse 16 **...Daniel, Thy God whom thou servest continually, he will deliver thee.** God always remains faithful, thus we read in DANIEL 6:21 *Then said Daniel unto the king, O king, live for ever.* 22 **My God hath sent his angel, and hath shut the lions' mouths, that they have not hurt me: forasmuch as before him innocency was found in me; and also before thee, O king, have I done no hurt.** Darius had encouraged Daniel that **...Thy God whom thou servest continually, he will deliver thee,**... and in verse 22 Daniel assures the king that **...My God hath sent his angel, and hath shut the lions' mouths, that they have not hurt me:...** . There was no "lamentable voice" heard from king Darius in the next verse of DANIEL 6:23 *Then was the king exceeding glad for him, and commanded that they should take Daniel up out of the den. So Daniel was taken up out of the den, and no manner of hurt was found upon him, because he believed in his God.* Remember what we have seen in this part of our study, that **faith is not being dismayed** as to what one man with faith in God can do, thus we find no real surprise in reading that **...Daniel was taken up out of the den, and no manner of hurt was found upon him, because he believed in his God.**

Perhaps there are those who suppose that these lions in Daniel's lions den were some how tame, and they were that night in the presence of Daniel for as Daniel noted above **...My God hath sent his angel, and hath shut the lions' mouths, that they have not hurt me.** God had done exceedingly, abundantly, above all that Daniel could ask or think in this lions den, and had made the lions den a sanctuary, a house of God for Daniel. Daniel witnessed the angel of the Lord shutting the lions' mouths, and this angel sent from God was no doubt the pre-incarnate Lord Jesus Christ Himself, the very same One witnessed by Nebuchadnezzar in the furnace with Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego in DANIEL 3:25! As bad a night as king Darius had the night before, Daniel in the lions den had an exceeding great night, a night to remember, in fact a night that we all are now recalling. As for those lions in Daniel's lions den, they really were a hungry bunch as is noted in the next verse of DANIEL 6. DANIEL 6:24 *And the king commanded, and they brought those men which had accused Daniel, and they cast them into the den of lions, them, their children, and their wives; and the lions had the mastery of them, and brake all their bones in pieces or ever they came at the bottom of the den.* These were not tame lions!

King Darius didn't want another sleepless night, and we find that he too turned to the living God in the last verses of DANIEL 6. DANIEL 6:25 *Then king Darius wrote unto all people, nations, and languages, that dwell in all the earth; Peace be multiplied unto you.* 26 *I make a decree, That in every dominion of my kingdom men tremble and fear before the God of Daniel: for he is the living God, and stedfast for ever, and his kingdom that which shall not be destroyed, and his dominion shall be even unto the end.* 27 *He delivereth and rescueth, and he worketh signs and wonders in heaven and in earth, who hath delivered Daniel from the power of the lions.* 28 *So this Daniel prospered in the reign of Darius, and in the reign of Cyrus the Persian.*

Before we move on with our thoughts from HEBREWS 12:1 & 2, let's pause for a moment and notice a few things that all of the Old Testament worthies of faith had in common, even though most of them never even knew each other. First on the list of course is that they all put their faith and trust wholly in the Lord. Secondly they all were given obstacles upon their path in life, and seem to know in their hearts the principles of PSALMS 37:23 *The steps of a good man are ordered by the LORD: and he delighteth in his way.* We just looked at Daniel as he faced a dark night in the

lion's den. Did the Lord keep Daniel from being cast into the lion's den? No. Did the Lord keep Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego from going into the fiery furnace? No. Did the Lord keep Job from losing all his wealth, children, and health? No. Did the Lord keep Noah from the flood that destroyed everyone on the earth? No, the Lord took Noah through the flood. Did the Lord keep Joshua on the east side of the obstacle called the Jordan River? No. Did the Lord keep Moses from facing Pharaoh? No, nine times no. Did Lord keep Moses and the children of Israel from crossing the Red Sea? No. The Red Sea was a big obstacle, but not to the Lord. Did the Lord destroy Rahab and her kindred within her house when He destroyed all of the rest of the inhabitants of Jericho? No, because she had confessed that the Lord is God in heaven above, and in earth beneath, and she believed Him to save her, and her house, and He did! Take the time to study all the worthies of faith found in the Old Testament and see for yourself that each of these overcomers were given by the Lord impossible obstacles to overcome in their lives. That is each faced seemingly impossible events that were the steps ordered by the Lord in their lives. The Lord had a far-reaching purpose in testing each of these Old Testament worthies of faith, and part of that was for their lives to be testimonies to our lives as to what faith and trust in God can accomplish. The Lord took each of the Old Testament overcomers through each of the tests He put on their course of life as obstacles for them to face by faith. **The darkest of times brought forth the hero's of faith.** The third point then that we must pause and take note of is that each of these Old Testament icons of faith walked the path that was ordained for them by the Lord to walk, and when they came to these faith defining tests in their lives, they moved forward by faith, trusting the Lord to take them through their trials, and **were not dismayed with what the Lord could do**, and did do. Thus they all went through their trials and tribulations, and came out the other side an overcomer.

Then there is a fourth common theme found in the Old Testament full overcomers that we need to spend a little more time acknowledging, as it also is a most profound theme that is also found in all that will forever be known as a New Testament worthy of faith also. Our text of HEBREWS 12:1 & 2 specifically addresses the New Testament full overcomer, so we need to pay attention to the common testimony left us by the Old Testament full overcomers. This fourth point of commonality found in all of the Old Testament full overcomers is that **they were thankful unto the Lord.** Let this theme permeate, that is spread through, and penetrate your heart too. All of these Old Testament full overcomers **were thankful unto the Lord** before they ever faced a trial! **They were thankful unto the Lord** while in the trial! And **they were thankful to the Lord** when delivered from the trial! Stated another way, **they thanked the Lord** before they were ever tested; **they thanked the Lord** when being tried; **they thanked the Lord** after being delivered from the test(s)! Before it was ever written they knew 1 THESSALONIANS 5:18 *In every thing give thanks: for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus concerning you.*

As you ponder these thoughts no doubt Job will again come to your mind. Was Job thankful unto the Lord while in his test? Brother Hill noted in his Bible that Job spoke of God 54 times, and referenced himself over 700 times! Job expressed the want to die 13 times, and spoke of death 76 times. Brother Hill also noted that Job never once speaks of life. So how can we state that Job was thankful unto the Lord while in his test? We have 42 chapters left us that reveal the heart of Job, and while in the test, and it was a severe test, Job still expressed in his own way how grateful he still was unto the Lord for taking him down his path of life. Notice how the very first chapter of Job ends after all his children were killed, and all his herds taken from him. JOB 1:20 *Then Job arose, and rent his mantle, and shaved his head, and fell down upon the ground, and worshipped, 21 And said, Naked came I out of my mother's womb, and naked shall I return thither: the LORD gave, and the LORD hath taken away; blessed be the name of the LORD. 22 In all this Job sinned not, nor charged God foolishly. Blessed be the name of the LORD* is a statement of thanksgiving as well as praise. In JOB 2:9 Job's wife even suggested that Job should *...curse God, and die.* Job answered her in a spirit of thanksgiving, saying in JOB 2:10 *...Thou speakest as one of the foolish women speaketh. What? shall we receive good at the hand of God, and shall we not receive evil? In all this did not Job sin with his lips.* Another way Job expressed his thanksgiving unto the Lord is found in

the first part of JOB 13:15 *Though he slay me, yet will I trust in him:...* . Again in JOB 23:10 we find Job in his own way, with his own words expressing how grateful he still was unto the Lord for taking him down his path of life: JOB 23:10 *But he knoweth the way that I take: when he hath tried me, I shall come forth as gold.* We previously noted that this is a statement of faith, but we also need to recognize this as a statement of thankfulness unto the Lord also.

Note again what we just looked at in Daniel's life in DANIEL 6:10 *Now when Daniel knew that the writing was signed, he went into his house; and his windows being open in his chamber toward Jerusalem, he kneeled upon his knees three times a day, and prayed, and gave thanks before his God, as he did aforetime.* He was **thankful unto the Lord**, and he remained **thankful unto the Lord** when cast into the lion's den, and was very much **thankful unto the Lord** when delivered from the lion's den!

Many of these Old Testament worthies of faith, including Job, expressed their thankfulness unto the Lord not only with their lips, but also with their offerings of sacrifice upon their altars unto the Lord where they also offered praise unto the Lord. The Apostle Paul wrote in HEBREWS 13:15 *By him (Jesus) therefore let us offer the sacrifice of praise to God continually, that is, the fruit of our lips giving thanks to his name.* Stated another way, we are to be **thankful unto the Lord** continually. The Old Testament overcomers were **thankful unto the Lord** continually, and the New Testament full overcomers will be also.

We have in our Bible's several examples of New Testament full overcomers, and the most decorated of these is our Apostle Paul. We too can be a New Testament worthy of faith, a full overcomer, if we will just follow Paul's example. Here is what he encouraged us to do: 1 CORINTHIANS 4:16 *Wherefore I beseech you, be ye followers of me.* 1 CORINTHIANS 11:1 *Be ye followers of me, even as I also am of Christ.* PHILIPPIANS 3:17 *Brethren, be followers together of me, and mark them which walk so as ye have us for an ensample.* We are then to follow the steps of faith that made the Old Testament worthies full overcomers, which are the very same steps of faith that Paul followed to have God's best. Paul also wrote this in HEBREWS 13:7 *Remember them which have the rule over you, who have spoken unto you the word of God: whose faith follow, considering the end of their conversation.* That word "conversation" simply means: manner of life. Paul's manner of life as our Apostle was a life lived by faith in our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. Paul was also **thankful unto the Lord** every step of his Christian life as he followed the Lord. We saw this in our lengthy examination of Paul's life in our recent study on the life of Paul.

Paul was in the middle of his second missionary journey before he ever wrote his first epistle. By that time he had faced many tests, and trials, and lived through all of the events of ACTS 1 through 17. ACTS 13 on deals primarily with Paul's life up until his first two years of imprisonment in Rome. Recall in ACTS 16 that Paul and Silas were arrested in Philippi, had many stripes laid upon them, and were cast into the dark inner prison where their feet were chained in the stocks. We then read in ACTS 16:25 what took place at midnight, the darkest time of night, and what was the darkest time of this particular trial. ACTS 16:25 *And at midnight Paul and Silas prayed, and sang praises unto God: and the prisoners heard them. They were thankful unto the Lord while in the midst of their trial!* Again full overcomers are **thankful unto the Lord** continually.

Take special notice here that Paul and Silas **were thankful unto the Lord** while in the midst of their trial, at the "**midnight**" time of their ordeal. By this time in his life Paul had already faced some tremendous **midnight** trials. **Midnight** as we will define it here is the darkest part of the night, and in a metaphorical sense, the time when our test, or our trial appears to have reached it's darkest, and seemingly hopeless point. The word "**midnight**" itself is found fourteen times in the Bible with two basic meanings. One expresses the thought that **midnight** occurs in the middle of the night, and the other expresses the darkness of gloom found at **midnight**. "**Midnight**" can be expressed in literal terms, in figurative terms, and in spiritual terms. The full overcomer will face many "**midnight's**" (darkest of times) in spiritual terms throughout his or her lifetime. All the Old Testament worthies of faith did, and the New Testament worthies of faith will too. The Apostle Paul faced many "**midnight's**" throughout his Christian lifetime. The sweet psalmist of Israel, David wrote in

PSALMS 34:19 *Many are the afflictions of the righteous: but the LORD delivereth him out of them all.* The fact that “midnight” is found fourteen times in scripture also points to DELIVERANCE or SALVATION. Brother Hill used to make a statement like this: “when found in the King’s dungeon, start looking for the King’s wine.” Wine speaks of joy. Jesus first miracle was changing ordinary water into wine at a wedding, thus bringing exceeding joy to everyone that was at that wedding. Yet for Paul and Silas being beaten, and cast into this foreign prison with their feet held fast in the stocks doesn’t seem like a joyous occasion does it? Nevertheless Paul and Silas were **thankful unto the Lord** while in the midst of their trial, at the “midnight” time of their ordeal, and expressed their joy in the Lord by praying, and singing praises unto God expecting Him to deliver them out of this darkest “midnight” time of testing, and He did! During the process of delivering them God allowed Paul to establish the roots of the Philippian church, to whom he later wrote from another prison the joy book of the Bible, PHILIPPIANS. This dark **midnight** moment even reaches down to you and me, for we have left for us to study the letter written to those established at the church of Philippi, the PHILLIPIANS epistle, where we read in PHILIPPIANS 1:29 *For unto you it is given in the behalf of Christ, not only to believe on him, but also to suffer for his sake.* PHILIPPIANS 3:17 *Brethren, be followers together of me, and mark them which walk so as ye have us for an ensample.* PHILIPPIANS 4:4 *Rejoice in the Lord always: and again I say, Rejoice.* 5 *Let your moderation be known unto all men. The Lord is at hand.* 6 *Be careful for nothing; but in every thing by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God.* 7 *And the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus.*

During the time frame of ACTS 18 Paul wrote his first epistle, a letter to the church of the Thessalonians. Paul encouraged the Thessalonians to continually be looking for the Lord’s soon coming, and also he wrote in 1 THESSALONIANS 5:18 *In every thing give thanks: for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus concerning you.* This is the pattern, the manner of life, which we as potential full overcomers are to follow as we follow Paul as he followed Christ. As we noted above this was the examples left us of the Old Testament worthies of faith who did the very same thing. 1 THESSALONIANS 5:18 *In every thing give thanks: for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus concerning you.* Two verse prior to 1 THESSALONIANS 5:18 Paul wrote one of the two 2 word verses found in scripture: 1 THESSALONIANS 5:16 *Rejoice evermore.* Paul and Silas in ACTS 16:25 had demonstrated the facts now written in 1 THESSALONIANS 5:16 *Rejoice evermore*, and in 1 THESSALONIANS 5:18 *In every thing give thanks: for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus concerning you.*

REVELATION 4:11 tells of the eternal heart felt cry of praise of the full overcomers: *Thou art worthy, O Lord, to receive glory and honour and power: for thou hast created all things, and for thy pleasure they are and were created.* All things means all things even the midnight tests and trials we face here on earth.

Let’s be full overcomers, and have **God’s best.** 1 THESSALONIANS 5:18 *In every thing give thanks: for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus concerning you.*

1 THESSALONIANS 5:16 *Rejoice evermore.*

When we began this study on the importance of HEBREWS 12:1 & 2, which is one eighty word sentence in our King James Bible, we noted that these eighty words are to us just as important as the ninety-nine word sentence that the Lord Jesus spoke to Saul of Tarsus on the road to Damascus back in ACTS 26:16-18. A lifetime of information, and instruction to Saul of Tarsus is found in that one sentence of ACTS 26:16-18. Those words took Saul of Tarsus, the chiefest of sinners, and made him the Apostle Paul, the chiefest Apostle unto the Gentiles. Those ninety-nine words that the Lord Jesus spoke to Saul of Tarsus on the road to Damascus were etched in his mind until the day he died. Again the whole of ACTS 26:16-18 reads: *But rise, and stand upon thy feet: for I have appeared unto thee for this purpose, to make thee a minister and a witness both of these things which thou hast seen, and of those things in the which I will appear unto thee; 17 Delivering*

*thee from the people, and from the Gentiles, unto whom now I send thee, 18 To open their eyes, and to turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins, and inheritance among them which are sanctified by faith that is in me.* It took Paul twenty plus years before he was able to share the content of these words, mainly because there was so much information contained in this ninety-nine-word sentence that it took years for Paul to fully assimilate them, and a lifetime to fulfill these instructions. Those ninety-nine words carried Paul through all kinds of tests, and trials as an example to **us** as to what a racecourse runner may face on the race that is set before **us**. The content of HEBREWS 12:1 & 2 are the Holy Ghost inspired words the Lord gave **us** as instructions, and encouragements of how to be a New Testament grand prize race course winner; a New Testament icon of faith that will forever be known as ...*the bride, the Lamb's wife...* REVELATION 21:9. So **we** must note that eighty word sentence of HEBREWS 12:1 & 2 must register in **our** hearts as being our life time pursuit, and it will be the common theme in all who will be found in that bridal company! The eighty words of HEBREWS 12:1 & 2 states: *Wherefore seeing we also are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset us, and let us run with patience the race that is set before us, 2 Looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith; who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God.*

So far in this study we have spent much time going over the importance of just the first two words in this eighty-word sentence, and now we get to the third word “**we**.” The “**we**” found here is also the “**us**” found four times in verse 1, and the “**our**” found once in verse 2. “**We**” speaks of you, and me here, potential New Testament full overcomers! The word “**we**” then addresses “**us**” who follow Paul’s gospel message. Let’s read the sentence that comes just before our eighty words of HEBREWS 12:1 & 2, along with our text, and make the connection that the Lord wants **us** to make. HEBREWS 11:39 & 40 is the concluding remarks concerning the Old Testament worthies of faith. HEBREWS 11:39 *And these all, having obtained a good report through faith, received not the promise: 40 God having provided some better thing for us, that they without us should not be made perfect. 12:1 Wherefore seeing we also are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset us, and let us run with patience the race that is set before us, 2 Looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith; who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God.* First note that the words “**we**,” “**us**,” and “**our**” are found eight times in these verses, which is a subtle reminder to “**us**” that eight is a number which is also associated with the BRIDE of Christ. The Old Testament full overcomers will not be a completed company in heaven without “**us**” New Testament full overcomers is what is being said here.

Let’s make sure we see the distinction between the Old Testament full overcomers, and the New Testament full overcomers. The Old Testament full overcomers lived in the ages prior to **our** present church age. HEBREWS 11:39 tells that ...*these all, having obtained a good report through faith, received not the promise.* They all looked forward to a promised Messiah, but the majority of them live many years before Christ’s first advent. HEBREWS 11:13 further tells **us** that: *These all died in faith, not having received the promises, but having seen them afar off, and were persuaded of them, and embraced them, and confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth.*

HEBREWS 11:40 addresses the New Testament full overcomers and notes two things: (1) *God having provided some better thing for us,* and (2) *that they* (the Old Testament full overcomers) *without us should not be made perfect.* Think about it, what was the better thing offered to **us** of New Testament church age times? Jesus answered part of this question in LUKE 24:49 *And, behold, I send the promise of my Father upon you: but tarry ye in the city of Jerusalem, until ye be endued with power from on high.* The promise Jesus spoke of here was the promise of the Holy Ghost, whom Jesus had previously told His disciples was going to be sent to them of the Father as another Comforter, for the purpose of teaching **us** all things, and to bring all things to **our** remembrance that Jesus spoke, and to guide **us** into all truth, and show **us** things to come. {Study JOHN 14:16 & 17;

26, and 16:12-15.} The promised Holy Ghost was sent on the day of Pentecost in ACTS 2. The Old Testament worthies of faith were not given the gift of the Holy Ghost, as were the New Testament Saints in this church age on the day of Pentecost. The Holy Ghost was just the start of the better thing offered us New Testament Saints that the Old Testament worthies of faith didn't have offered them in total.

This statement requires a little explanation. We know that *...All scripture is given by inspiration of God...* as is recorded in 2 TIMOTHY 3:16, and the agency of the God-head that inspired holy scripture is the Holy Ghost. Further we read in 2 PETER 1:21 *For the prophecy came not in old time by the will of man: but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost.* So we see that the Holy Ghost at times came upon holy men of God in Old Testament times, whose record we have left for us in the Old Testament. And HEBREWS 11 highlights some of the incredible things that the Old Testament worthies of faith accomplished by faith, but the promised Holy Ghost wasn't yet sent unto the believers until the day of Pentecost in ACTS 2. Jesus made the distinction very clear in JOHN 14:17 telling His disciples that the Holy Ghost *...Even the Spirit of truth; whom the world cannot receive, because it seeth him not, neither knoweth him: but ye know him; for he dwelleth with you, and shall be in you.* We just noted that the Holy Ghost dwelt with the Old Testament worthies of faith too, but the Holy Ghost wasn't give to dwell in believers until the day of Pentecost, and then He the Holy Ghost was given only to the believers who would receive Him as a distinct separate gift sent from God, whose sign and evidence was speaking in other tongues as noted in ACTS 2:4, ACTS 10:46, and ACTS 19:6. Again we note what is said in 2 PETER 1:21 *For the prophecy came not in old time by the will of man: but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost.* Two of the last from Old Testament times are the parents of John the Baptist, Zacharias and Elisabeth, both of whom we read were "filled with the Holy Ghost," (study LUKE 1:41, and 1:67). They were "filled with the Holy Ghost" for the purpose of speaking prophecy concerning the imminent soon coming of the Lord Jesus Christ, who Himself was not yet manifest, but was at that time still in the womb of Mary His mother. Read and study these prophecies and see how Zacharias and Elisabeth also *...spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost.*

Back to our earlier statement that the Holy Ghost was just the start of the better thing offered us New Testament Saints that the Old Testament worthies of faith didn't have offered them in total. Simply stated the New Testament full overcomer will be found full of faith, and the Holy Ghost. There is one additional better thing that distinguishes the New Testament full overcomer from the Old Testament full overcomer. The second better thing for us in this church age that the Old Testament worthies of faith didn't have was the unique opportunity that our Apostle Paul was given to teach unto us of this church age. The gold mine of Paul's gospel message is the mystery of the Bride of Christ. The Old Testament worthies of faith were not offered the opportunity to be in the Bride of Christ. ROMANS 7:4 explains this point: *Wherefore, my brethren, ye also are become dead to the law by the body of Christ; that ye should be married to another, even to him who is raised from the dead, that we should bring forth fruit unto God.* The Old Testament worthies of faith looked forward to the birth of Christ, and His first coming. Jesus Christ is the New Testament, whose blood was *...shed for many for the remission of sins...* MATTHEW 26:28. Jesus Christ died and rose again is New Testament doctrine. There is no way the Old Testament full overcomer ever looked forward to being married to Him who was raised from the dead, for again the Old Testament worthies of faith looked forward to the birth of Christ, and His first coming. The New Testament worthies of faith look forward to the second coming of Christ, and have within them the hope *...that ye should be married to another, even to him who is raised from the dead, that we should bring forth fruit unto God.*

There are qualifications for being in the Bride of Christ, for not all believers will qualify to be in this unique company of being married to Christ. Very few churches today teach this because they do not fully know Paul's doctrine. REVELATION 19:7 plainly tells us New Testament church age Saints that "His wife prepared herself," which is how the Greek literal translation reads. How does the Bride of Christ become the bride of Christ? By being saved only. No! Being saved is only

the first qualification for being in the bride of Christ. Thus potentially all Christians from this church age can be in the bride of Christ, but all won't be because they all do not want to get ready. The second qualification for being in the bride of Christ is being filled with the Holy Ghost. The evidence of being filled is speaking with other tongues: {study ACTS 2:1-11; 10:44-46; and 19:1-6}. Once a Christian is filled with the Holy Ghost he or she can then enter into all of the truth as JOHN 16:13 tells us: *Howbeit when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth.* We must also note that all who are filled with the Holy Ghost do not allow the Holy Ghost to reveal all truth to them. Furthermore all who are filled with the Holy Ghost will not be in the bride of Christ, for not all seek His best. The third qualification for being in the Bride of Christ is to “love his (Christ's) appearing” as noted in 2 TIMOTHY 4:8. In other words they see His mighty hand in everything that comes their way, and in that they love His appearing. Finally, to be in the bride of Christ one must be a full overcomer.

Brother Copley noted there must be spiritual growth in a Christian in order for him or her to qualify as a full overcomer, and in order to achieve spiritual growth one must be filled, and full of the Holy Ghost. The Bride of Christ is not the whole church, but a rib portion taken out of the sleeping church! The rib portion you may note is the closest to His heart! We have a picture of this in the story of Adam and Eve. GENESIS 2:21 & 22 records: *And the LORD God caused a deep sleep to fall upon Adam, and he slept: and he took one of his ribs, and closed up the flesh instead thereof; 22 And the rib, which the LORD God had taken from man, made he a woman, and brought her unto the man.* Eve was her name, and she became Adam's wife. Paul teaches in 1 CORINTHIANS 15:45 *The first man Adam was made a living soul; the last Adam was made a quickening spirit.* The last Adam is a reference to Christ. ROMANS 5:14 further tells that Adam *...is the figure of him that was to come.* “Him that was to come” references Christ. Furthermore Paul writes in 1 CORINTHIANS 15:22 & 23 *For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive. 23 But every man in his own order: Christ the firstfruits; afterward they that are Christ's at his coming.* Thus it remains a mystery to the majority of Christians that only a very small rib portion from the church will be in that company of Saints known as the bride of Christ. During this mysterious church age in which we are still living, the church, the collective body of Christ, (EPHESIANS 5:30 *For we are members of his body, of his flesh, and of his bones...*); this body of believers called the church, like Adam in GENESIS 2, has fallen into a deep sleep, yet a rib portion remains awake, and is being built into that choice company of tried Saints that will forever be known as the Lamb's wife, the bride of Christ!! This actually is the “great mystery” Paul speaks about in EPHESIANS 5:30-33, noting in verse 32 *This is a great mystery: but I speak concerning Christ and the church.* To bridal Saints Paul writes in 1 THESSALONIANS 5:6 *Therefore let us not sleep, as do others; but let us watch and be sober.* This is written to Christians of this church age. Sinners are dead in trespasses and sins according to EPHESIANS 2:1, and thus are not asleep. The bridal Saints are watching for Christ's soon appearing, and know the facts of another mystery revealed unto the Apostle Paul, that being the mystery of final change, also called the exit mystery, talked about in 1 CORINTHIANS 15:51 *Behold, I shew you a mystery; We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed, 52 In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump: for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed.*

The Bride of Christ thus will be composed of the company of full overcomers from this church age, which means the New Testament full overcomer is offered a position not offered unto the Old Testament worthies of faith. Sister Bodie notes: “Christ must have a bride like unto Himself, a companion, fit for Him, not an infant, nor a child, but a mature woman full-grown in every respect, able to enter into the fullest sympathy and understanding with all His desires and plans. The whole church has been betrothed; but they will not all qualify as the chaste virgin, who shall be presented. ....The young woman who is engaged must be proven and tried; she must measure up to the standard -- CHRIST, who is set before her, and thus grow up into His likeness. She must have His nature fully developed and manifested in her. And this is only possible as she holds her head (CHRIST), she the conscious weaker vessel, absolutely dependent upon Him, ...strengthened,

energized and harmonized by His abundant life of which she is a partaker.” (End of quoting Sister Bodie.)

As we discuss the distinction between the Old Testament full overcomers, and the New Testament full overcomers, and ...*that they* (the Old Testament full overcomers) *without us should not be made perfect...* (HEBREWS 11:40), let's see in scripture how the Old Testament full overcomers will be a completed company in heaven with “us” the potential New Testament full overcomers. We see this in several places in REVELATION. We will get to REVELATION 4 here in a minute, but before we do consider this: where would you expect to find the Old Testament worthies of faith in their place in heaven? Recall they were the ones who in Old Testament times drew the closest to the Lord, and wholly put their faith, and confidence, and trust in Him. Don't you suppose that God wanted those who so much pleased Him, like Enoch whom He translated, to continue having this close fellowship with Him in heaven? The answer is of course yes, so then naturally we would expect the Old Testament worthies of faith to be found right there around the very throne of God. And that is exactly where we find them in REVELATION 4. In REVELATION 4:1 we start to see ...*things which must be hereafter*. So let's ask ...*things which must be hereafter...* what? *Things which must be hereafter...* this present church age. And John the revelator is then caught up into the very throne room of God. He sees quite a scene, which you can further study out for your self. Recall from HEBREWS 1:3 that Jesus is sitting at the right hand of the Majesty on high, and John is now viewing this scene, and the brightness of His glory! Note what John sees in REVELATION 4:4 *And round about the throne were four and twenty thrones: and upon the thrones I saw four and twenty elders sitting, arrayed in white garments; and on their heads crowns of gold.* This group called the four and twenty elders is the first group of Saints that John sees round about the throne of the Majesty in the heavens. The four and twenty elders are the Old Testament worthies of faith found mentioned in HEBREWS 11. The four and twenty elders are from that first resurrection group which appeared unto many back in MATTHEW 27:52 & 53, which reads: *And the graves were opened; and many bodies of the saints which slept arose, 53 And came out of the graves after his resurrection, and went into the holy city, and appeared unto many.* Pilate's letter unto Caesar stated this told him by lieutenant Ben Isham about the scene surrounding the sepulcher of Jesus on the early morning of His resurrection: “...behold the whole place was lighted up, and there seemed to be crowds of the dead in their grave clothes. All seemed to be shouting and filled with ecstasy, while all around and about was the most beautiful music he had ever heard, and the place seemed to be full of voices praising God.” EPHESIANS 4:8 tells us ...*When he ascended up on high, he led captivity captive,*... and that is when many, not all, of the Old Testament dead Saints arose and went into Jerusalem and appeared unto many. The word “elder” depicts one who is mature in age and in wisdom, as well as one who is senior by reason of chronological time of birth. Those senior by reason of chronological time of birth to “us” of this church age are the Old Testament full overcomers, called “elders” twelve times in REVELATION. Twelve is the number that points to DIVINE GOVERNMENTAL PERFECTION. Now this next point is very important for all of us to make special note of. Where do we find the Old Testament worthies of faith in their place in heaven? The answer is found in our text of REVELATION 4:4 ...round about the throne... exactly where we suspected to find them in our above discussion. Further more also note that not only were they ...round about the throne... but they were sitting upon four and twenty seats, or thrones themselves! So we find the Old Testament worthies of faith sitting round about the throne of God upon four and twenty thrones themselves! Who sits upon thrones? Rulers.

Moving on further in REVELATION 4 we find a second distinct group of Saints that John viewed, whom John described as the original Greek puts it “living creatures,” of whom he sees four. We read in the last part of REVELATION 4:6 ...*and in the midst of the throne, and round about the throne, four living creatures full of eyes before and behind.* It seems as if when John looked real close at this throne of the Majesty in the heavens he noticed something that he didn't see earlier, and that was this group of Saints called the four living creatures, who were in the midst of the throne, that is right in the middle of the throne, obviously closest to Jesus. This group of rib portion Saints

called the four living creatures is indeed the New Testament worthies of faith, who are also known as the bride of Christ. We would expect to see Christ's bride sitting next to Himself, and here in REVELATION 4:6 that is exactly where we find her next to Him *...in the midst of the throne*. Never do we find the Old Testament elders *...in the midst of the throne*, for they are always found round about the throne of God.

In REVELATION 4:7 we read some of her qualities and find how she, the bride of Christ, is "fashioned like unto His glorious body," a fact that is noted in PHILIPPIANS 3:21. These four living creatures are types like Christ Himself in other words. REVELATION 4:7 *And the first creature was like a lion, and the second creature like a calf, and the third creature had a face as of a man, and the fourth creature was like a flying eagle*. Thus each of these four living creatures represents a side of Jesus Christ also. These four qualities are also expressed in the four gospel records of the New Testament.

The gospel of MATTHEW portrays Christ as the King, and we know that Jesus is the King of kings, and Lord of lords. The lion figures the kings of beasts. The lion is also a defender. Paul wrote in PHILIPPIANS 1:7 & 17 of being *...set for the defence of the gospel*. PROVERBS 28:1 also tells us *...the righteous are bold as a lion*.

The gospel record of MARK paints a picture of Jesus as the perfect servant, figured in REVELATION 4:7 as the faith ox, which is the king of the domestic beasts. The ox also signifies the perfect sacrifice, which Jesus became for our sins. 1 CORINTHIANS 5:7 states, in part: *For even Christ our passover is sacrificed for us:...* . To the potential full overcomer Paul writes in ROMANS 12:1 *I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service*.

The gospel of LUKE notes many things about Christ the man, who left the lofty heights of heaven, and took those perfect seven steps down found in PHILIPPIANS 2 that took Him to the cross to be the perfect sacrifice for sinful man. PHILIPPIANS 2:5 *Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus: 6 Who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God: 7 But made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men: 8 And being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross*. The kingly character of a man is found in GENESIS 1:26, where we find that man was given *...dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth*.

The fourth gospel record is the gospel according to JOHN, figured by the flying eagle in REVELATION 4:7 above. The flying eagle is the king of birds. Christ's quality's figured by the flying eagle shows that He is the eternal, ageless, heavenly One. The flying eagle soars free from the pull of the world, can't be held down, and seeks those things that are above. Such too are qualities of a full overcomer. COLOSSIANS 3:1 reads: *If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God*. EPHESIANS 1:21 *...Far above all principality, and power, and might, and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world, but also in that which is to come:...* . The flying eagle is at liberty, and ROMANS 8:21 tells of *...the glorious liberty of the children of God*.

So we see that the New Testament full overcomers, who are also known as the bride of Christ, the Lamb's wife, have His qualities worked into her life as noted in REVELATION 4:7 *And the first creature was like a lion, and the second creature like a calf, and the third creature had a face as of a man, and the fourth creature was like a flying eagle*. The "four living creatures" are indeed the New Testament full overcomers that John saw in REVELATION 4:6-8, and as you read through the book of REVELATION you will notice that the "four living creatures" (the New Testament full overcomers), and the four and twenty elders (the Old Testament full overcomers) are frequently mentioned together engaged in some form of worship round about the throne of the Majesty in the heavens. Worship of the Lord was the chief engagement of these very same full overcomers while here on earth, thus we would expect them to be the most familiar with this kind of

activity when they get to heaven. The full overcomers of this church age will be the ones who have spent so much time at the throne of grace while here on earth, that they will fit right in being the closest to Jesus and His throne when seen in heaven, and now here in REVELATION 4 that is exactly where we find them, closest to Jesus and His throne with the throne of the Majesty in the heavens. This is exactly where the Apostle Paul encouraged us to go in HEBREWS 4:16 *Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need.*

Having now said all of this, let's read REVELATION 4:8-11 from the Authorized Version: *And the four living creatures, having each one of them six wings, are full of eyes round about and within: and they have no rest day and night, saying, Holy, holy, holy, is the Lord God, the Almighty, who was and who is and who is to come. 9 And when the living creatures shall give glory and honor and thanks to him that sitteth on the throne, to him that liveth for ever and ever, 10 the four and twenty elders shall fall down before him that sitteth on the throne, and shall worship him that liveth for ever and ever, and cast their crowns before the throne, saying, 11 Worthy art thou, our Lord and our God, to receive the glory and the honor and the power: for thou didst create all things, and because of thy will they were, and were created.* Note in verse 9 that it is the living creatures, (which we have noted are the New Testament full overcomers, also known as the bride of Christ), are noted here to be the leaders of worship giving *...glory and honor and thanks to him that sitteth on the throne, to him that liveth for ever and ever.* These living creatures are found in verse 6 to be *...in the midst of the throne.* Then in verse 10 we see the Old Testament full overcomers, called *...the four and twenty elders...* removing themselves off of their thrones, and falling *...down before him that sitteth on the throne...* and joining in with the four living creatures as they, the Old Testament full overcomers, also *...worship him that liveth for ever and ever, and cast their crowns before the throne...* and then the four and twenty elders in their worship say something, which is found in verse 11, *...Worthy art thou, our Lord and our God, to receive the glory and the honor and the power: for thou didst create all things, and because of thy will they were, and were created.* In verse 9 the four living creatures give *...glory and honor and thanks to him that sitteth on the throne...* and thus display their thankful and joy filled hearts. In verse 11 the four and twenty elders echo in worshipful praise that the Lord was worthy *...to receive the glory and the honor and the power...* and they displayed their thankful and joy filled hearts by casting their crowns before the throne of God in worship. As you study this portion of scripture note also that *...the four and twenty elders... cast their crowns before the throne...* {see REVELATION 4:10}, the four living creatures do not. REVELATION 4:4 points out that *...the four and twenty elders... crowns are ...crowns of gold...* not royalty crowns that a queen would wear. The joint-heir queen with Christ keeps her royal crown on!

Another feature of distinction between *...the four and twenty elders...* and the bride of Christ is in their wardrobe. In REVELATION 4:4 we find *...the four and twenty elders... clothed in white raiment...* . REVELATION 19:8 tells the clothing of the bride of Christ: *And to her was granted that she should be arrayed in fine linen, clean and white: for the fine linen is the righteousness of saints.* On the surface it appears that she is clothed in white raiment also, but there is a difference of meanings in the original Greek words translated "white" here. The "white" in REVELATION 4:4 is the Greek word leukos, number 3022 in The Strong's Greek Concordance, which is a bright brilliant shining white. This is the garment of *...the four and twenty elders.* The "white" *...fine linen, clean and white...* worn by the bride of Christ found in REVELATION 19:8 is the Greek word lampros, number 2986 in The Strong's Greek Concordance, which is brilliant, clear, transparent, bright, magnificent, splendid color of white. The literal Greek translation of REVELATION 19:8 reads: "And it was given to her that she be clothed (with) fine linen, clean and bright; for the fine linen is the righteousness of the saints." This same Greek word lampros is used by Jesus in REVELATION 22:16 where He says: *I Jesus have sent mine angel to testify unto you these things in the churches. I am the root and the offspring of David, and the bright and morning star.* 1 JOHN 3:2 *Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when he shall*

*appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is.* The clothing of the bride of Christ is distinct.

On your own take the time to study again the scriptures referenced in this part of our lesson from REVELATION 4 and 5 and 19, and see for yourself the distinctions between the Old Testament full overcomers that are pictured in scripture by the “four and twenty elders,” and the New Testament full overcomers who are called the “four living creatures,” or “four beasts” in our King James version.

Again HEBREWS 11:39 & 40 is written to encourage those of this church age to become the New Testament worthies of faith, and states this concerning those full overcomers of Old Testament times: *39 And these all, having obtained a good report through faith, received not the promise: 40 God having provided some better thing for us, that they without us should not be made perfect {complete or fully fulfilled}*. In REVELATION 4:8-11 we see the Old Testament full overcomers now made complete being now found with the New Testament full overcomers a harmonious group of full overcomers. Furthermore these two distinct groups now completing the full overcomers in heaven are the first Saints mentioned at the beginning of the millennial age, and they are surrounding the throne of the Majesty in the heavens, but the throne of grace first became their favorite “hangout” (if you will) while here on earth, for the throne of grace was exactly where they found mercy, and the grace to help in time of need as is recorded in HEBREWS 4:16 that we read above: HEBREWS 4:16 *Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need.* As you study further about the Old Testament full overcomers pictured by the “four and twenty elders,” and the New Testament full overcomers called the “four living creatures” in REVELATION note another thing they have in common as this fully completed, or perfected group; these full overcomers are found as the leaders of worship in heaven. Again they were also found as leaders of worship while here on earth too.

One more point concerning these two complementary groups of full overcomers that they have in common is found in REVELATION 5:9, which reads: *And they sung a new song, saying, Thou art worthy to take the book, and to open the seals thereof: for thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God by thy blood out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation.* Here we find our full overcomers united in worship singing a new song worshipping Christ as the redeemer. In REVELATION 4:11 they worshipped Him as the creator. The point that I want to draw to your attention here in REVELATION 5:9 is that they were redeemed to God by the blood of Jesus Christ *...out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation.* Every **kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation** means that these full overcomers came from all over the world, out of every nation came some, and from every language came some, and from every race of people came some, and from every class of people came some. If you think about it, our position in life whether it be rich, or poor, young or old, fat or skinny, educated or uneducated, handicapped or not, the color of our skin, none of this prevents any of us from having God’s best. Those who end up in the rank of full overcomer do so because of one common thing; their focus was on things above, far beyond the trials and tests of life here on earth, and they all lived by faith. The Apostle Paul teaches in ROMANS 10:17 *So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.* All of the full overcomers whether from Old Testament times or from the New Testament church age heard the word of God and believed Him. Grant it not all of the Old Testament worthies of faith had the written word of God to study, but they all some where along their course in life heard the word of the Lord, received the word of the Lord, and believed the word of God. In the case of Abraham we read in GENESIS 15:1 *After these things the word of the LORD came unto Abram in a vision, saying, Fear not, Abram: I am thy shield, and thy exceeding great reward.* Here we see the word of the Lord came unto Abram in a vision, but the fact remains that *...faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.* Abraham didn’t have a Bible, neither did those before him like Enoch, Noah, and Abel, nevertheless they all heard the word of the Lord, and they all lived by faith. Again we repeat that those who end up in the rank of full overcomer do so because of one common thing; their focus was on things above, far beyond the trials and tests of life here on earth, and they all lived

by faith. It is not possible for us to know the heart of anybody, including our own self. Thus all we can do is run our own race focused on having God's best, that is if we want to be a full overcomer. We find here in REVELATION 5:9 that this collective group of full overcomers in heaven came from **...every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation...** from all over the world, from the time of Abel until Christ's soon coming! The heart examiner, who is Jesus Christ Himself, knew their hearts, knew who lived their lives by faith, and knew who walked with God, and was a focused upon having God's best. The Lord knew where they lived, when they lived, what language they spoke, every hair on their head, every thought of their heart, and how they would receive the word of the Lord irregardless of how it was presented unto them. Elijah in 1 KINGS 19 thought he was the only one left who sought after the Lord, but what Elijah didn't realize was that there were seven thousand others just like him in Israel who were serving the Lord. Elijah didn't know this, but the Lord did.

Another example of every **kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation** is found in MATTHEW 2. MATTHEW 2:1 *Now when Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judaea in the days of Herod the king, behold, there came wise men from the east to Jerusalem, 2 Saying, Where is he that is born King of the Jews? for we have seen his star in the east, and are come to worship him.* Where did these wise men come from? They came from the east, far enough east that it took the better part of two years to get to Jerusalem from the east where they came from. What was the nationality of these wise men? We are not told this in scripture, but they were not from around Jerusalem, so they must have been from some other **kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation**. Read on in MATTHEW 2 and see that after they visited Herod the king we read starting in verse 9: *When they had heard the king, they departed; and, lo, the star, which they saw in the east, went before them, till it came and stood over where the young child was. 10 When they saw the star, they rejoiced with exceeding great joy. 11 And when they were come into the house, they saw the young child with Mary his mother, and fell down, and worshipped him: and when they had opened their treasures, they presented unto him gifts; gold, and frankincense, and myrrh.* Note that Jesus was then a young child, not a babe when they finally found Him. And they came to worship Him. They obviously were believers from afar, from some other **kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation**. Their gifts were gold, and frankincense, and myrrh. Gold was a gift for a royal king; frankincense a gift for a priest, and myrrh a gift for a prophet. These gifts symbolically show that these wise men knew that Jesus was special. Did these wise men know that Jesus was King of Kings; did these wise men know that Jesus was the great High Priest (HEBREWS 4:14); did these wise men know that Jesus was the Prophet of Nazareth of Galilee (MATTHEW 21:11)? It is possible that these wise men from some other **kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation** had revealed unto them by God these truths. In the very least it was shown unto them that Jesus was King of the Jews, (MATTHEW 2:2). And we find in MATTHEW 2:12 that they also listened unto the voice of God: *And being warned of God in a dream that they should not return to Herod, they departed into their own country another way.* One thing we learn from the story of the wise men in MATTHEW 2 is that there are people from every **kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation** who love the Lord of whom we know nothing about. The Lord knows their hearts, and also knows who among them are full overcomers. The wise men from the east had two years to change their mind and cease from following the star of the Lord, the star of the King of the Jews, who just also happens to be the King of Kings, and Lord of Lords, but they continued on their course until they found him, overcoming all obstacles until they did. And it is obvious from MATTHEW 2:12 they followed the voice of God.

I'll take it one step further to illustrate a point. In 1880 Helen Keller was left deaf and blind probably from scarlet fever at the age of nineteen months. In 1886 The Perkins Institute for the Blind in Boston provided Helen Keller with a teacher named Anne Sullivan, who in time found a way to communicate with Helen Keller. By the time Helen Keller was 16, Anne Sullivan had been able to teach her well enough that she passed the entrance exam to Radcliffe College. Back when she was nine years old a minister told her about God. When he did, Helen smiled real big and communicated back to him these words: "I always knew He was there, I just didn't know His name." In those years of darkness, without knowing human communication, Helen knew she wasn't alone. She felt God's

love. And when later told about Christ, she knew it was Him who was living in her heart! God didn't just leave her in utter isolation in her dark, and silent world, lost with no lines of communication for seven years. No, He brought her to this place to reveal Himself unto her in a way only she could understand! She couldn't talk to anybody. She couldn't see anybody. She couldn't hear any body. She couldn't yet communicate with anyone. But God communicated to her, and with her. Helen Keller later wrote: "The best and most beautiful things in the world cannot be seen or even touched. They must be felt with the heart." God touched her heart. Her own testimony was that she felt God's love; that she knew she wasn't alone. Can I reason in my own mind how this was possible with Helen Keller? No. Can I explain how when missionaries first came to a group of natives, who had never even seen people outside their tribe, how it was they already knew Jesus as their Saviour? No. Can I explain how a person with no education, and no reading ability, after praying to God can read a Bible, but can read nothing else? No, and I have heard two different examples of this happening. There are a lot of things I cannot explain, but there is one thing I too can do, ...*Be not afraid, only believe...* MARK 5:36! MARK 10:27 tells us in part ...*for with God all things are possible*. The bottom line of this portion of our study is that we do not know all who will be full overcomers, but we have just pointed out that Christ through the power of the Holy Ghost has revealed Himself unto those whom we may have thought unreachable. And with God to whom all things are possible we must acknowledge that there are those from ...*every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation...* who have been revealed the truth preached in Paul's gospel of having God's best. The thing that we should learn from all of this is that there is no way we, in our tiny little world that we live in, can possibly know very many that will qualify to be in the rib portion bridal company of Saints that will compose the full overcomers from this church age. If we focus on such things as who are those from ...*every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation...* then our attention is not on Him, Christ our redeemer, who those full overcomers from ...*every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation...* worship in REVELATION 5:9. Rest assured that the heart examiner, who sent to us of this church age the Holy Ghost on the day of Pentecost to help us become prize winning racecourse runners, He knows who the full overcomers are, and they come from ...*every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation*. We here and now have the opportunity to join this rib portion group in worship in heaven, but we can only do so by following Paul as he followed Christ, and ...*press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus...* PHILIPPIANS 3:14.

Let's read again our study text starting in HEBREWS 11:39 *And these all, having obtained a good report through faith, received not the promise: 40 God having provided some better thing for us, that they without us should not be made perfect {complete or fully fulfilled}. 12:1 Wherefore seeing we also are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset us, and let us run with patience the race that is set before us, 2 Looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith; who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God.* In the above discussion we have pointed out some distinct differences between the Old Testament full overcomers, and the New Testament full overcomers. These differences can be summed up as follows: (1) the Old Testament worthies of faith were not given the gift of the Holy Ghost like the New Testament full overcomers have been given. 2 PETER 1:21 explains: *For the prophecy came not in old time by the will of man: but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost.* Thus we see there were some from Old Testament times upon whom the Holy Ghost moved upon to give prophecy. Jesus told His disciples in JOHN 17:14 the following concerning the Holy Ghost ...*Even the Spirit of truth; whom the world cannot receive, because it seeth him not, neither knoweth him: but ye know him; for he dwelleth with you, and shall be in you.* We just noted that the Holy Ghost dwelt with the Old Testament worthies of faith too, but the Holy Ghost wasn't give to dwell in believers until the day of Pentecost, and then He the Holy Ghost was given only to the believers who would receive Him as a distinct separate gift sent from God, whose sign and evidence was speaking in other tongues as noted in ACTS 2:4, ACTS 10:46, and ACTS 19:6. (2) The New Testament

worthies of faith are given a gospel message that wasn't revealed until the Apostle Paul came upon the scene. Paul's gospel message that the New Testament full overcomers receive is that Jesus Christ, the Lamb of God, will have a wife taken out of this church age. The Old Testament worthies of faith didn't have this opportunity to be in the bride of Christ, *God having provided some better thing for us, that they without us should not be made perfect* {complete or fully fulfilled}... HEBREWS 11:40. Again note what HEBREWS 11:39 says: *And these all, having obtained a good report through faith, received not the promise.* HEBREWS 11:13 further tells us that: *These all died in faith, not having received the promises, but having seen them afar off, and were persuaded of them, and embraced them, and confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth.* Simply put, the Old Testament worthies of faith had a heavenly focus too, and seen in the distant future beyond their lifetime the day when the kingdom of the Lord Jesus Christ eternal, immortal, invisible, would be established forever, and He the only Potentate, the King of Kings, and Lord of Lords would reign forever! This subject is a whole other Bible study in itself, but what the Old Testament full overcomers didn't see is he Lord Jesus Christ having a queen, His queen, the Lamb's wife, will rule and reign with Him as a joint-heir with Christ, a fact only taught in Paul's gospel. {Study ROMANS 8:17, EPHESIANS 3:6; and 2 TIMOTHY 2:12.} This opportunity to be in the Bride of Christ is only presented unto the New Testament full overcomers who follow Paul as he followed Christ. Thus Paul writes in HEBREWS 11:40 to us of the church age: *God having provided some better thing for us, that they without us should not be made perfect* {complete or fully fulfilled}. Furthermore we spent considerable time above discussing the distinctions between the Old Testament worthies of faith, and the New Testament full overcomers known as the Bride of Christ, and how these two distinct groups are very much complementary to each other in heaven, and are often found together especially in worship in heaven. Again in the book of REVELATION we find the Old Testament worthies of faith referred to as "elders" or "four and twenty elders," and sometimes the New Testament full overcomers are called "beasts," or more properly "living creatures." The better thing for the Old Testament worthies of faith alluded to in HEBREWS 11:39 & 40 is being found with the New Testament worthies of faith, with whom they are made complete. The better thing for the New Testament worthies of faith is being married to Christ Jesus, without whom we are incomplete, and none of the rest of this is possible. The New Testament full overcomers, called the Bride of Christ, will rule and reign with Him, and accompanying Him, and she at times will be that now perfected company of Old Testament worthies of faith. HEBREWS 11:39 *And these all, having obtained a good report through faith, received not the promise: 40 God having provided some better thing for us, that they without us should not be made perfect* {complete or fully fulfilled}.

By now we should all have a better idea of the very important subject matter being presented in HEBREWS 12:1 & 2, and the distinctions between an Old Testament full overcomer, and a New Testament full overcomer, and how to distinguish them in the book of REVELATION. With that in mind I want to spend a few moments introducing a thought that helps us here in HEBREWS 12:1 & 2 see again the distinction between the Old Testament full overcomer, and the New Testament potential full overcomer that Paul is addressing here. We better see this distinction in this portion of HEBREWS 12:1 *Wherefore seeing we also are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses,...* . Now mentally put a parenthesis before the word "seeing," and after the word "witnesses." By doing so we find us once again connected to the Old Testament worthies of faith, the group the Holy Ghost wants us to see that we are compassed about with. After this parenthesis the focus is placed upon us, the potential New Testament worthies of faith, and how we are to run the race to obtain God's very best for eternity! Within these parenthesis we find a very important, and often over looked connecting word, the little word "also:" *Wherefore seeing we also are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset us, and let us run with patience the race that is set before us, 2 Looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith; who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God.* This little word "also"

is kai in the Greek, number 2532 in The Strong's Greek Concordance, and can also be translated as "even," or "and." When kai is translated as "also" in our English, it precedes the word it stresses, however in English the order should be reversed. Thus here in HEBREWS 12:1 the Greek reads "So therefore **also** we,..." which begins to connect us of New Testament church age times to the Old Testament worthies of faith. "So therefore **also** we are compassed about with the so great a cloud of witnesses" that we have introduced above, who are the Old Testament worthies of faith.

Let's now begin to look further into the "so great a cloud of witnesses" that we are "compassed about" with. These that are encompassing us are those Old Testament worthies of faith referenced in HEBREWS 11 whose manner of life, and faith in God we are given as examples, and witnesses, and testimonies to follow. Some commentaries incorrectly state that these worthies of faith are up in heaven sitting in a grandstand watching us as we run our race. Nothing can be further from the truth. Those who are the worthies of faith that have gone on before us lived their lives looking unto the Lord above, and He remains their focus, not us. Who is the heart examiner? The heart examiner is Jesus Christ Himself, not some Old Testament worthy of faith. JEREMIAH 17:10 tells us: *I the LORD search the heart, I try the reins, even to give every man according to his ways, and according to the fruit of his doings.* In REVELATION 2:23 we read these words of our Lord Jesus Christ: *...I am he which searcheth the reins and hearts: and I will give unto every one of you according to your works.* We are first and foremost in Jesus thoughts, and always have been since the eternities past! And He looks deep into our hearts to see who is first and foremost in our own individual thoughts. Those who put Him first in everything, and live their lives by faith, like the Old Testament worthies did, will qualify to be New Testament full overcomers. We of this church age are "compassed about" with the Old Testament worthies' lives of faith engrained in our memory, as we recall their accomplishments when we read, and study about their lives of faith in scripture. All of this is what "compassed about" means. Think of it like this, we all have buried many a loved one, perhaps even a mother or a father, and their memory encompasses us as we continue to live. That is we continue to remember things they said or did. In so doing we are "compassed about" with their memory. We are further encouraged in HEBREWS 13:7 to: *Remember them which have the rule over you, who have spoken unto you the word of God: whose faith follow, considering the end of their conversation.* The literal Greek translation of HEBREWS 13:7 reads: Remember your leaders who spoke the Word of God to you, considering the issue of (their) conduct, imitate (their) faith. The Old Testament worthies all lived their life by faith in God. They too were given a course in life to walk, and by faith they actually ran upon their individual track in life. In essence they were racecourse runners, who finished their course in life a full overcomer.

The Greek word translated "witnesses" here in HEBREWS 12:1 is *martus* {mar'-toos}, number 3144 in The Strong's Greek Concordance, which is found thirty-four times in New Testament scripture. Twenty-nine times *martus* {mar'-toos} is translated "witness" as in to positively state what one has seen or heard or knows for a fact to be truth. Three times *martus* {mar'-toos} is translated "martyr," and a couple of examples of this are found in the following scriptures, the first a reference to Stephen in ACTS 22:20 where Paul says: *And when the blood of thy martyr Stephen was shed, I also was standing by, and consenting unto his death, and kept the raiment of them that slew him.* The second example of this is found in REVELATION 2:13 where Jesus calls Antipas "*my faithful martyr.*" Stephen and Antipas were faithful witnesses unto God who proved the strength and genuineness of their faith in Christ by undergoing a violent death. Twice *martus* {mar'-toos} is translated "record," and one example of this is found in PHILIPPIANS 1:8 where Paul writes: *For God is my record,* meaning: God is my witness. In Hebrews 12:1 *martus* {mar'-toos} is translated "witnesses" meaning a collection of Old Testament Saints fitting all three of these meaning. Here in HEBREWS 12:1 "witnesses" (*martus* {mar'-toos}) is used of those who are mentioned in HEBREWS 11, whose lives and actions testified to the worth and effect of faith, and whose faith received witness in Scripture. As we mentioned above these "witnesses" of Hebrews 12:1 were essentially Old Testament racecourse runners, who finished their course in life a full overcomer.

The Apostle Paul makes several references in his writings to the racecourse runner sometimes using himself as an example, and other times encouraging us, his followers, to be focused racecourse runners ourselves. In 1 CORINTHIANS 9:24 Paul wrote: *Know ye not that they which run in a race run all, but one receiveth the prize? So run, that ye may obtain.* So we see that not only are we encouraged to be racecourse runners, but diligently focused upon running to win an obtainable prize. Paul defines the prize in PHILIPPIANS 3:14 *I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus.* A few verses earlier Paul defined what the prize is: PHILIPPIANS 3:8 *...that I may win Christ.* Those yearning to be a full overcomer, those who want God's best, those who are running the race to win Christ as bridegroom, all want the same thing, to win Christ, and by faith God will let them have it, yet each one of us will have his own God designed special racecourse full of obstacles to overcome; obstacles carefully placed there by the Author and Finisher of our faith, who simply wants us to live our lives by faith in Him. Those like Paul who fight a good fight, and keep the faith, and finish their particular racecourse will be those in the Bride of Christ, the full overcomers of this church age. To the Galatian Saints Paul wrote in GALATIANS 5:7 *Ye did run well; who did hinder you that ye should not obey the truth?* So we note that we too can be hindered from running the race to have God's best. That is why Paul later wrote to us once again in HEBREWS 12:1 & 2 about the race we are to run, and the goal to whom we look: *Wherefore seeing we also are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset us, and let us run with patience the race that is set before us, 2 Looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith; who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God.* The Old Testament worthies of faith all finished their course *...having obtained a good report through faith...* but they *...received not the promise: God having provided some better thing for us, that they without us should not be made perfect {complete or fully fulfilled}...* HEBREWS 11:39 & 40.

HEBREWS 12:1 *Wherefore seeing we also are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses...* . We have already identified who this *...so great a cloud of witnesses...* is. This *...so great a cloud of witnesses...* is all of those Old Testament worthies who *...obtained a good report through faith...* that are found highlighted in HEBREWS 11, some of whom we have spent much time reviewing their lives of faith earlier in this study. One whose life was highlighted in HEBREWS 11 was **Enoch**, whom we didn't discuss earlier, but we will briefly do so now, for he also by faith witnessed this *...so great a cloud of witnesses.* **Enoch's** testimony of faith is fairly short, and is noted like this in HEBREWS 11:5 *By faith Enoch was translated that he should not see death; and was not found, because God had translated him: for before his translation he had this testimony, that he pleased God.* **Enoch** and Elijah are the only two translated in the Old Testament, a sufficient witness to us living now that there will be those of New Testament times translated also. We first read of **Enoch** in GENESIS 5, and GENESIS 5:22 & 24 both tell us the same thing: *...Enoch walked with God...* . **Enoch** walking with God was not a part time thing, but a full time occupation of his, as will be the case with all full overcomers. GENESIS 5:24 states: *And Enoch walked with God: and he was not; for God took him.* God translated **Enoch**, and took him to heaven because **Enoch** put his faith and trust in God. **Enoch** pleased God because he put his focus on the unseen things above. HEBREWS 11:6 explains: *But without faith it is impossible to please him: (God) for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him. This is the testimony of all full overcomers.*

**Enoch** was also a prophet, and JUDE 1:14 & 15 records his prophecy: *And Enoch also, the seventh from Adam, prophesied of these, saying, Behold, the Lord cometh with ten thousands of his saints, 15 To execute judgment upon all, and to convince all that are ungodly among them of all their ungodly deeds which they have ungodly committed, and of all their hard speeches which ungodly sinners have spoken against him.* Recall what we read in 2 PETER 1:21 *For the prophecy came not in old time by the will of man: but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy*

*Ghost.* The Holy Ghost moved **Enoch** to speak what God told him, and part of what God had told **Enoch** as they two walked together was that ...*Behold, the Lord cometh with ten thousands of his saints!* Brother Copley wrote in his commentary of this portion of scripture from JUDE: “How could **Enoch**, over five thousand years ago tell what would take place in the end of this age? Here is the answer – “*Enoch walked with God.*” They who walk with God have eagle’s eyes, far seeing eyes. They are made to see as God sees. To walk with God is to talk with Him, have fellowship with Him, know what He knows, and understand as He understands. “*The secret of the Lord is with them that fear him...*” (PSALMS 25:14). To walk with Jehovah is to drink in His spirit and partake of His likeness and learn His will and purposes concerning the children of men. The Lord cannot make His things known to most people because they do not care to know. He is willing; but His people are indifferent. ...If we are going to be translated we need to be consecrated to God. Then we need to walk with God just like **Enoch** did; for it is the folk who walk with Him, separated from this world, that will go up when the Lord comes. ...Today God is taking out of the Gentiles a people for the name of the Lord. **Enoch** the seventh from Adam prophesied of these, the saints of this age. That is a marvelous truth, that a man 5000 years ago prophesied of an event and of a people that were not yet in existence. He saw the Lord coming in judgment with ten thousands of his saints,... .” {End of quoting Brother Copley.}

There are a couple of things to pay particular attention to here in our discussing what **Enoch** prophesied here in JUDE 1:14 & 15. The first point is that **Enoch** also believed by faith that ...*the Lord cometh with ten thousands of his saints.* Keep in mind that **Enoch** was born 622 years after Adam was created, and by the time of Enoch’s death 365 years later there wouldn’t yet have been in existence ten thousand(s) (plural) of God’s full overcoming Saints. So when **Enoch** prophesied here in JUDE 1:14 & 15 that ...*the Lord cometh with ten thousands of his saints...* he was telling of events yet future to us here today! The second point that we need to realize here is that **Enoch** glimpsed with his eyes of faith the ...*so great a cloud of witnesses...* Paul wrote about in HEBREWS 12:1. In fact **Enoch** himself is among the ...*ten thousands of his saints...* that he prophesied about!

We have spent much time introducing the ...*so great a cloud of witnesses...* Paul wrote about in HEBREWS 12:1 (*Wherefore seeing we also are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses...*), so let’s now see them in some other scriptures besides HEBREWS 12:1, and JUDE 1:14. Again this “...*so great a cloud of witness...*” is the Old Testament worthies of faith that we find mentioned in HEBREWS 11, and in the many other scriptures we looked at earlier in this study. We also see this “...*so great a cloud of witness...*” mentioned several other places in New Testament scripture. Let’s begin this part of our study by reading a couple of verses from MATTHEW 27, which record events right after Jesus’ resurrection. MATTHEW 27:52 *And the graves were opened; and many bodies of the saints which slept arose, 53 And came out of the graves after his resurrection, and went into the holy city, and appeared unto many.* Note that MATTHEW 27:52 plainly tells us that “many bodies of the saints,” not all, but ...*many bodies of the saints which slept arose, And came out of the graves after his resurrection, and went into the holy city, and appeared unto many.* The Apostle Paul references this same group of people in HEBREWS 12:23 and calls them ...*the spirits of just men made perfect...* . These many bodies of the Saints that arose after the resurrection of Jesus are indeed the Old Testament worthies of faith found in HEBREWS 11. In HEBREWS 12:1 the very same Old Testament worthies of faith are called “**a cloud of witnesses,**” who also are found mentioned in close association with Jesus in the following scriptures: ACTS 1:9 *And when he had spoken these things, while they beheld, he was taken up; and a cloud received him out of their sight.* This is a **cloud** of Saints, not a fleecy weather **cloud** that we see nearly every day. We see this same **cloud** of overcomers again in REVELATION 10:1 *And I saw another mighty angel come down from heaven, clothed with a cloud: and a rainbow was upon his head, and his face was as it were the sun, and his feet as pillars of fire.* This mighty angel is none other than the Lord Jesus Christ Himself. This “**cloud**” again is a **cloud** of Saints, and a much larger crowd of overcoming Saints compose this **cloud**, for it includes the New Testament overcomers.

Let's go back for a moment and consider the *...many bodies of the saints which slept arose, And came out of the graves after his resurrection, and went into the holy city, and appeared unto many...* we talked about in MATTHEW 27:52. We already noted that these were the Old Testament full overcomers. What about the rest of the Saints, which slept in the graves of Old Testament dead Saints, what happened to them? Were they still in upper sheol? (The Old Testament word for the grave, or hell is sheol, with the New Testament word calling the grave or hell Hades. In LUKE 16:26 we find a great gulf fixed between lower sheol, and upper sheol, which is also called Abraham's bosom in LUKE 16:22. The saved dead before the resurrection of Christ went to Abraham's bosom, or upper sheol, and the dead sinner went to lower sheol, or hades. And that is a whole other study in itself.) So back to our question, where were the Old Testament Saints that didn't come out of the graves and appear unto many, like some did in MATTHEW 27:52? Were they still in upper sheol? Several scriptures answer this question, and one is 2 CORINTHIANS 5:8 where Paul notes to be absent from the body is to be present with the Lord. And we also know from several other scriptures that our risen Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ is seated on the right hand of the Majesty on high, which is the very throne of God the Father in heaven on high! {See HEBREWS 1:3.} So are the Old Testament Saints still in upper sheol? Paul answers this very same question in EPHESIANS 4:8-10. EPHESIANS 4:8 *Wherefore he saith, When he ascended up on high, he led captivity captive, and gave gifts unto men. 9 (Now that he ascended, what is it but that he also descended first into the lower parts of the earth? 10 He that descended is the same also that ascended up far above all heavens, that he might fill all things.)* When Jesus ascended to heaven He emptied out upper sheol, and when He did so *...many bodies of the saints which slept arose, And came out of the graves after his resurrection, and went into the holy city, and appeared unto many...* like we noted above in MATTHEW 27:52. These resurrected Saints that arose out of the grave and appeared unto many were *...the spirits of just men made perfect...* noted in HEBREWS 12:23 above. This is the same group found in ACTS 1:9 above: *And when he had spoken these things, while they beheld, he was taken up; and a cloud received him out of their sight.*

Okay let's go a little further here and look into some more scriptures that further expound this **cloud of witnesses**. 1 THESSALONIANS 4:14 describes this **cloud** of Saints with Jesus like this: *For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so them also which sleep in Jesus will God bring with him.* Pause here for a moment and answer these questions. Do you believe that Jesus died and rose again? All Christians believe this and confess this to be true as is noted in ROMANS 10:9 & 10 -- *That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved. 10 For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation.* Do you also believe that those believers who have previously died and gone to heaven will be found with Jesus when he returns at His second coming? It says here in 1 THESSALONIANS 4:14 that *...even so them also which sleep in Jesus will God bring with him.* How do these "which sleep in Jesus" appear to us who are alive and remain at Jesus second coming? There are so many of them that at a distance they look like a **cloud**, and in fact they are a **cloud** of Saints. Out in the country I have often in the distance viewed a **cloud** of birds, and perhaps you have too. One day soon we will view Jesus returning with a **cloud** of Saints as was foretold in ACTS 1:11. Let's start with verse 9: ACTS 1:9 *And when he had spoken these things, while they beheld, he was taken up; and a cloud received him out of their sight. 10 And while they looked stedfastly toward heaven as he went up, behold, two men stood by them in white apparel; 11 Which also said, Ye men of Galilee, why stand ye gazing up into heaven? this same Jesus, which is taken up from you into heaven, shall so come in like manner as ye have seen him go into heaven.* The manner in which Jesus was taken up into heaven was in a **cloud** of Saints. The manner in which He will return is with a **cloud** of Saints! Back here in 1 THESSALONIANS 4:17 we read again of this: *Then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord...* (as part of this ever increasing **cloud** formation). Notice we that are alive and remain are caught up together with them whom Jesus Christ brings with Him, among whom are the *"...so great*

*a cloud of witness...*” of HEBREWS 12:1. Then also take note of more than one **cloud** here, for it says *...Then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord.* Here we get a hint of the different ranks in the resurrection, each a distinct **cloud**. This is also a whole other Bible study, but make a note somewhere that the first resurrection occurs in phases over time, and in fact has already started way back there in MATTHEW 27:52 & 53, which we looked at above. Again it states in 1 THESSALONIANS 4:14 *For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so them also which sleep in Jesus will God bring with him. ...17 Then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord.* REVELATION 1:7 also tells us: *Behold, he cometh with clouds;*... . What did Enoch prophecy? JUDE 1:14 *And Enoch also, the seventh from Adam, prophesied of these, saying, Behold, the Lord cometh with ten thousands of his saints.* {I believe we have covered this subject very well concerning “**the great cloud of witness**” of HEBREWS 12:1, and I encourage each of us to take the time to also study LUKE 21:27; REVELATION 11:12; 14:14-16, and the many other scripture that reference **cloud(s)** of Saints that are found sprinkled all throughout scripture.}

Let’s move forward in our studying these eighty very important words of HEBREWS 12:1 & 2 that are written to encourage us of this church age, which is quickly coming to a close. HEBREWS 12:1 *Wherefore seeing we also are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset us, and let us run with patience the race that is set before us, 2 Looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith; who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God.* So far we have spent much time considering the first fourteen words of this sentence, which basically is a look back at the “so great a cloud of witnesses,” who are the Old Testament worthies of faith whom we have as a testimony, and a witness of what can be accomplished by putting ones faith, and trust one hundred percent in God. We noted that the Old Testament icons of faith came from every walk of life, both rich and exceedingly poor; highly educated in Old Testament teaching, and those deprived of any written text of any kind. These elders all obtained a good report because of one thing, and that being they pleased God because they believed that He is, and that He is a rewarder of them that diligently seek Him... HEBREWS 11:6. So having spent much time discussing the “so great a cloud of witnesses” we move forward and now begin to examine the last sixty-six words that are specifically addressed to us, the New Testament racecourse runners whose focus is like Paul’s, pressing toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus (PHILIPPIANS 3:14). The last part of HEBREWS 12:1 continues addressing the potential New Testament full overcomers, and verse 2 draws the attention of our focus to be one hundred percent on the goal, who is our precious Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, but we will cover the details of His all important Majesty later in this study, the Lord willing of course.

Let’s spend some time and energy looking into the depths of the last part of HEBREWS 12:1. With these next words of verse 1 our Apostle Paul is kind of like a coach, who metaphorically puts his arm around our shoulder, while at the same time giving us a Holy Ghost inspired pep talk of encouragement, pointing out how we too can be racecourse winners. As he does so he states this concept: ‘Now I want you to see that we have encompassed within our memory of Bible stories, and Old Testament scriptures, many examples, many testimonies, many witnesses from all walks of life, who lived and died having obtained a good report through faith in God. Yet this great throng of witnesses received not the promises God provided for us of this church age. God in this church age has provided some better thing for us, some thing that this Old Testament cloud of witnesses knew nothing about, and they without us won’t be a fully fulfilled and complete company in heaven. So precious Saint let me give you some Holy Ghost inspired secrets that will help you finish a winner in the race you have been running. First of all, and this goes for me too, we need to lay aside every weight, and distractions that confronts us, and keeps us from losing focus upon our lovely Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. Secondly, we need to be aware of, and overcome the obstacle of sin that so

easily besets us, and thirdly we need to continue on continuing on every day running with patience the race that the Lord Jesus Christ has set before us.'

Now I realize that this isn't the way Paul wrote it in HEBREWS 12:1, but it gets us started in our further examination of the rest of the important words written to us in HEBREWS 12:1. Let's now spend some time looking into the depths of this phrase ...*let us lay aside every weight*. The key word here is "weight." The reason that "weight" is the key word here is because the Greek word translated "weight" here is only found this one time in scripture. The Greek noun used here is *ogkos* {ong'-kos}; number 3591 in our Strong's Greek Concordance, and it denotes a bulk or a mass; hence, metaphorically, an encumbrance, or a weight. The Apostle Paul wants us to think like a racecourse runner. What racecourse runner encumbers him or herself with extra weight? Such action would impede or hinder his or hers progress in winning a race. We thus need to lay such encumbrances aside.

We will discuss in depth what these weights are shortly, and the key that begins to unlock, and release these weights lies within the phrase "lay aside." The Greek word translated "lay aside" here is *apotiyhmi*, or *apotithemi* {ap-ot-eeth'-ay-mee}, number 659 in The Strong's Greek Concordance, which means to put off from oneself, to put away, to cast off, to put aside, and to lay apart. *Apotiyhmi*, or *apotithemi* {ap-ot-eeth'-ay-mee} is found in eight verse of New Testaments scripture. Again we are reminded that eight is a number which often times is associated with the BRIDE of Christ, and we will notice bridal quality encouragement as we look at the eight scriptures where *apotiyhmi*, or *apotithemi* {ap-ot-eeth'-ay-mee} is found.

The first time we read the word *apotiyhmi*, or *apotithemi* {ap-ot-eeth'-ay-mee} is in ACTS 7. I'll give you the verse in ACTS 7 in a minute, but recall that most of ACTS 7 is the Holy Ghost inspired sermon that Stephen gave before the Sanhedrin council. It was a momentous day, for had the Jews in attendance turned to Jesus at that time, it would have altered church history. But their hearts were hardened, and they rejected Stephen's powerful message. ACTS 7:51-58 tells it this way: *Ye stiffnecked and uncircumcised in heart and ears, ye do always resist the Holy Ghost: as your fathers did, so do ye. 52 Which of the prophets have not your fathers persecuted? and they have slain them which shewed before of the coming of the Just One; of whom ye have been now the betrayers and murderers: 53 Who have received the law by the disposition of angels, and have not kept it. 54 When they heard these things, they were cut to the heart, and they gnashed on him with their teeth. 55 But he, being full of the Holy Ghost, looked up stedfastly into heaven, and saw the glory of God, and Jesus standing on the right hand of God, 56 And said, Behold, I see the heavens opened, and the Son of man standing on the right hand of God. 57 Then they cried out with a loud voice, and stopped their ears, and ran upon him with one accord, 58 And cast him out of the city, and stoned him: and the witnesses laid down their clothes at a young man's feet, whose name was Saul.* Here in verse 58 we find the Greek word *apotiyhmi*, or *apotithemi* {ap-ot-eeth'-ay-mee} translated "laid down" as in to cast off, to put aside, and to lay apart their clothes so that they could give a full one hundred percent unencumbered effort in throwing stones at Stephen. So in a very negative sense we see how the Greek word translated "lay aside" in HEBREWS 12:1 is used here in ACTS 7:58. The positive we should take away here in ACTS 7:58 in our discussion of the eight scriptures where the Greek word *apotiyhmi*, or *apotithemi* {ap-ot-eeth'-ay-mee} is found, is the effort given after they laid aside every weight that was hindering their fulfilling their evil deed. They gave a full one hundred percent effort in stoning Stephen. They held nothing back. What they meant for evil in stoning Stephen, God used for our good, because Stephen's sermon did indeed prick the heart of a man named Saul of Tarsus. And Saul of Tarsus remembered word for word Stephen's sermon, and Stephen's words were in Saul of Tarsus' mind when on the road to Damascus the Lord arrested him and said: *...I am Jesus whom thou persecutest: it is hard for thee to kick against the pricks...* (of your conscience), ACTS 9:5. Of course we know the rest of the story, Saul of Tarsus got saved, and became our Apostle Paul. And when we finally read one of Paul's sermons in ACTS 13, we find that he patterned his synagogue sermon after Stephen's sermon given before the Sanhedrin council.

The rest of the eight scriptures that use the Greek word apotiyhmi, or apotithemi {ap-ot-eeth'-ay-mee}, number 659 in The Strong's Greek Concordance, give us examples of the **weights** we are to "**lay aside**" in HEBREWS 12:1. And the order of these scriptures found in our Bible are also pretty much the chronological order that the Holy Ghost inspired these words to be written. Thus we find told the God given order, which the racecourse winner needs to "**lay aside every weight**" that potentially hinders him, or her from winning the prize, who again is our Lord Jesus Christ. The second of the eight scriptures that use the Greek word apotiyhmi, or apotithemi {ap-ot-eeth'-ay-mee} is ROMANS 13:12, where we find the Greek word apotiyhmi, or apotithemi used twice for double emphasis. ROMANS 13:12 *The night is far spent, the day is at hand: let us therefore cast off the works of darkness, and let us put on the armour of light.* It is within the phrase "...**let us therefore cast off the works of darkness,...**" where the double emphasis of apotiyhmi is found. The enthusiasm with which we are to **cast off** the works of darkness should be a one hundred percent whole hearted effort with nothing held back. Let's read this text within the context that "...**let us therefore cast off the works of darkness,...**" is found, thus allowing scripture to commentate upon scripture. We will start in ROMANS 13:11 *And that, knowing the time, that now it is high time to awake out of sleep: for now is our salvation nearer than when we believed. 12 The night is far spent, the day is at hand: let us therefore cast off the works of darkness, and let us put on the armour of light. 13 Let us walk honestly, as in the day; not in rioting and drunkenness, not in chambering and wantonness, not in strife and envying. 14 But put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make not provision for the flesh, to fulfil the lusts thereof.*

Digging a little deeper here we want to see that Paul is encouraging all racecourse runners to acknowledge *...that now it is high time to awake out of sleep...* for no one wins a race in their sleep. Notice further that it is a "high time," meaning a critical period of time in which we are living, the approaching moment when the Lord will return to catch His Bride away! The last part of ROMANS 13:11 reads: *...for now is our salvation nearer than when we believed.* When we believed we were saved, right? That "salvation" was our new birth, the salvation of our souls, and is not the "salvation" spoken of here in ROMANS 13:11. The "salvation" spoken of here is the deliverance from this present evil world that abides in darkness, the darkness of sin. The hour that Jesus comes to take us home to be with Him will be our deliverance from this present evil world. Paul encourages us in EPHESIANS 5:8 *For ye were sometimes darkness, but now are ye light in the Lord: walk as children of light.* Here in ROMANS 13:12, our text, Paul acknowledges: *The night is far spent, the day is at hand: let us therefore cast off the works of darkness, and let us put on the armour of light.* Do we really want to focus upon the "works of darkness?" Such is not the focus of a full overcomer. We are in the world, but we that are saved are not of the world. Recall the Lord's prayer of JOHN 17 where He said in His prayer starting in verse 11 *And now I am no more in the world, but these are in the world, and I come to thee. Holy Father, keep through thine own name those whom thou hast given me, that they may be one, as we are. 12 While I was with them in the world, I kept them in thy name: those that thou gavest me I have kept, and none of them is lost, but the son of perdition; that the scripture might be fulfilled. 13 And now come I to thee; and these things I speak in the world, that they might have my joy fulfilled in themselves. 14 I have given them thy word; and the world hath hated them, because they are not of the world, even as I am not of the world. 15 I pray not that thou shouldest take them out of the world, but that thou shouldest keep them from the evil. 16 They are not of the world, even as I am not of the world. 17 Sanctify them through thy truth: thy word is truth.*

Notice the last part of ROMANS 13:12 *...let us therefore cast off the works of darkness, and let us put on the armour of light.* If we the potential New Testament full overcomer are with one hundred percent enthusiasm are to **cast off** the works of darkness with a whole hearted effort nothing held back, what are we to put on as a more than worthy replacement? ROMANS 13:12 informs us that this weight we are laying aside should be replaced with racecourse running **armour**; *...let us put on the armour of light.* The Greek word translated "**armour**" here is hoplon {hop'-lon}, number 3696 in The Strong's Greek Concordance, a word found six times in New Testament scripture.

Twice hoplon {hop'-lon} is translated **armour**, twice it is translated **instruments**, and twice it is translated **weapons**. The literal translation of this part of ROMANS 13:12 reads: "...let us **put on** the **weapons of the light**." Paul writes in 2 CORINTHIANS 4:6 *For God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined in our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ.* Paul's gospel is our **weapon of light**, our **instrument of light**, and our **armour of light**. ROMANS 13:12 *...let us therefore cast off the works of darkness, and let us put on the armour (hoplon {hop'-lon}) of light.* This very same **armour of light**, this powerful **weapon**, which is to be **put on** by the racecourse runner is also discussed in 2 CORINTHIANS 10. 2 CORINTHIANS 10:3 *For though we walk in the flesh, we do not war after the flesh: 4 (For the weapons (hoplon {hop'-lon}) of our warfare are not carnal, but mighty through God to the pulling down of strong holds;) 5 Casting down imaginations, and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ.*

Sticking with this thought of laying **aside every weight**, and **putting on the armour of light**, let's look a little deeper into the thought behind *...let us put on the armour of light...* and specifically the genius behind the Greek word translated "**put on**" here in ROMANS 13:12, and in twenty-six other New Testament scriptures. (Twenty-six is the number pointing to THE GOSPEL; or THE GOOD NEWS of the gospel.) The Greek word translated "**put on**" here is enduo {en-doo'-o}, number 1746 in The Strong's Greek Concordance, and yes one of the English translations of enduo {en-doo'-o} is "**endued**" as found in these words of Jesus in LUKE 24:49 *And, behold, I send the promise of my Father upon you: but tarry ye in the city of Jerusalem, until ye be endued with power from on high.* Enduo {en-doo'-o} also means to "**put on**," to be "**clothed with**," or "**clothed in**;" to "**have on**;" and to be "**arrayed in**." The Bride of Christ will be arrayed in lampros *...fine linen, clean and white...* as noted in REVELATION 19:8, the Greek word lampros, number 2986 in The Strong's Greek Concordance, which is a brilliant, clear, transparent, bright, magnificent, splendid color of white. Thus we begin to see a little more the importance of what is being said here in ROMANS 13:12 when Paul writes: *...let us put on (enduo {en-doo'-o}) the armour of light.* Two verse later Paul again uses the Greek word enduo {en-doo'-o} -- ROMANS 13:14 *But put ye on (enduo {en-doo'-o}) the Lord Jesus Christ, and make not provision for the flesh, to fulfil the lusts thereof.* A couple of more instances of this bridal clothing that the New Testament full overcomers will be "**arrayed in**" is found in the text concerning weapons of the Spirit filled believer found in EPHESIANS 6 from whence Brother Hill wrote his pamphlet entitled "The Warfare of the Believer." EPHESIANS 6:11 *Put on (enduo {en-doo'-o}) the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil. 12 For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places. 13 Wherefore take unto you the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand. 14 Stand therefore, having your loins girt about with truth, and having on (enduo {en-doo'-o}) the breastplate of righteousness; 15 And your feet shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace; 16 Above all, taking the shield of faith, wherewith ye shall be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked. 17 And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God: 18 Praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, and watching thereunto with all perseverance and supplication for all saints.*

Hopefully we haven't lost track of what we are studying about. We are looking at the depths of this phrase *...let us lay aside every weight...* found in HEBREWS 12:1, which is indeed written to "us" New Testament church age Saints. The Greek word here translated "**lay aside**" again is apotiyhmi, or apotithemi {ap-ot-eeth'-ay-mee}, number 659 in The Strong's Greek Concordance, a word found in eight verse of New Testaments scripture, which again means: to put off from oneself, to put away, to cast off, to put aside, and to lay apart. So far we have only examined two of the eight scriptures where apotithemi {ap-ot-eeth'-ay-mee} is found; ACTS 7:58 and ROMANS 13:12. In ROMANS 13:12 above we found that we are to *...therefore cast off the works of darkness...* and to

...**put on** (enduo {en-doo'-o}) **the armour of light**. The next two usages of apotithemi {ap-ot-eeth'-ay-mee} is in EPHESIANS 4:22 & 25. EPHESIANS 4:22 *That ye **put off** concerning the former conversation the old man, which is corrupt according to the deceitful lusts.* EPHESIANS 4:25 *Wherefore **putting away** lying, speak every man truth with his neighbour: for we are members one of another.* Sandwiched in between these two verses we find that after laying aside these hindering weights, we are to **put on** (enduo {en-doo'-o}) high calling quality clothing, which is created in righteousness and true holiness. Let's read the whole context here in EPHESIANS 4 within which we find these verses, and see how once again Paul encourages us how to ...**lay aside every weight**... and to ...**put on the new man**, which is renewed in knowledge after the image of him that created him... COLOSSIANS 3:10. EPHESIANS 4:17 *This I say therefore, and testify in the Lord, that ye henceforth walk not as other Gentiles walk, in the vanity of their mind, 18 Having the understanding darkened, being alienated from the life of God through the ignorance that is in them, because of the blindness of their heart: 19 Who being past feeling have given themselves over unto lasciviousness, to work all uncleanness with greediness. 20 But ye have not so learned Christ; 21 If so be that ye have heard him, and have been taught by him, as the truth is in Jesus: 22 That ye **put off** (apotithemi {ap-ot-eeth'-ay-mee}) concerning the former conversation the old man, which is corrupt according to the deceitful lusts; 23 And be renewed in the spirit of your mind; 24 And that ye **put on** the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness. 25 Wherefore **putting away** (apotithemi {ap-ot-eeth'-ay-mee}) lying, speak every man truth with his neighbour: for we are members one of another.*

I told a Brother the other day that one of the things I probably detest the most is being lied to. I love hearing the truth, and the epitome of the truth is Jesus. What did we just read in EPHESIANS 4:21? EPHESIANS 4:21 *...the truth is in Jesus.* What did we just read in ROMANS 13:14 above? ROMANS 13:14 *But **put ye on** (enduo {en-doo'-o}) the Lord Jesus Christ,...* . Put the context of these two verse together, and we find this: *But **put ye on** (enduo {en-doo'-o}) the Lord Jesus Christ,...* *...the truth is in Jesus.* Jesus Himself said in JOHN 14:6 *...I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me.* So if we love Jesus we truly love **the truth**. The opposite of **the truth** is a lie, and we all know the source of lies, for Jesus once again taught us this in JOHN 8:44, where he told the Pharisees: *Ye are of your father the devil, and the lusts of your father ye will do. He was a murderer from the beginning, and abode not in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he speaketh a lie, he speaketh of his own: for he is a liar, and the father of it.* Lying is one of these weights HEBREWS 12:1 tells us that we are to "**lay aside**" (apotithemi {ap-ot-eeth'-ay-mee}). We repeat what EPHESIANS 4:25 tells us: *Wherefore **putting away** lying,...* and again a one hundred percent effort should be devoted to this task. Many times I have been quoted a Bible scripture that says "all men are liars," but that is only half of the scripture. The scripture being quoted here is PSALMS 116:11, which in its context reads: PSALMS 116:9 *I will walk before the LORD in the land of the living. 10 I believed, therefore have I spoken: I was greatly afflicted: 11 I said in my haste, All men are liars. 12 What shall I render unto the LORD for all his benefits toward me? 13 I will take the cup of salvation, and call upon the name of the LORD.* For you number eight fans, the word "liars" (plural) is found eight times in scripture. Do you think the Bide of Christ is one of the "liars?" Lying is not a bridal quality, so again Paul writes: EPHESIANS 4:25 *Wherefore **putting away** lying, speak every man truth with his neighbour: for we are members one of another.* Again in COLOSSIANS 3:9 & 10 Paul writes: *Lie not one to another, seeing that ye have **put off** the old man with his deeds; 10 And have **put on** the new man, which is renewed in knowledge after the image of him that created him.* Let me add my two cents worth here also. Don't lie to yourself either. Be honest, and be truthful, especially with yourself, for the Lord truly knows your heart. Don't tell someone one that you will meet him or her at twelve noon if you have no intention of being there until twelve forty-five. In my book this is lying. COLOSSIANS 3:9 again: *Lie not one to another...* . EPHESIANS 4:25 *Wherefore **putting away** lying, speak every man truth with his neighbour: for we are members one of another.* How about this one: "I will pay you back Friday

when I get paid.” Is that the truth, or a lie? I guess we have to wait until Friday to find out, and to often then the question becomes “but what Friday?”

Let’s put the above thoughts together in today’s language. I have a note in my Bible in between the verses of REVELATION 4:6-8 where we read in our King James Version of the “four beasts,” and my note simply states that these “beasts” are types like Jesus. What we have actually being described in these verses is a picture of the Bride of Christ, who will be the full overcoming redeemed Saints from this church age who have indeed taken upon themselves, by the power of the Holy Ghost, the characteristics of Christ Himself! Let me also remind you that Jesus Christ came to earth from heaven “full of grace and **truth**” JOHN 1:14 and 17 tells us. Jesus didn’t lie, He always spoke **the truth**, for He indeed is *...the way, the truth, and the life...* as we read above in JOHN 14:6. Furthermore we also just read in EPHESIANS 4:21 above that *...the truth is in Jesus.* 1 JOHN 3:5 also tells us that there was “no sin” in Him, and 2 CORINTHIANS 5:21 further informs us: *For he hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him.* We have just looked at four verses where is explained that we the potential New Testament full overcomer are with one hundred percent enthusiasm are to **cast off** the works of darkness with a whole hearted effort nothing held back. EPHESIANS 4:22-25 that we just read above told us *...That ye put off concerning the former conversation the old man, which is corrupt according to the deceitful lusts; 23 And be renewed in the spirit of your mind; 24 And that ye put on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness. 25 Wherefore putting away lying, speak every man truth with his neighbour: for we are members one of another.* The full overcomer of this church age by yielding to the power of the Holy Ghost will not be conformed to this present evil world, but will be clothed in the garments of royalty, having *...put on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness...* (EPHESIANS 4:24), knowing our citizenship *...is in heaven; from whence also we look for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ...* PHILIPPIANS 3:20. In short the full overcomer has **put off** the old man, **put on** the new man, and has with one hundred percent racecourse winning effort also laid aside lying.

Perhaps we need to look at some more New Testament spiritual encouragement along these lines as to how we are to **put away** (apotithemi {ap-ot-eeth'-ay-mee}) **lying**. Let’s also not forget that we are encouraged as racecourse runners to “**lay aside every weight**” that potentially hinders him, or her from winning the prize, who again is our Lord Jesus Christ. The one epistle of Paul’s that lays the foundation to all the rest of his Holy Ghost inspired letters is ROMANS. ROMANS 6 expounds upon the theme of **know**, **reckon**, and **yield**. In ROMANS 6:6 we are taught to **know** *...that our old man is crucified with him, that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin.* In ROMANS 6:11-13 Paul continues: *Likewise reckon ye also yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord. 12 Let not sin therefore reign in your mortal body, that ye should obey it in the lusts thereof. 13 Neither yield ye your members as instruments of unrighteousness unto sin: but yield yourselves unto God, as those that are alive from the dead, and your members as instruments of righteousness unto God.* Study the whole of ROMANS 6 again on your own time, and see what else Paul had to say on this subject. How are we to **yield ourselves unto God**? Were we not given some heavenly divine help in this matter? Yes we were. The Apostle Paul told King Agrippa in ACTS 26:22 that *...Having therefore obtained help of God, I continue unto this day,...* . It was the Holy Ghost who guided Paul, who helped Paul run his race. We too have the very same Holy Ghost given as a gift unto us to help us; to guide us into all **truth**, as is told by Jesus in JOHN 16. And we have studied this many times before. JOHN 16:13 *Howbeit when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth.* We **yield ourselves unto God** by **yielding** to the divine guidance of the Holy Ghost, who is again our guide unto what? **All truth!** EPHESIANS 4:21 above stated that *...the truth is in Jesus.* **The Spirit of truth** will guide us into **all truth**, who is Jesus, and as we **yield** ourselves unto the power of the Holy Ghost, **the Spirit of Truth**, there is no room left for lying. The Lamb of God will have a Bride like unto Himself, thus she will not be a liar. This brings us back to EPHESIANS 4:17 *This I say therefore, and testify in the Lord, that ye henceforth walk not as other Gentiles walk, in the*

*vanity of their mind, 18 Having the understanding darkened, being alienated from the life of God through the ignorance that is in them, because of the blindness of their heart: 19 Who being past feeling have given themselves over unto lasciviousness, to work all uncleanness with greediness. 20 But ye have not so learned Christ; 21 If so be that ye have heard him, and have been taught by him, as the truth is in Jesus: 22 That ye **put off** concerning the former conversation the old man, which is corrupt according to the deceitful lusts; 23 And be renewed in the spirit of your mind; 24 And that ye **put on** the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness. 25 Wherefore **putting away lying, speak every man truth** with his neighbour: for we are members one of another.*

Moving on to the fifth scripture of eight where we find the Greek word apotithmi, or apotithemi {ap-ot-eeth'-ay-mee}, number 659 in The Strong's Greek Concordance, that give us further examples of the **weights** we are to "**lay aside**" in HEBREWS 12:1. And again the full overcomer will be a fully yielded vessel unto the transforming power of the Holy Ghost, who will enable us to accomplish the one hundred percent full racecourse winning overcoming effort that it takes to become one of the types like Jesus found in REVELATION 4:6-8. The fifth scripture of the eight where the Greek word apotithemi {ap-ot-eeth'-ay-mee} is found is in COLOSSIANS 3:8, which reads: *But now ye also **put off** all these; anger, wrath, malice, blasphemy, filthy communication out of your mouth.* Have you ever heard of a "life time achievement award?" COLOSSIANS 3:8 qualifies us for a lifetime full overcoming achievement award. Recall in our discussion above that the effort that we the potential New Testament full overcomer with one hundred percent enthusiasm are to **cast off** the works of darkness with a whole hearted effort nothing held back, and added to the list here of things to **cast off** is *...anger, wrath, malice, blasphemy, filthy communication out of your mouth.* Oh, but wait there's more. Let's read what else Paul writes here. COLOSSIANS 3:8 *But now ye also **put off** (apotithemi {ap-ot-eeth'-ay-mee}) all these; anger, wrath, malice, blasphemy, filthy communication out of your mouth. 9 Lie not one to another, seeing that ye have **put off** the old man with his deeds; 10 And have **put on** the new man, which is renewed in knowledge after the image of him that created him.*

Mercy there is a lot to discuss here, so let's do so in the order the Holy Ghost inspired Paul to write these very same instructions starting in verse 8. There are five items listed here in verse 8 -- anger, wrath, malice, blasphemy, and filthy communication. The first two of these anger, and wrath: anger is translated from the Greek word orge {or-gay'}, number 3709 in The Strong's Greek Concordance, and wrath from the Greek word thumos {thoo-mos'}, number 2372 in The Strong's Greek Concordance. Anger and wrath are linked being closely akin to each other in our English translation as to their meanings. Vine's Dictionary clears this up for us. "Thumos, wrath (not translated "anger") is to be distinguished from orge in this respect; that thumos indicates a more agitated condition of the feelings, an outburst of wrath from inward indignation, while orge suggests a more settled or abiding condition of mind, frequently with a view to taking revenge. Orge is less sudden in its rise than thumos, but more lasting in nature. Thumos expresses more the inward feeling, orge the more active emotion. Thumos may issue in revenge, though it does not necessarily include it." {End of quoting Vine.} Whether we fully understand the differences between these two, anger and wrath, our instructions in COLOSSIANS 3:8 tells us that we are to *...also **put off** all these; anger, wrath, malice, blasphemy, filthy communication out of your mouth.* Our third item to be **put off** is "malice," which comes from the Greek word kakia {kak-ee'-ah}, number 2549 in The Strong's Greek Concordance, with the meaning of maliciousness, evil, wickedness, malignity, ill-will, trouble, the kind of wickedness that is not ashamed to break laws. Generally speaking kakia references badness in quality, which is the opposite of the kind of qualities that will be found in the Bride of Christ. Our fourth and fifth items are about the same, blasphemy, and filthy communication out of your mouth. Blasphemy is 988 in The Strong's Greek Concordance, the Greek word blasphemia {blas-fay-me'-ah} meaning among other things evil speaking. Filthy communication means obscene speech, foul speech, evil speaking, and comes from the Greek word aischrologia {ahee-skhol-og-ee'-ah} number 148 in The Strong's. All five of these anger, wrath, malice, blasphemy, and filthy communication are the basis on how Hollywood makes it's billions.

COLOSSIANS 3:8 is not the only place where we are told to ...**put off** *all these; anger, wrath, malice, blasphemy, filthy communication out of your mouth.* The Apostle Paul made a similar request in EPHESIANS 4:31 & 32 -- *Let all bitterness, and wrath, and anger, and clamour, and evil speaking, be put away from you, with all malice: 32 And be ye kind one to another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven you.*

Back to COLOSSIANS 3:8 *But now ye also **put off** (apotithemi {ap-ot-eeth'-ay-mee}) all these; anger, wrath, malice, blasphemy, filthy communication out of your mouth. 9 Lie not one to another, seeing that ye have **put off** the old man with his deeds; 10 And have **put on** the new man, which is renewed in knowledge after the image of him that created him.* A quick note here concerning the difference between “**put off**” in verse 8, and the “**put off**” in verse 9. These are two different Greek words. The “**put off**” in verse 8 is our current Greek word of focus (apotithemi {ap-ot-eeth'-ay-mee}) an action word requesting that something be done going from this point forward. We have been discussing the one hundred per cent racecourse winning, full overcoming, fully yielded to the Holy Ghost effort that it takes to win Christ as Bridegroom, and the works of darkness, lying, anger, wrath, malice, blasphemy, filthy communication, and the corrupt and deceitful lusts of the old man human nature are all a part of this overcoming work that the Holy Spirit helps us to accomplish, if we yield to His workmanship. The “**put off**” in verse 9 is another action word looking back at something that has already taken place. The “**put off**” in verse 9 is taken from the Greek word apekduomai ap-ek-doo'-om-ahee, number 554 in The Strong's Greek Concordance, denoting a separation from what is **put off**, or to wholly strip from one's self. COLOSSIANS 3:8 *But now ye also **put off** (apotithemi {ap-ot-eeth'-ay-mee}) all these; anger, wrath, malice, blasphemy, filthy communication out of your mouth. 9 Lie not one to another, seeing that ye have **put off** (apekduomai ap-ek-doo'-om-ahee) the old man with his deeds; 10 And have **put on** (enduo {en-doo'-o}) the new man, which is renewed in knowledge after the image of him that created him.*

Again let's repeat some of what we stated above. {See page 47.} The Greek word translated “**put on**” here is once again enduo {en-doo'-o}, number 1746 in The Strong's Greek Concordance, and yes one of the English translations of enduo {en-doo'-o} is “**endued**” as found in these words of Jesus in LUKE 24:49 *And, behold, I send the promise of my Father upon you: but tarry ye in the city of Jerusalem, until ye be **endued** with power from on high.* Enduo {en-doo'-o} also means to “**put on**,” to be “clothed with,” or “clothed in;” to “have on;” and to be “arrayed in.” The Bride of Christ will be arrayed in lampros ...*fine linen, clean and white...* as noted in REVELATION 19:8, the Greek word “white” here is lampros, number 2986 in The Strong's Greek Concordance, which is a brilliant, clear, transparent, bright, magnificent, splendid color of white, the clothing of Jesus. In ROMANS 13:12 Paul writes: ...*let us **put on** (enduo {en-doo'-o}) the armour of light.* Two verse later Paul again uses the Greek word enduo {en-doo'-o} -- ROMANS 13:14 *But **put ye on** (enduo {en-doo'-o}) the Lord Jesus Christ, and make not provision for the flesh, to fulfil the lusts thereof.* A couple of more instances of this bridal clothing that the New Testament full overcomers will be “arrayed in,” spiritual clothing that she has “**put on**” (enduo {en-doo'-o}) is found in the text concerning weapons of the Spirit filled believer found in EPHESIANS 6 from whence Brother Hill wrote his pamphlet entitled “The Warfare of the Believer.” EPHESIANS 6:11 ***Put on** (enduo {en-doo'-o}) the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil. 12 For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places. 13 Wherefore take unto you the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand. 14 Stand therefore, having your loins girt about with truth, and having **on** (enduo {en-doo'-o}) the breastplate of righteousness; 15 And your feet shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace; 16 Above all, taking the shield of faith, wherewith ye shall be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked. 17 And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God: 18 Praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, and watching thereunto with all perseverance and supplication for all saints.*

Again we are looking at the depths of this phrase *...let us lay aside every weight...* found in HEBREWS 12:1, which is indeed written to “us” New Testament church age Saints. And as a reminder the Greek word translated “lay aside” here is apotiyhmi, or apotithemi {ap-ot-eeth'-ay-mee}, number 659 in The Strong’s Greek Concordance, which means to put off from oneself, to put away, to cast off, to put aside, and to lay apart. Apotiyhmi, or apotithemi {ap-ot-eeth'-ay-mee} is found in eight verse of New Testaments scripture, and so far we have examined five of them. HEBREWS 12:1 is the sixth verse where apotithemi {ap-ot-eeth'-ay-mee} is found, but HEBREWS 12:1 was most likely written after the epistle of JAMES, and after 1 PETER was penned. And in JAMES 1:21, and 1 PETER 2:1 is where we find the seventh and eighth verses where apotithemi {ap-ot-eeth'-ay-mee} is found. And since these two verses from JAMES and 1 PETER also connect thoughts we have been examining above, let’s probe into the ideas brought out in these two verses before digging deeper into our phrase *...let us lay aside every weight...* found in HEBREWS 12:1. By reviewing these two verses from JAMES and 1 PETER first, we will get the most out of our phrase *...let us lay aside every weight...* found in HEBREWS 12:1 when we get to it.

JAMES 1:21 *Wherefore lay apart all filthiness and superfluity of naughtiness, and receive with meekness the engrafted word, which is able to save your souls.* Here the Greek word apotithemi {ap-ot-eeth'-ay-mee} is translated “lay apart.” Here we are encouraged to “lay apart all filthiness,” for such is not a quality that will be found in a full overcomer, and we should all be able to say “amen” to that. Next we are also told to “lay apart,” or put off from oneself all “superfluity of naughtiness.” What is “superfluity?” “Superfluity” is the word the King James translators came up with from the Greek word perisseia {per-is-si'-ah}, number 4050 in The Strong’s Greek Concordance. However the original Greek here in JAMES 1:21 translates this word perisseia {per-is-si'-ah} into “overflowing” in our English. Perisseia {per-is-si'-ah} more commonly is translated as “abundance,” with the meaning also of superabundant; something above the ordinary. Perisseia {per-is-si'-ah} is only found four times in scripture, and in ROMANS 5:15 it references the “abundance of grace,” and in 2 CORINTHIANS 8:2 it references an abundance of joy. An above the ordinary measure of joy, and an “abundance of grace” will be qualities found in bridal Saints. However an “overflowing of naughtiness” definitely is not a quality to be found in the Bride of Christ. So here in JAMES 1:21 we are also told to **put off** (apotithemi {ap-ot-eeth'-ay-mee}) from oneself all “overflowing of naughtiness,” and “all” means “all;” “all overflowing of evil” as the original Greek translates it.

Let’s put this together in the theme of HEBREWS 12:1, and as we do we see that the encouragement here is to *...let us lay aside every weight...* to “*...lay apart all filthiness...*” and the “*...overflowing of naughtiness.*” In return James writes that we are to *...receive with meekness the engrafted (implanted) word...* which is the new man endowment we are to **put on**. The encouragement James was given by the Holy Ghost to write here is much the same as we read above that our Apostle Paul wrote unto us, that we have now looked at several times above. ROMANS 13:12 *...let us put on (enduo {en-doo'-o}) the armour of light.* ROMANS 13:14 *But put ye on (enduo {en-doo'-o}) the Lord Jesus Christ, and make not provision for the flesh, to fulfil the lusts thereof.* In EPHESIANS 6:11, which we also looked at above, Paul wrote: **Put on** (enduo {en-doo'-o}) *the whole armour of God...* . Additionally Paul wrote in COLOSSIANS 3:10 *And have put on (enduo {en-doo'-o}) the new man, which is renewed in knowledge after the image of him that created him.* All of these verses express bridal quality encouragement, which is only fully achievable by yielding unto the power of the Holy Ghost.

Now let’s look a little further into this statement in JAMES 1:21 that we are to *...receive with meekness the engrafted (implanted) word.* Look up the word “engrafted” that James uses here, and you will find it only used this one time in scripture. “Engrafted” comes from the Greek word emphutos {em'-foo-tos}, number 1721 in The Strong’s Greek Concordance, a word rich in meaning. Emphutos {em'-foo-tos} is an adjective derived from the Greek word emphuo meaning to implant. Vine’s Dictionary explains “the metaphor is that of a seed rooting itself in the heart.” Thus we are to think of the implanted word as being like a seed rooting itself in our heart. David was no doubt the

psalmist who wrote in PSALMS 119:11 *Thy word have I hid in mine heart, that I might not sin against thee.* LUKE 8:11 also informs us: *The seed is the word of God.* REVELATION 19:13 tells us of another name of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, which is “**The Word of God.**” Simply stated, the implanted word that James references is Jesus, who when we are born again begins to take root Himself in our heart. Recall in JOHN 3:3 Jesus, who is “**The Word of God,**” told that well educated Pharisee Nicodemus: *Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God.* Nicodemus questioned Jesus about this, and in JOHN 3:7 Jesus answered: *Marvel not that I said unto thee, Ye must be born again.* Nicodemus questioned Jesus some more, and in JOHN 3:16-18 Jesus told Nicodemus exactly how to be **born again.** JOHN 3:16 *For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life. 17 For God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world; but that the world through him might be saved. 18 He that believeth on him is not condemned: but he that believeth not is condemned already, because he hath not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God.* Since that time millions upon millions have believed these scriptures, and have been **born again** themselves. The Apostle Peter in 1 PETER 1:23 explains this further, writing: *Being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the word of God, which liveth and abideth for ever.* Is Christ “**The Word of God**” growing in your life? We are encouraged in EPHESIANS 4:15 to *...grow up into Him in all things...* . A few pages back {review page 32 of these notes} we quoted something Sister Bodie wrote: “Christ must have a bride like unto Himself, a companion, fit for Him, not an infant, nor a child, but a mature woman full-grown in every respect, able to enter into the fullest sympathy and understanding with all His desires and plans. The whole church has been betrothed; but they will not all qualify as the chaste virgin, who shall be presented. ...The young woman who is engaged must be proven and tried; she must measure up to the standard -- CHRIST, who is set before her, and thus grow up into His likeness. She must have His nature fully developed and manifested in her. And this is only possible as she holds her head (CHRIST), she the conscious weaker vessel, absolutely dependent upon Him, ...strengthened, energized and harmonized by His abundant life of which she is a partaker.” (End of quoting Sister Bodie.)

Recall back in LUKE 1:28 that the angel Gabriel was sent from God unto Mary to tell her something very important, and here is what the angel Gabriel said: *“Hail, thou that art highly favoured, the Lord is with thee: blessed art thou among women.”* Reading on here in LUKE 1 it seems that this saying scared the living daylights out of Mary, as Gabriel’s appearance was sudden, and unexpected, and the proclamation profound, but when she had calmed down Gabriel in essence told Mary that she would conceive from incorruptible seed Jesus, “**The Word of God.**” In LUKE Gabriel 1:35 explained to Mary how she would conceive from incorruptible seed Jesus, “**The Word of God.**” LUKE 1:35 *And the angel answered and said unto her, The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee, and the power of the Highest shall overshadow thee: therefore also that holy thing which shall be born of thee shall be called the Son of God.*

When Gabriel announced in LUKE 1:28 that Mary was “**highly favoured**” the meaning that was being conveyed was that Mary was the “(one) receiving grace” as the original Greek renders it. And Christ grew up in her until the day Jesus was made fully manifest to the world in the manger in Bethlehem. Precious born again Saint do you realize that the very same incorruptible seed of Christ was implanted in your heart the very moment you accepted Jesus as your Saviour? This is exactly what we noted above in JAMES 1:21 that we are to *...receive with meekness the engrafted (implanted) word.* Paul stated it like this in GALATIANS 2:20 *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.* All who are born again have Christ living in them. The question remains, is Christ growing up in them? Is Christ growing up in you? I think we all love the story of Jesus’ birth, and wish we too could be “**highly favoured**” like Mary. For those of you who may not know this already, all that are born again are indeed “**highly favoured**” like Mary. The Greek word *charitoo* {khar-ee-to'-o}, number 5487 in The Strong’s

Greek Concordance, which is translated “**highly favoured**” in LUKE 1:28, is also found one more time in scripture, and that scripture is EPHESIANS 1:6 where charitoo {khar-ee-to'-o} is translated made accepted. EPHESIANS 1:6 *To the praise of the glory of his grace, wherein he hath made us accepted in the beloved.* Thank the Lord that we too are “**highly favoured**” like Mary, but think about this in the coming hours, and coming days if Jesus should tarry; how “**highly favoured**” is the Bride of Christ? It will take us a few more pages of notes, and a few more Sunday School lessons to better answer this question. For now we are reminded that the racecourse winner noted in HEBREWS 12:1 needs to “**lay aside every weight**” that potentially hinders him, or her from winning the prize, who again is our Lord Jesus Christ. Again the Greek word translated “**lay aside**” here in HEBREWS 12:1 is apotiyhmi, or apotithemi {ap-ot-eeth'-ay-mee}, number 659 in The Strong’s Greek Concordance, which means to put off from oneself, to put away, to cast off, to put aside, and to lay apart. And the energy that we the potential New Testament full overcomer are to “**lay aside every weight**” is with one hundred percent enthusiasm, a whole hearted effort nothing held back, an effort that can only be achieved with the help of the Holy Ghost.

This brings us to the eighth, and last scripture where we find the Greek word apotiyhmi {ap-ot-eeth'-ay-mee}, which is 1 PETER 2:1 *Wherefore laying aside* (apotiyhmi {ap-ot-eeth'-ay-mee}) *all malice, and all guile, and hypocrisies, and envies, and all evil speakings,...* . These five, malice, all guile, hypocrisies, envies, and all evil speakings fall into categories we have looked at above, which can be summarized as more works of darkness, the former manner of life of the old man noted in ROMANS 13:12, EPHESIANS 4:22-25, and COLOSSIANS 3:8. Again here “malice” comes from the Greek word kakia {kak-ee'-ah}, number 2549 in The Strong’s Greek Concordance, with the meaning of maliciousness, evil, wickedness, malignity, ill-will, trouble, the kind of wickedness that is not ashamed to break laws. Generally speaking kakia references badness in quality, which is the opposite of the kind of qualities that will be found in the Bride of Christ. Also “guile” will not be a quality found in the Bride of Christ either. The Greek word translated “guile” here is dolos, number 1388 in The Strong’s Greek Concordance, and dolos also translates as: subtlety, deceit, and craft. This same Greek word is also found in the following portion of scripture that speaks about Jesus starting in the middle of 1 PETER 2:21 *...Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that ye should follow his steps: 22 Who did no sin, neither was guile (dolos) found in his mouth: 23 Who, when he was reviled, reviled not again; when he suffered, he threatened not; but committed himself to him that judgeth righteously: 24 Who his own self bare our sins in his own body on the tree, that we, being dead to sins, should live unto righteousness: by whose stripes ye were healed.* Besides “**laying aside**” all malice, and all guile, Peter under the inspiration of the Holy Ghost instructs us to apotiyhmi {ap-ot-eeth'-ay-mee} “hypocrisies.” “Hypocrisies” is the plural of hypocrisy, and a cousin to a hypocrite. “Hypocrisies” is number 5272 in The Strong’s Greek Concordance, and hypocrite is number 5273 in the Strong’s. A hypocrite is a dissembler, a pretender, a stage actor, and one found acting like a stage player, or causing hypocrisy, or dissimulation was noted to be “full of hypocrisy” in MATTHEW 23:28. Peter was very familiar with what “hypocrisies” meant as the Apostle Paul called Peter out on this very thing in GALATIANS 2. Paul in GALATIANS 2:9 & 10 writes that when he and Barnabas went to Jerusalem back in the ACTS 15 time frame that: *...when James, Cephas, 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. 10 Only they would that we should remember the poor; the same which I also was forward to do.* Cephas is another name for Peter. Recall that after that meeting in Jerusalem Paul and Barnabas returned to Antioch, Syria from where they were sent on their missionary journeys. Some time then passes and we read in GALATIANS 2:11-13 that Peter then also took a trip to Antioch, and that is where he had the following confrontation with our Apostle Paul. GALATIANS 2:11 *But when Peter was come to Antioch, I withstood him to the face, because he was to be blamed. 12 For before that certain came from James, he did eat with the Gentiles: but when they were come, he withdrew and separated himself, fearing them which were of the circumcision. 13 And the other Jews dissembled likewise with him; insomuch that Barnabas also was carried away with their*

*dissimulation.* The Greek word translated “dissimulation” here in GALATIANS 2:13 is the same Greek word Peter writes here in 1 PETER 2:1 when he writes that we are to **lay aside** (apotiyhmi {ap-ot-eeth'-ay-mee}) “hypocrisies.” Obviously the elder Apostle Peter took the Holy Ghost inspired correction from the younger Apostle Paul that was given him in GALATIANS 2 to in essence **lay aside** (apotiyhmi {ap-ot-eeth'-ay-mee}) “hypocrisies.”

Again here is what Peter wrote in 1 PETER 2:1 *Wherefore laying aside* (apotiyhmi {ap-ot-eeth'-ay-mee}) *all malice, and all guile, and hypocrisies, and envies, and all evil speakings,...* . The fourth thing that Peter instructs Christians to **lay aside** (apotiyhmi {ap-ot-eeth'-ay-mee}) is “envies,” the plural of envy. The Greek word translated “envies” is phthonos {fthon'-os}, number 5355 in The Strong’s Greek Concordance, meaning the feeling of displeasure produced by witnessing or hearing of the advantage or prosperity of others. The same Greek words used here in 1 PETER 2:1 for malice, guile, and envies are all also found in ROMANS 1:29 in association with those of unbelieving reprobate minds, so we must note that these qualities will not be found in the full overcomer. The fifth item Peter lists here that we are to **lay aside** (apotiyhmi {ap-ot-eeth'-ay-mee}) is “all evil speaking,” or evil words. The Greek literal translation here is “evil words,” taken from the Greek word katalalia {kat-al-al-ee'-ah}, number 2636 in The Strong’s Greek Concordance. The only other time we find this Greek word used in scripture is in 2 CORINTHIANS 12:20 where katalalia {kat-al-al-ee'-ah} is translated “backbiting’s.” 2 CORINTHIANS 12:20 *For I fear, lest, when I come, I shall not find you such as I would, and that I shall be found unto you such as ye would not: lest there be debates, envyings, wraths, strifes, backbitings, whisperings, swellings, tumults.*

Considering all of what we have just reviewed of the things that the New Testament full overcomer is to “**lay aside**” apotithemi {ap-ot-eeth'-ay-mee}, number 659 in The Strong’s Greek Concordance, which also means to **put off** from oneself, to **put away**, to **cast off**, to **put aside**, and to **lay apart**, let’s now return to our text found in HEBREWS 12:1 *...let us lay aside every weight...* . It’s been a while since we began probing the depths of this phrase, so it doesn’t hurt to remember that we said the key word here is “**weight**.” The reason that “**weight**” is the key word here is because the Greek word translated “**weight**” here is ogkos {ong'-kos}; number 3591 in our Strong’s Greek Concordance, which is only found this one time in scripture denotes a bulk or a mass; hence, metaphorically, an encumbrance, or a **weight**. The Apostle Paul wants us to think like a racecourse runner, and the encouragement here in HEBREWS 12:1 is to be a racecourse runner, focused upon winning Christ as bridegroom. What racecourse runner encumbers him or herself with extra **weight**? Such action would impede or hinder his or hers progress in winning a race. We thus need to **lay** such encumbrances **aside**, and we mentioned the energy that we the potential New Testament full overcomer are to “**lay aside every weight**” is with one hundred percent enthusiasm, a whole hearted effort nothing held back, an effort that can only be achieved with the help of the Holy Ghost. The full overcomer from this Church Age will be fully yielded to the Holy Ghost, for it will take the power of the Holy Ghost to help *...us lay aside every weight...* that we discussed above, such as lying, anger, wrath, malice, blasphemy, filthy communication, debates, envying’s, wraths, strife’s, backbiting’s, whisperings, swellings, tumults, all guile, hypocrisies, envies, all evil speaking’s, and the corrupt and deceitful lusts of the old man human nature, etc. Overcoming all of these works of the flesh are a part of the overcoming work that the Holy Spirit was sent to us to help us accomplish, if we will only yield to His workmanship.

Recall again what Jesus Himself told His closest followers in ACTS 1:8 *But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you:...* . What kind of **power** are we talking about here? This is divine supernatural **power** that Jesus is speaking of here, and the agency of the trinity who manifests such heavenly **power** in us, and through us is the Holy Ghost. That is why Jesus told His closest followers in ACTS 1:8 *But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you:...* . The Greek word that translates here into our word **power** is dunamis {doo'-nam-is}, number 1411 in The Strong’s Greek Concordance, a word used 120 times in New Testament scripture. Brother Hill used to point out that dunamis {doo'-nam-is} comes from the same root word

where we get our English word dynamite from. That Greek word is *dunamai* {doo'-nam-ahee}, number 1410 in The Strong's Greek Concordance, a powerful root word that means: to be able to do something; to be capable, strong and powerful; or to have **power**. That very same dynamite **power** is also found in the Greek word *dunastes* {doo-nas'-tace}, number 1413 in The Strong's Greek Concordance, which is translated "**Potentate**" in 1 TIMOTHY 6:15, referencing our Sovereign Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, *...who is the blessed and only **Potentate**, (dunastes {doo-nas'-tace}), the King of kings, and Lord of lords...* whom COLOSSIANS 1:16 tells us: *For by him were all things created, that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers: all things were created by him, and for him.* Now that is **power!** The literal Greek translation of COLOSSIANS 1:16 reads: "For all things were created in Him, the things in the heavens, and the things on the earth, the visible and the invisible; whether thrones, or lordships, or rulers, or authorities, all things have been created through Him and for Him." It would be well worth your time to study further the scriptures that use this root word *dunamai* {doo'-nam-ahee}, number 1410 in The Strong's Greek Concordance, and see for yourself all the mighty spiritual things that can be accomplished in our lives by the mighty dynamite **power** of the Holy Ghost. For now however we are just going to consider some of the facts concerning the Greek word *dunamis* {doo'-nam-is}, number 1411 in The Strong's Greek Concordance, that is found in ACTS 1:8 translated "**power.**" *Dunamis* {doo'-nam-is} is also found translated as mighty work, strength, miracle, might, virtue, mighty, and some other miscellaneous words, all of which reference the **mighty working power** of the Holy Ghost, which is to be manifested in the life of the Spirit filled believer.

Before we proceed any further let's make sure we all have the proper understanding concerning the Holy Ghost, whom we have referenced many times already in this study. Receiving Jesus as our Lord and Saviour is a distinct separate event than receiving the infilling of the Holy Ghost. In order to be saved JOHN 20:31 tells us that: *...these are written, that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing ye might have life through his name.* Jesus told Nicodemus in JOHN 3:7 *...Ye must be born again.* Jesus continued to explain to Nicodemus how to be born again, in other words how to be saved in JOHN 3:16 *For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life. 17 For God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world; but that the world through him might be saved. 18 He that believeth on him is not condemned: but he that believeth not is condemned already, because he hath not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God.* We have already discussed this earlier in this study. The Apostle Paul wrote in ROMANS 10:9 & 10 -- *That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved. 10 For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation.* We also previously in this study referenced this portion of scripture also. This is how simple it is to get saved, but you must believe this for yourself. Once one accepts Jesus as their personal Saviour, they are born again; they are saved, they have everlasting life, and Jesus said it like this in JOHN 10:28 *And I give unto them eternal life; and they shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of my hand.* And one more scripture on the subject of salvation brings us to EPHESIANS 2:8 *For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God.*

Now a quick quiz on what we just read. When a person confesses with their mouth the Lord Jesus, and believes in their heart that God has raised Him from the dead, what do they have? Eternal life! Furthermore GALATIANS 4:6 informs us: *And because ye are sons, God hath sent forth the Spirit of his Son into your hearts,...* . Did any of these scriptures that we just read tell us that we also have the Holy Ghost the moment we believe? No. Receiving the Holy Ghost is a distinct separate event than being born again. In ACTS 19:1 we find the Apostle Paul returning from a visit to Antioch, Syria, and coming once again unto Ephesus where he had previously left Aquila and Priscilla. Here is what we next find in ACTS 19:1 & 2: *...Paul having passed through the upper*

*coasts came to Ephesus: and finding certain disciples, 2 He said unto them, Have ye received the Holy Ghost since ye believed? We find in ACTS 19:7 that all of these disciples were men, and there was about twelve of them. Keep in mind this was more than twenty years after the day of Pentecost when the Holy Ghost was sent in ACTS 2. And Paul asked all twelve of them: Have ye received the Holy Ghost since ye believed? The original Greek here reads; "The Holy Ghost, have you received Him, having believed?" Twelve pairs of ears heard this question, and none answered "we were filled with the Holy Ghost when we believed." Saints, the majority of believers actually think this to be true, yet it is not. These twelve disciples that Paul came across gave Paul this answer found in ACTS 19:2 *And they said unto him, We have not so much as heard whether there be any Holy Ghost.* So they knew they were believers, but they only knew the message of John the Baptist, ...*that they should believe on him which should come after him, that is, on Christ Jesus...* ACTS 19:4, which message they had received, and believed. The Apostle Paul explained to them ...*how that Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures; And that he was buried, and that he rose again the third day according to the scriptures...* 1 CORINTHIANS 15:3 & 4, and on the day of Pentecost He sent the Holy Ghost. There was no need in Paul asking these twelve believers again *Have ye received the Holy Ghost since ye believed?* for Paul knew, and they knew that they hadn't yet received the Holy Ghost. But now they were ready to receive the Holy Ghost having just learned about Him by the teaching of the Apostle Paul. ACTS 19:6 records: *And when Paul had laid his hands upon them, the Holy Ghost came on them; and they spake with tongues, and prophesied.* How did they know they were filled with the Holy Ghost? First of all they spake with tongues, which is a sign and an evidence of being filled with the Holy Ghost, and secondly they prophesied, which is a gift of the Holy Ghost.*

We made a couple of references to the day of Pentecost in the above discussion, so let's go back to ACTS 2, and read what took place on the day of Pentecost. ACTS 2:1 *And when the day of Pentecost was fully come, they were all with one accord in one place. 2 And suddenly there came a sound from heaven as of a rushing mighty wind, and it filled all the house where they were sitting. 3 And there appeared unto them cloven tongues like as of fire, and it sat upon each of them. 4 And they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance.* In ACTS 19:6 this very same thing happened unto those twelve disciples upon whom Paul laid his hands on them, and ...*the Holy Ghost came on them; and they spake with tongues, and prophesied.*

I will give you two more examples that prove a believer is not filled with the Holy Ghost the very second they are saved. The first scripture we will now go to is in ACTS 9. In ACTS 9:1-8 we read of the conversion of Saul of Tarsus. In ACTS 9:9 we find Saul of Tarsus being three days in Damascus after he was saved. In ACTS 9:10-17 we read of Ananias of Damascus being sent by the Lord to Saul of Tarsus. ACTS 9:10 *And there was a certain disciple at Damascus, named Ananias; and to him said the Lord in a vision, Ananias. And he said, Behold, I am here, Lord. 11 And the Lord said unto him, Arise, and go into the street which is called Straight, and enquire in the house of Judas for one called Saul, of Tarsus: for, behold, he prayeth, 12 And hath seen in a vision a man named Ananias coming in, and putting his hand on him, that he might receive his sight. 13 Then Ananias answered, Lord, I have heard by many of this man, how much evil he hath done to thy saints at Jerusalem: 14 And here he hath authority from the chief priests to bind all that call on thy name. 15 But the Lord said unto him, Go thy way: for he is a chosen vessel unto me, to bear my name before the Gentiles, and kings, and the children of Israel: 16 For I will shew him how great things he must suffer for my name's sake. 17 And Ananias went his way, and entered into the house; and putting his hands on him said, Brother Saul, the Lord, even Jesus, that appeared unto thee in the way as thou camest, hath sent me, that thou mightest receive thy sight, and be filled with the Holy Ghost.* Now think about this for a moment. If Saul of Tarsus was filled with the Holy Ghost the second he believed, why would the Lord Jesus Himself put Ananias of Damascus up to the task of laying hands on Saul of Tarsus so that he could be filled with the Holy Ghost? It doesn't make any sense does it? But we here again find scriptural evidence that being filled with the Holy Ghost is a distinct separate

event than being born again. And notice here in ACTS 9:17 that Ananias of Damascus also knew that Saul of Tarsus was a believer, for he addresses him as “Brother Saul.” We know that Saul of Tarsus here was filled with the Holy Ghost when Ananias laid his hands on him, and prayed for him, and he received his sight. Study this story out further in ACTS 9 for yourself.

The last example show that receiving Jesus as our Lord and Saviour is a distinct separate event than receiving the infilling of the Holy Ghost takes us to ACTS 10. In ACTS 10 Peter is sent by divine leading unto the house of Cornelius. This is a big problem for Peter because Cornelius was an Italian, full-blooded Gentile, and Peter was a full-blooded Jew. So to put it mildly, Peter had to be convinced by the Lord that it was okay to go unto the house of this Gentile named Cornelius. And one more point before we need to mention before we start reading from ACTS 10, and that is Cornelius was a believer. ACTS 10:2 tells us that Cornelius was: *A devout man, and one that feared God with all his house, which gave much alms to the people, and prayed to God alway.* Let’s jump ahead to ACTS 10:21 *Then Peter went down to the men which were sent unto him from Cornelius; and said, Behold, I am he whom ye seek: what is the cause wherefore ye are come? 22 And they said, Cornelius the centurion, a just man, and one that feareth God, and of good report among all the nation of the Jews, was warned from God by an holy angel to send for thee into his house, and to hear words of thee. 23 Then called he them in, and lodged them. And on the morrow Peter went away with them, and certain brethren from Joppa accompanied him. 24 And the morrow after they entered into Caesarea. And Cornelius waited for them, and had called together his kinsmen and near friends. 25 And as Peter was coming in, Cornelius met him, and fell down at his feet, and worshipped him. 26 But Peter took him up, saying, Stand up; I myself also am a man. 27 And as he talked with him, he went in, and found many that were come together. 28 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 shewed me that I should not call any man common or unclean. 29 Therefore came I unto you without gainsaying, as soon as I was sent for: I ask therefore for what intent ye have sent for me? 30 And Cornelius said, Four days ago I was fasting until this hour; and at the ninth hour I prayed in my house, and, behold, a man stood before me in bright clothing, 31 And said, Cornelius, thy prayer is heard, and thine alms are had in remembrance in the sight of God. 32 Send therefore to Joppa, and call hither Simon, whose surname is Peter; he is lodged in the house of one Simon a tanner by the sea side: who, when he cometh, shall speak unto thee. 33 Immediately therefore I sent to thee; and thou hast well done that thou art come. Now therefore are we all here present before God, to hear all things that are commanded thee of God. 34 Then Peter opened his mouth, and said, Of a truth I perceive that God is no respecter of persons: 35 But in every nation he that feareth him, and worketh righteousness, is accepted with him. 36 The word which God sent unto the children of Israel, preaching peace by Jesus Christ: (he is Lord of all:) 37 That word, I say, ye know, which was published throughout all Judaea, and began from Galilee, after the baptism which John preached; 38 How God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Ghost and with power: who went about doing good, and healing all that were oppressed of the devil; for God was with him. 39 And we are witnesses of all things which he did both in the land of the Jews, and in Jerusalem; whom they slew and hanged on a tree: 40 Him God raised up the third day, and shewed him openly; 41 Not to all the people, but unto witnesses chosen before of God, even to us, who did eat and drink with him after he rose from the dead. 42 And he commanded us to preach unto the people, and to testify that it is he which was ordained of God to be the Judge of quick and dead. 43 To him give all the prophets witness, that through his name whosoever believeth in him shall receive remission of sins. 44 While Peter yet spake these words, the Holy Ghost fell on all them which heard the word. 45 And they of the circumcision which believed were astonished, as many as came with Peter, because that on the Gentiles also was poured out the gift of the Holy Ghost. 46 For they heard them speak with tongues, and magnify God.*

So once again we see here in scripture the very point we are proving, which is receiving Jesus as our Lord and Saviour is a distinct separate event than receiving the infilling of the Holy Ghost. And the sign and evidence of receiving the Holy Ghost is speaking with tongues. All

believers since the day of Pentecost have had available unto them the opportunity to receive the infilling of the Holy Ghost, but an innumerable number of them have not been filled with the Holy Ghost for various reasons. The purpose of receiving the Holy Ghost is not to speak in tongues, but to have living in your life the **power** that is required to be a full overcomer. Again we repeat what is recorded in ACTS 1:8 that *...ye shall receive **power**, (dunamis {doo'-nam-is}) after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you:...* and it is by the mighty dunamis {doo'-nam-is} **power** of the Holy Ghost that we can be fully guided into all truth, and be shown the deeper things of God. LUKE 11:13 *If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children: how much more shall your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to them that ask him?* ACTS 19:2 *Have ye received the Holy Ghost since ye believed?*

We mentioned earlier in this study that the Holy Ghost was just the start of the “**better thing**” (HEBREWS 11:40) offered us New Testament Saints that the Old Testament worthies of faith didn't have offered them in total. Furthermore when Jesus Himself told His closest followers in ACTS 1:8 that *...ye shall receive **power**, (dunamis {doo'-nam-is}) after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you:...* Paul's gospel message was not yet revealed, or preached, which means Paul hadn't yet been taught himself by the Holy Ghost the “**better thing**” offered us of this church age of the opportunity to be in the Bride of Christ. The Kingdom Apostles, of whom Peter and John were chief, never taught us of this church age of the opportunity to be in the Bride of Christ. That “**better thing**” was not their gospel message; it was Paul's. Yet Peter and John, and those who were with them in the upper room in ACTS 2 did indeed *...receive **power**, after that the Holy Ghost... came upon them, and under the effectual working **power** of the Holy Ghost they did become ...witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judaea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth...* as Jesus also told them they would in ACTS 1:8. For example in ACTS 2 Peter, now filled with the Holy Ghost, preached a **power** packed Holy Ghost inspired instantaneous sermon where about three thousand souls were saved. In ACTS 3 Peter and John, who had both received this **power** of the Holy Ghost on the day of Pentecost, prayed for a lame man at the temple, who instantly was healed. All that were there witnessed this miracle, and Peter then preached his second instantaneous Holy Ghost inspired **power** packed sermon, which started with these words found in ACTS 3:12 *...Ye men of Israel, why marvel ye at this? or why look ye so earnestly on us, as though by our own **power** or holiness we had made this man to walk?* That word “**power**” here is the same word in the Greek that we have been looking at, dunamis {doo'-nam-is}, number 1411 in The Strong's Greek Concordance. This same dunamis {doo'-nam-is} Holy Ghost **power** continued in their ministry, and we read in ACTS 4:33 *And with great **power** (dunamis {doo'-nam-is}) gave the apostles witness of the resurrection of the Lord Jesus: and great grace was upon them all.* All who have received the gift of the Holy Ghost since they believed have this dunamis {doo'-nam-is} **power** living in them.

Stephen was a follower of the Kingdom Apostles, and we read in ACTS 6:8 *And Stephen, full of faith and **power**, (dunamis {doo'-nam-is}) did great wonders and miracles among the people.* In ACTS 7 this wonderful man full of the Holy Ghost named Stephen preached another instantaneous **power** packed Holy Spirit inspired sermon that was full of far reaching, soul searching dunamis {doo'-nam-is} **power**, and the words of this sermon reached out, and pricked the heart of one Saul of Tarsus, a staunch proud Jewish Pharisee who was there in ACTS 7, and heard Stephen's **powerful** message. Some time passes, and in ACTS 9 Saul of Tarsus met our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ on the road to Damascus. Saul of Tarsus immediately knew it was our risen Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ who was appearing unto him, and Saul of Tarsus believed that Jesus was indeed the Lord and Saviour, the risen Son of God, and he was saved. Three days later Ananias of Damascus laid hands on Saul of Tarsus, and he was filled with the Holy Ghost. When that happened what did Saul of Tarsus receive? The very same dunamis {doo'-nam-is} **power** that Jesus told about in ACTS 1:8 *But ye shall receive **power**, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you:...* . It took the dunamis {doo'-nam-is} **power** of the Holy Ghost to fully reveal unto Paul the gospel message he was to

teach, and preach. Jesus Himself told Saul of Tarsus the minute he believed on the road to Damascus the following ninety-nine words recorded in ACTS 26:16-18 -- *But rise, and stand upon thy feet: for I have appeared unto thee for this purpose, to make thee a minister and a witness both of these things which thou hast seen, and of those things in the which I will appear unto thee; 17 Delivering thee from the people, and from the Gentiles, unto whom now I send thee, 18 To open their eyes, and to turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins, and inheritance among them which are sanctified by faith that is in me.* This one sentence took Saul of Tarsus on a mission that took the rest of his life to fulfill. As you know Saul of Tarsus became our Apostle Paul, the Apostle sent unto the Gentiles, to open our eyes by the **power** of the Holy Ghost, turning us from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God, that we may receive forgiveness of sins, and inheritance among them which are sanctified by faith that is in Christ Jesus. A few days after being filled with the **power** of the Holy Ghost the Lord began to reveal unto Paul the gospel message that he was to teach and preach. GALATIANS 1:11-17 explains how: *But I certify you, brethren, that the gospel which was preached of me is not after man. 12 For I neither received it of man, neither was I taught it, but by the revelation of Jesus Christ. 13 For ye have heard of my conversation in time past in the Jews' religion, how that beyond measure I persecuted the church of God, and wasted it: 14 And profited in the Jews' religion above many my equals in mine own nation, being more exceedingly zealous of the traditions of my fathers. 15 But when it pleased God, who separated me from my mother's womb, and called me by his grace, 16 To reveal his Son in me, that I might preach him among the heathen; immediately I conferred not with flesh and blood: 17 Neither went I up to Jerusalem to them which were apostles before me; but I went into Arabia, and returned again unto Damascus.* GALATIANS 1:18 indicates that Paul was in Arabia approximately three years. In EPHESIANS 3:7 Paul writes: *...I was made a minister, according to the gift of the grace of God given unto me by the effectual working of his power* (dunamis {doo'-nam-is}). That word "effectual" comes from the Greek word *energeia* {en-erg'-i-ah}, number 1753 in The Strong's Greek Concordance, a word used exclusively by Paul eight times in his Epistles, and *energeia* here speaks of the strong efficient energy of the superhuman **power** of the Holy Ghost.

EPHESIANS 3:7 is actually the final part of the sentence which began in EPHESIANS 3:1, a Holy Ghost inspired **power** packed sentence which highlights Paul's gospel message of the "**better thing for us**" (HEBREWS 11:40) that we are currently studying about. So let's read the whole sentence: EPHESIANS 3:1 *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; 6 That the Gentiles should be fellowheirs, and of the same body, and partakers of his promise in Christ by the gospel: 7 Whereof I was made a minister, according to the gift of the grace of God given unto me by the effectual working of his power.* The **better thing** Paul wrote about in HEBREWS 11:40 is the mystery found in EPHESIANS 3:6 *...That the Gentiles should be fellowheirs, and of the same body, and partakers of his promise in Christ by the gospel.* This verse has a depth to it that incorporates the other mysteries revealed unto Paul, which very few Christians ever grasp, or ever see, mainly because the vast majority of Christian pastors and teachers don't know, and haven't been properly taught what it means to be **fellowheirs** with Christ. The Kingdom Apostle didn't know this, or teach this because this was Paul's gospel message to teach, which is "the mystery of Christ" referenced in EPHESIANS 3:4. The Greek word translated "**fellowheirs**" here in EPHESIANS 3:6 is *sunkleronomos*, sometimes written as *sugkleronomos* {soong-klay-ron-om'-os}, number 4789 in The Strong's Greek Concordance, and *sugkleronomos* elevates the word "**fellowheirs**" to it's highest levels. *Sugkleronomos* also translates to "heirs with him" in HEBREWS 11:9; "heirs together" in 1 PETER 3:7; and "**joint-heirs with Christ**" in ROMANS 8:17. All believers won't be "**joint-heirs with Christ**" even though this provision is made for all

believers during this church age. But all believers are not filled with the Holy Ghost, thus they are missing the dunamis {doo'-nam-is} **power** that is required to qualify as a “**joint-heirs with Christ.**” The most profound, and complete meaning of the Greek word sugkleronomos is **joint-heir**, or co-inheritor as of a wife with her husband! The Bride of Christ is the ultimate **better thing** Paul spoke of in HEBREWS 11:40 *God having provided some better thing for us, that they without us should not be made perfect.* Furthermore the Bride of Christ is the ultimate joy that was set before Christ as He endured the cross, a point noted in HEBREWS 12:2, which we will probe the depths of later in this study Lord willing.

This brings us back to our thought in found in HEBREWS 12:1 *...let us lay aside every weight...* . Now let me repeat the point we expressed above in searching the deeper truths of this portion of scripture. We the potential New Testament full overcomer are to “**lay aside every weight**” with one hundred percent enthusiasm, with a whole hearted effort nothing held back, an effort that can only be achieved with the help of the Holy Ghost. The full overcomer from this Church Age will be fully yielded to the Holy Ghost, for it will take the **power** of the Holy Ghost to help *...us lay aside every weight...* that we also discussed above, such as lying, anger, wrath, malice, blasphemy, filthy communication, debates, envying’s, wraths, strife’s, backbiting’s, whisperings, swellings, tumults, all guile, hypocrisies, all evil speaking’s, and the corrupt and deceitful lusts of the old man human nature, etc. Overcoming all of these works of the flesh are a part of the overcoming work that the Holy Spirit was sent to us to help us accomplish, if we will only yield to the **power** of His workmanship. Let this thought sink into your heart, that it takes the dunamis {doo'-nam-is} **power** of the Holy Ghost to help us become a full overcomer. Let’s again also repeat what Jesus Himself told His closest followers in ACTS 1:8 *But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you:...* . Now putting all this together that we looked at above, we find that these words have even deeper meaning us who are Jesus closest followers during this yet present church age, who were given Paul’s gospel message to follow. To the bridal Saint, Jesus words of ACTS 1:8 say: *But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you:...* to *...lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset... you, and to ...run with patience the race that is set before... you.*

There are a couple of important points I want to give additional consideration to here concerning the dunamis {doo'-nam-is} **power** of the Holy Ghost given to help us become a full overcomer. In JOHN 14:16 when Jesus began telling His disciples about the Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost (JOHN 14:26), Jesus said this: *And I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you for ever.* How long is for ever? For ever is for ever. Point number two takes our thinking back to the story of a bride for Isaac in GENESIS 24. The typical teaching in that chapter pictures Abraham as a type of God the Father, Isaac figures Jesus, Rebekah is a type of the Bride of Christ, and Abraham’s eldest servant, who was Eliezer of Damascus, a type of the Holy Ghost in that chapter. You all know the story how Abraham sent his eldest servant to the land of Abraham’s kindred to take a wife for his son Isaac. When Eliezer found her, he didn’t let Rebekah out of his sight until she was presented unto Isaac. In GENESIS 25:5 we find after Isaac married Rebekah that Abraham gave all that he had to Isaac. So what became of Eliezer of Damascus? We are not told this exactly in scripture, so the following is sanctified imagination, but it fits the type that Eliezer, who was Abraham’s eldest servant then became Isaac’s servant, and if you take your thinking back to GENESIS 24:15, Eliezer really became Rebekah’s guide, and coach as to how to please Isaac, and in essence became Rebekah’s chief aid in this regard from that day forward until the day he died. Eliezer was at Rebekah’s disposal for ever is the thought we are bringing out here. As Isaac’s servant, Eliezer was also Rebekah’s servant was he not? In our recent studies on Wednesday night in REVELATION we often times have seen the Bride of Christ accomplishing some powerful things. How is this possible? There is only one way that these powerful things can be accomplished that are accredited to the Bride of Christ, and that is by the dunamis {doo'-nam-is} **power** of the Holy Ghost, who was given us on the day of Pentecost *...that he may abide with you for ever.* Have you received the Holy Ghost since ye believed? The Holy

Ghost was given us of this church age as the means to assist us in becoming the Bride of Christ, just like Eliezer took Rebekah, and assisted her in the long hard journey to become Isaac's wife.

Lest you think that this dunamis {doo'-nam-is} power of the Holy Ghost was not given to aid us in becoming a full overcomer, the Apostle Paul was inspired by the very same Holy Ghost to write a couple of prayerful encouragements, which we will now explore. (Actually if you really think about it, the whole one hundred chapters of Paul's epistles was written under the power, and inspiration of the Holy Ghost for the ultimate specific purpose of equipping the church age Holy Ghost filled Saints, who are followers of Paul as he followed Christ, to be the full overcomers from this church age, who will be forever known as the Bride of Christ.) Right now let's zero in on a couple of highlight portions of Paul's scripture that further encourage us as to how to be a sugkleronomos joint-heir with Christ full overcoming Saint. The first portion of scripture we will look at is part of a prayer Paul prays for us found in EPHESIANS 1. Starting in EPHESIANS 1:17 Paul prays: *That the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give unto you the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of him: 18 The eyes of your understanding being enlightened; that ye may know what is the hope of his calling, and what the riches of the glory of his inheritance in the saints, 19 And what is the exceeding greatness of his power (dunamis {doo'-nam-is}) to us-ward who believe, according to the working of his mighty power, 20 Which he wrought in Christ, when he raised him from the dead, and set him at his own right hand in the heavenly places,...*

Just in this particular portion of scripture we find emphasized several points concerning the importance of being yielded unto the mighty wonder working power of the Holy Ghost in our lives. For example in verse 17 we find mentioned "*the spirit of wisdom.*" Brother Hawkins in his teachings has emphasized the point that the word "wisdom" often times is another name for Christ, *In whom are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge...* as COLOSSIANS 2:3 tells us. It is the job of the Holy Ghost to unfold "*the spirit of wisdom*" unto us, and in fact Jesus Himself said this very thing in JOHN 14:26. JOHN 14:26 *But the Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my name, he shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you.* In EPHESIANS 1:17 we also are told of the "*revelation in the knowledge of him,*" which is another reference to Christ. Again it is by the power of the Holy Ghost by which we have enhanced the "*revelation in the knowledge of him,*" a fact Jesus also taught in JOHN 15:26. JOHN 15:26 *But when the Comforter is come, whom I will send unto you from the Father, even the Spirit of truth, which proceedeth from the Father, he shall testify of me.* In EPHESIANS 1:18 we find next mentioned in Paul's prayer that "*The eyes of your understanding being enlightened.*" Here again we find that it is by the power of the Holy Ghost by which the eyes of our understanding are fully enlightened, a fact that Jesus also expounded in JOHN 16:15. JOHN 16:15 *All things that the Father hath are mine: therefore said I, that he (the Holy Ghost) shall take of mine, and shall shew it unto you.* Stated another way, The Holy Spirit enlightens our eyes of faith by which we see the deeper things of God. The power of the Holy Ghost working in our lives further reveals unto us the next points expressed in EPHESIANS 1:18 *...that ye may know what is the hope of his calling, and what the riches of the glory of his inheritance in the saints.* Recall here also what Jesus told our Apostle Paul on the road to Damascus in ACTS 26:18 that he was being sent unto the Gentiles *...To open their eyes, and to turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins, and inheritance among them which are sanctified by faith that is in me.* On that particular day our Apostle Paul had no idea the depths of what an *...inheritance among them which are sanctified by faith that is in me...* meant, but when he writes *...that ye may know what is the hope of his calling, and what the riches of the glory of his inheritance in the saints...* in EPHESIANS 1:18, Paul knew by the power of the Holy Ghost the depths of *...the hope of his calling, and what the riches of the glory of his inheritance in the saints.* Most Christian churches today have a very lame understanding of this portion of scripture knowing nothing about the high calling of God in Christ Jesus that Paul speaks of in PHILIPPIANS 3:14. These same Christian assemblies know even less about *...what the riches of the glory of his*

*inheritance in the saints... is.* Thank God we have had the rich teaching of deeper truth taught to us by Spirit filled preachers and teachers. One of these pastors was Brother Copley, who wrote this concerning *...what the riches of the glory of his inheritance in the saints... is.* “Christ in us is the measure of God's inheritance in us. As much as we are partakers of Christ now, so much will we possess forever. Accordingly, so much will God possess. “Christ in you” is “the hope of glory” for you - Colossians 1:27. Christ fully formed in us, full grown, fully matured, so that we are “all glorious within” (Psalm 45:13), “a glorious Church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing”; but holy and without blemish (Ephesians 5:27) - this will be the “riches of the glory of His (the Father's) inheritance in the saints” - 1:18. Oh! How wonderful!” {End of quoting Brother Copley.}

Look at what Paul wrote next in EPHESIANS 1:19 & 20 -- *And what is the exceeding greatness of his power* (dunamis {doo'-nam-is}) *to us-ward who believe, according to the working of his mighty power, 20 Which he wrought in Christ, when he raised him from the dead, and set him at his own right hand in the heavenly places,...* . The *...exceeding greatness of his power* (dunamis {doo'-nam-is}) *to us-ward who believe,...* is another reference to the mighty working power of the Holy Ghost. This point is further emphasized in EPHESIANS 1:20 *Which he wrought in Christ, when he raised him from the dead, and set him at his own right hand in the heavenly places,...* . HEBREWS 13:20 tells us that it was *...the God of peace, that brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus... .* “**The God of peace**” is another name of the Holy Ghost. Imagine having this same power working in us that was wrought in Christ when the Holy Ghost, **the God of peace** raised Him from the dead, and set Him at God the Father's own right hand, yet this is the very same power we having working in us if you have received the Holy Ghost since you believed!!!! The full scope of this prayer of Paul's for us that he wrote about in EPHESIANS 1 will take each of us the rest of our lifetime to fully appreciate, and apprehend. Paul expressed the value of having the power of the Holy Ghost working in our lives as he wrote the words found in HEBREWS 13:20 & 21. HEBREWS 13:20 *Now the God of peace, that brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus, that great shepherd of the sheep, through the blood of the everlasting covenant, 21 Make you perfect in every good work to do his will, working in you that which is wellpleasing in his sight, through Jesus Christ; to whom be glory for ever and ever. Amen.* These scriptures are further proof that the dunamis {doo'-nam-is} power of the Holy Ghost was indeed given to aid us in becoming a sugkleronomos joint-heir with Christ full overcoming Saint.

Another powerful prayer of Paul for us along these same lines is found in EPHESIANS 3:14-21, which took Brother Copley nineteen pages of notes to expound. There is a good reason that it took Brother Copley many pages of notes to try and probe the immense expanse of these verses, because there is an immeasurable depth found in this prayer of Paul's; a prayer that reaches down through the centuries concerning you, and me! That great English preacher, and gifted orator from the eighteenth century, Charles Spurgeon, pondered the depths of this prayer, and preached at least one sermon from this text entitled “Measuring the Immeasurable.” Brother Hill preached several sermons from this text, and Brother Copley, Brother Spurgeon, and Brother Hill all just scratched the surface of the contents of this prayer that has an immeasurable depth, length, breadth, and height to it. A prayer that also mentions the exceeding, abundantly, above all we could ask or think. How could any of us measure the immeasurable? We really can't, especially on our own, yet Paul in this prayer prays that we may be able to comprehend the thoughts, precepts, and concepts that are expressed in this powerful, far reaching prayer. A prayer whose contents can only be fully revealed, and answered by the power of the Holy Ghost, who again was given to aid us in becoming a sugkleronomos joint-heir with Christ full overcoming Saint. Let's read this extraordinary Holy Ghost inspired prayer of Paul's starting in EPHESIANS 3:14 *For this cause I bow my knees unto the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, 15 Of whom the whole family in heaven and earth is named, 16 That he would grant you, according to the riches of his glory, to be strengthened with might* (dunamis {doo'-nam-is}) *by his Spirit in the inner man; 17 That Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith; that ye, being rooted and grounded in love, 18 May be able to comprehend with all saints what is the breadth, and length, and depth, and height; 19 And to know the love of Christ, which passeth*

*knowledge, that ye might be filled with all the fulness of God. 20 Now unto him that is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power (dunamis {doo'-nam-is}) that worketh in us, 21 Unto him be glory in the church by Christ Jesus throughout all ages, world without end. Amen.*

What is theme of this prayer? Brother Copley writes that this prayer “is doubtless the most important petition that Paul ever offered.” Brother Hill further noted that the whole book of EPHESIANS is the high watermark of scripture. And we have all had the opportunity to have read, and study this prayer hundreds of times. So again what is the theme of this prayer? Brother Copley further noted that this prayer is for the racecourse runner, who is running for the Prize, so Paul “poured out his heart to God in this petition that we might be so equipped as never to faint on the race course.” Our well educated Apostle Paul, who knew the Greek, Hebrew, and Latin languages, did his best in these verses to express the inexpressible, and requested that we too may be able to comprehend that which seems incomprehensible, to know that which passeth knowledge, to be empowered by the Holy Ghost to measure the immeasurable, to get a grasp within us on that which seems beyond reach, which is *...to know the love of Christ*. The theme of this prayer of Paul’s is love; the divine love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord, the very same love that will be found in the Bride of Christ, who will be *...strengthened with might (dunamis {doo'-nam-is}) by his Spirit in the inner man!*

Have you ever taken a trip, and asked the question: “are we there yet?” Or “how much longer?” When I used to pilot planes all across the country there wasn’t hardly ever a long flight when the flight attendants wouldn’t call me and ask: “how much time do we have left?” None of us knows on our journey through life how much longer we have until the Lord comes to take us home, whether by translation, or by the subway as Brother Hill used to say. So let’s ask ourselves the question: “are we there yet?” Are we manifesting in our lives the very same love of God that was found in Christ that will also be found in the Bride of Christ? In JOHN 13:34 we read these words of Jesus: *A new commandment I give unto you, That ye love one another; as I have loved you, that ye also love one another*. Are you there yet? In JOHN 15:12 we read these words of Jesus: *This is my commandment, That ye love one another, as I have loved you*. Are you there yet? Reading further Jesus words in JOHN 15:17 we find that He again says: *These things I command you, that ye love one another*. Are you there yet? In JOHN 21 after Jesus resurrection, Jesus asks Peter some questions that in essence asked Peter; are you there yet? Let’s look at this discourse, starting in JOHN 21:15 *So when they had dined, Jesus saith to Simon Peter, Simon, son of Jonas, lovest thou me more than these? He saith unto him, Yea, Lord; thou knowest that I love thee. He saith unto him, Feed my lambs*. Now I know it doesn’t say this here, but implied in this statement is the following: Peter if you love me with the kind of love that I have shown you, then you should *...love one another, as I have loved you. ...Feed my lambs*. Peter are you there yet? Continuing on in JOHN 21:16 *He saith to him again the second time, Simon, son of Jonas, lovest thou me? He saith unto him, Yea, Lord; thou knowest that I love thee. He saith unto him, Feed my sheep*. Again I know it doesn’t say this here but implied in this statement is the following: Peter if you love me with the kind of love that I have shown you, then you should *...love one another, as I have loved you. ...Feed my sheep*. Peter are you there yet? Continuing on in JOHN 21:17 *He saith unto him the third time, Simon, son of Jonas, lovest thou me? Peter was grieved because he said unto him the third time, Lovest thou me? And he said unto him, Lord, thou knowest all things; thou knowest that I love thee. Jesus saith unto him, Feed my sheep*. It took the dunamis {doo'-nam-is} power of the Holy Ghost strengthening the inner man of Peter before Peter truly could feed the sheep of Jesus, and Peter became one of the chief Apostles by whose preaching thousands were saved. Peter learned the lesson that Jesus taught him in JOHN 13:34 *...That ye love one another; as I have loved you, that ye also love one another*,... and late in life Peter wrote in 1 PETER 1:22 *Seeing ye have purified your souls in obeying the truth through the Spirit unto unfeigned love of the brethren, see that ye love one another with a pure heart fervently*. In total we find this statement thirteen times in scripture: **love one another**. Are you there yet? Paul’s prayer that we read above in EPHESIANS 3:14-21 was put

in writing so that we would ...*know the love of Christ...* (EPHESIANS 3:19), and manifest this love to one another. Paul also encouraged us with this very same thought in 1 THESSALONIANS 4:9 *But as touching brotherly love ye need not that I write unto you: for ye yourselves are taught of God to love one another.* Are you there yet? The full overcomers have fully yielded unto the leading of the Holy Ghost, and have learned ...*to love one another.*

Thus we find how powerful, and how far reaching this prayer of Paul is in EPHESIANS 3:14-21. Let's read it again. EPHESIANS 3:14 *For this cause I bow my knees unto the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, 15 Of whom the whole family in heaven and earth is named, 16 That he would grant you, according to the riches of his glory, to be strengthened with might (dunamis {doo'-nam-is}) by his Spirit in the inner man; 17 That Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith; that ye, being rooted and grounded in love, 18 May be able to comprehend with all saints what is the breadth, and length, and depth, and height; 19 And to know the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge, that ye might be filled with all the fulness of God. 20 Now unto him that is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power (dunamis {doo'-nam-is}) that worketh in us, 21 Unto him be glory in the church by Christ Jesus throughout all ages, world without end. Amen.*

We are studying a little about this powerful prayer because the elements Paul prayed for here in his petition for us address how it is possible that we can ...*lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset us, and let us run with patience the race that is set before us...* that we find mentioned in HEBREWS 12:1. Simply put we need to yield to the dunamis {doo'-nam-is} power of the Holy Ghost, and allow Him to be the divine source who actively works the mighty overcoming we need in our inner man to help lay aside every weight, to help us deal with the sin that so easily bests us, and to encourage our inner spirit to continue running the race that was authored by the greatest of Authors, Jesus Christ for us to run. Jesus will have a wife like unto Himself, and He sent the Holy Spirit to be our Comforter, and Guide, and Teacher, and Assistant in this mighty heavenly work. EPHESIANS 2:10 tells us: *For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them.* It's a long life-time journey, and the prayer Paul prayed centuries ago here in EPHESIANS 3:14-21 is still being answered in the lives of all church age potential full overcomers who are running the race to win Christ today.

The key elements of Paul's prayer here in EPHESIANS 3 revolves around ...*being rooted and grounded in love...* that is the inexpressible love of Christ, who gave Himself for our sins, (GALATIANS 1:4); who gave Himself a ransom for all (1 TIMOTHY 2:6); who gave Himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works (2 TIMOTHY 2:14); who gave Himself for the church (EPHESIANS 5:25), who gave Himself for me (GALATIANS 2:20). The second part of this inexpressible love of Christ noted in EPHESIANS 3:19 is that we may also ...*know the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge, that ye might be filled with all the fulness of God.* This point took Brother Hill seventy years of preaching to fully express. To ...*know the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge, that ye might be filled with all the fulness of God...* is a lifetime achievement that can only be fully accomplished with the aid, and assistance of the mighty dunamis {doo'-nam-is} power of the Holy Ghost. Paul here in EPHESIANS 3:18 gives a fourfold measurement of the love of God which is found in Christ Jesus. First he notes the breadth of His love, which Jesus expressed on the cross with his outstretched arms. The breadth of Christ's love is beyond all we could ask or think immense, and immeasurable. In ROMANS 8:35-39 Paul writes: *Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? 36 As it is written, For thy sake we are killed all the day long; we are accounted as sheep for the slaughter. 37 Nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him that loved us. 38 For I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, 39 Nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.* Try to ponder the breadth of this love. The second measurement

we find in EPHESIANS 3:18 is the length of Christ's love for us, which is eternal that takes us far beyond the ages to come (if that is even possible). Christ's love for us gave us eternal life, eternal salvation, eternal glory, eternal inheritance, eternal bliss, etc. After the immense breadth, and length of Christ's immeasurable love for us we find an incomprehensible depth of His love also. Paul wrote a little about this to the Philippians, and expressed some of the incomprehensible depth of Christ's love for us which was manifest in those seven steps He took down from the heights of glory to the depths of the cross to become sin for us, a truly incomprehensible immeasurable depth of love. PHILIPPIANS 2:5 *Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus: 6 Who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God: 7 But made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men: 8 And being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross.* Then in EPHESIANS 3:18 Paul writes concerning the infinite height of Christ's love for us, a height of love that takes us exceedingly above, and far beyond all that we could ever ask, or think, and gives us the opportunity to rule and reign with Christ as sugkleronomos joint-heirs with Christ! Doesn't such a prospect encourage you too "lay aside" (apotithemi {ap-ot-eeth'-ay-mee}) "every weight" with one hundred percent enthusiasm, a whole hearted effort nothing held back, and ...*run with patience the race that is set before...* before you? Again it will take the divine power, cunning guidance, and full overcoming encouragement from the Holy Ghost ruling and reigning in our inner man to win Christ as our Bridegroom! Thank God for the Holy Ghost, and His inspiring our Apostle Paul to pray for us like he did here in EPHESIANS 3.

A simple "Amen" finishes Paul's prayer in EPHESIANS 3:21 right after he prays these concluding words: *Now unto him that is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power (dunamis {doo'-nam-is}) that worketh in us, Unto him be glory in the church by Christ Jesus throughout all ages, world without end...* EPHESIANS 3:20 & 21. There are several sermons just in these two verses because conveyed here are inexpressible possibilities, which we in our thoughts often times regard as impossibilities. Again we are reminded what is stated in LUKE 1:37 *For with God nothing shall be impossible.* God took a man who called himself the chiefest of sinners, and made him the chiefest among the Apostles. That truly seems impossible, but not with God. That same Apostle is our Apostle Paul, who was given one hundred chapters of profound gospel record to write, and among the many verses Paul wrote was ROMANS 16:25, which reads: *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.* The mystery Paul spoke of here was further revealed in the earlier verses of EPHESIANS 3, which we have looked at previously in this study, where we read in EPHESIANS 3:5 & 6 concerning this mystery -- *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; That the Gentiles should be fellowheirs, (sugkleronomos joint-heirs as of a wife with her husband) and of the same body, and partakers of his promise in Christ by the gospel.* In the last part of this 3<sup>rd</sup> chapter of EPHESIANS Paul prays that we can comprehend these concepts, and concludes his prayer with these words we read above: *Now unto him that is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power (dunamis {doo'-nam-is}) that worketh in us, Unto him be glory in the church by Christ Jesus throughout all ages, world without end...* EPHESIANS 3:20 & 21.

Brother Copley wrote this concerning Paul words of EPHESIANS 3:20 & 21. "Amazement staggers, reels, and sits down in a holy hush, overwhelmed with the apostle's added words. We supposed that his vision of our privileges climaxed with the prayer; but nay. His anthem of praise to God is like a tremendous chorus of "AMEN AND AMEN" to the prayer. He glorifies Jehovah for being fully able, yea, powerful to answer his cry - even all that we ask or think. That is wonderful, and stimulates our faith. Is that all? Nay! Nay! There is much more. God is powerful to do "ABOVE ALL that we ask or think." Yes, and "ABUNDANTLY above all." Ah! Yes, "EXCEEDING abundantly above all." Oh, yes, in very deed, the God to whom Paul prayed is powerful enough to do superabundantly more than we ask or think. But our beloved apostle does not stop there in his high

praises. He reverts back to the dynamite of verse sixteen, and shouts, "According to the power that worketh in us" - 3:20. Jehovah is able to do it all. Surely that dynamite operates in us rapidly and effectively, deeply and wonderfully, widely and gloriously, as we yield to the blessed Holy Spirit, who carefully and wisely manipulates the dynamite. Glory! Glory! Hallelujah forever! Most everyone misquotes this verse. Usually people say, "All that we CAN ask or think." Well, God is able to do that much too; though it reads, "All that we ask or think." The implication is that most people ask far below their privileges. Many ask far less than they think, because they have not learned God's grace. Hence, they do not know the great and full provision which has been made for us. The little that people see of divine goodness is too great to suppose that there could be any greater than what they have beheld. But the provision is complete and immense. Therefore, let the dynamite work. Let the Holy Spirit have His way fully. Put full confidence in the dynamite. Let us learn the vast sweep of divine power in a human life. What could anyone desire rather than to "be filled with all the fulness of God"? If it is blessed and profitable to have any measure of His fullness, why not be supremely blessed and superlatively profited and useful to God by being filled unto all His fullness? Furthermore, this immeasurable unspeakable fullness will, no doubt, climax in the preparation of the Bride for the Lamb. Now, hearken to the fullest and sweetest doxology of all the epistles. "Unto Him be glory in the Church by Christ Jesus throughout all ages, world without end. Amen" - 3:21." {End of quoting Brother Copley.}

Let's read again our text of study, which is HEBREWS 12:1 & 2, the eighty-word sentence written you prospective New Testament full overcomers. HEBREWS 11:39 & 40 introduce our text. HEBREWS 11:39 *And these all, having obtained a good report through faith, received not the promise: 40 God having provided some better thing for us, that they without us should not be made perfect* {complete or fully fulfilled}. 12:1 *Wherefore seeing we also are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset us, and let us run with patience the race that is set before us, 2 Looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith; who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God.*

In the last several pages of notes we have spent considerable time discussing the things that the New Testament full overcomer is to "**lay aside**" apotithemi {ap-ot-eeth'-ay-mee}, number 659 in The Strong's Greek Concordance, from our text found in HEBREWS 12:1 *...let us lay aside every weight...* . And we further noted here that the Apostle Paul wants us to think like a racecourse runner, and the encouragement here in HEBREWS 12:1 is to be a racecourse runner, focused upon winning Christ as bridegroom. What racecourse runner encumbers him or herself with extra **weight**? Such action would impede or hinder his or hers progress in winning a race. We thus need to **lay** such encumbrances **aside**, and we mentioned the energy that we the potential New Testament full overcomer are to "**lay aside every weight**" is with one hundred percent enthusiasm, a whole hearted effort nothing held back, an effort that can only be achieved with the divine help and assistance of the Holy Ghost. The full overcomer from this Church Age will be fully yielded to the Holy Ghost, for it will take the power of the Holy Ghost to help *...us lay aside every weight...* that we discussed above. This laying aside (apotithemi {ap-ot-eeth'-ay-mee}) every weight is part of the spiritual battle all full overcomers must face, and to that end Paul wrote this encouragement in 2 CORINTHIANS 10: 3-5 -- *For though we walk in the flesh, we do not war after the flesh: 4 (For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but mighty through God to the pulling down of strong holds;) 5 Casting down imaginations, and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ.* This kind of language just flowed from the mouth, and pen of Paul all through his epistles. Obviously such thoughts were prominent in his mind. We are again reminded of some of the verses we discussed previously, one of which is ROMANS 13:12 where a double emphasis of apotiyhmi is found. ROMANS 13:12 *The night is far spent, the day is at hand: let us* (apotithemi {ap-ot-eeth'-ay-mee}) *therefore cast off* (apotithemi {ap-ot-eeth'-ay-mee}) *the works of darkness, and let us put on the armour of light.*

ROMANS 13:12 also informs us that this weight we are laying aside should be replaced with racecourse running **armour**; ...*let us put on the armour of light*. We also noted that the Greek word translated “**armour**” here is hoplon {hop'-lon}, number 3696 in The Strong’s Greek Concordance, and the literal translation of this part of ROMANS 13:12 reads: “...let us **put on the weapons of the light**.” Paul’s gospel is our **weapon of light**, our **instrument of light**, and our **armour of light**, our (hoplon {hop'-lon}), which the Holy Spirit guides us into. We discussed previously also how this very same **armour of light**, this powerful **weapon**, which is to be **put on** by the racecourse runner is also highlighted in 2 CORINTHIANS 10. 2 CORINTHIANS 10:3 *For though we walk in the flesh, we do not war after the flesh: 4 (For the weapons (hoplon {hop'-lon}) of our warfare are not carnal, but mighty through God to the pulling down of strong holds;) 5 Casting down imaginations, and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ.* ROMANS 13:12 ends with ...*let us put on the armour of light*. We also previously noted that the Greek word translated “**put on**” here is enduo {en-doo'-o}, number 1746 in The Strong’s Greek Concordance, and yes one of the English translations of enduo {en-doo'-o} is “**endued**” as found in these words of Jesus in LUKE 24:49 *And, behold, I send the promise of my Father upon you: but tarry ye in the city of Jerusalem, until ye be endued with power from on high.* Enduo {en-doo'-o} also means to “**put on**,” to be “**clothed with**,” or “**clothed in**,” to “**have on**,” and to be “**arrayed in**.” The Bride of Christ will be arrayed in lampros ...*fine linen, clean and white*... as noted in REVELATION 19:8, the Greek word lampros, number 2986 in The Strong’s Greek Concordance, which is a brilliant, clear, transparent, bright, magnificent, splendid color of white. Thus we begin to see a little more the importance of what is being said here in ROMANS 13:12 when Paul writes: ...*let us put on (enduo {en-doo'-o}) the armour of light*. Two verse later Paul again uses the Greek word enduo {en-doo'-o} -- ROMANS 13:14 *But put ye on (enduo {en-doo'-o}) the Lord Jesus Christ, and make not provision for the flesh, to fulfil the lusts thereof.* No wonder then that Paul prayed for us like he did in EPHESIANS 3:14-21 -- *For this cause I bow my knees unto the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, 15 Of whom the whole family in heaven and earth is named, 16 That he would grant you, according to the riches of his glory, to be strengthened with might (dunamis {doo'-nam-is}) by his Spirit in the inner man; 17 That Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith; that ye, being rooted and grounded in love, 18 May be able to comprehend with all saints what is the breadth, and length, and depth, and height; 19 And to know the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge, that ye might be filled with all the fulness of God. 20 Now unto him that is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power (dunamis {doo'-nam-is}) that worketh in us, 21 Unto him be glory in the church by Christ Jesus throughout all ages, world without end. Amen.*

This brings us to the next point that Paul mentions in HEBREWS 12:1, which is to also apotithemi {ap-ot-eeth'-ay-mee} “**lay aside**” ...*the sin which doth so easily beset us*... . Here again in the Greek we find a unique word in scripture in this phrase, and this word is euperistatos {yoo-per-is'-tat-os}, number 2139 in The Strong’s Greek Concordance, which here is translated “**easily best**.” Euperistatos {yoo-per-is'-tat-os} “**easily best**,” (which is not found elsewhere in scripture) means: “**standing well (easily) around**.” It denotes that which is near, or at hand, or readily occurring. Conybeare translates ...*the sin which doth so easily beset us*... this way: “**and the sin which clingeth closely round us**.” The New Testament translated by Henry Alford says it like this “**and sin, which doth naturally enwrap us**.” The Amplified translation reads: “**and that sin which so readily (defly and cleverly) clings to us**.” The New Testament in Modern Speech by Richard F. Weymouth uses these words: “**let us fling aside... ...the sin that so readily entangles our feet**.” Several commentators are of the opinion that this means: “**the sin which especially winds around us, and hinders our course**,” with allusion to the long Oriental garments. According to this, the meaning would be, that a runner would be careful not to encumber himself with a garment which would be apt to wind around his legs in running, and hinder him, and impede his course. The literal Greek translation of ...*the sin which doth so easily beset us*... simply states: “**the easily surrounding sin**.”

Having now looked at several different translations of this portion of HEBREWS 12:1, we must ask the question: “what is ...*the sin which doth so easily beset us...* ?” The short answer can be summed up in one word: unbelief. Brother Copley wrote: “Unbelief is the powerful sin that besets and upsets racers.” The word “unbelief” is found seventeen times in scripture. Our unbelief must be conquered, and we find in ROMANS 8:37 that ...*in all these things we are more than conquerors through him that loved us*. The very fact that “unbelief” is found seventeen times in scripture is our clue that “unbelief” can be conquered. Seventeen is the number associated with VICTORY IN CHRIST JESUS, and we just read that ...*we are more than conquerors through him that loved us*. Him that loved us is Christ Jesus, *Who gave himself for our sins, that he might deliver us from this present evil world, according to the will of God and our Father...* GALATIANS 1:4. We just read above these words of Jesus in LUKE 24:49 *And, behold, I send the promise of my Father upon you: but tarry ye in the city of Jerusalem, until ye be endued (enduo {en-doo'-o}) with power from on high*. That **power** is the dunamis **power** of the Holy Ghost who enables us to be ...*more than conquerors through him that loved us*. The New Testament full overcomers conquer unbelief with the enabling power of the Holy Ghost. Without the dunamis **power** of the Holy Ghost we Saint’s of the church age stand no chance of being a full overcomer!

Therefore we must “**lay aside**” ...*the sin which doth so easily beset us...* we must apotithemi “**lay aside**” apotithemi {ap-ot-eeth'-ay-mee}, “**put off**” from oneself, “**put away**,” “**cast off**,” “**put aside**,” and with the help of the Holy Ghost “**lay apart**” unbelief. Truly this is a spiritual battle that we face on a daily basis. The umbrella that hangs over the eighty-words of HEBREWS 12:1 & 2 is faith, so we find that we are to “**lay aside**” ...*the sin which doth so easily beset us...* by faith. Recall HEBREWS 11:1 *Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen*. Earlier in this study we expressed it this way; **faith is being not dismayed**. Faith is not unbelief, and again with the help of the Holy Ghost we are equipped to “**lay apart**” unbelief. The Apostle Paul encouraged us along these very same lines like this in EPHESIANS 6:10-18. EPHESIANS 6:10 *Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might. 11 Put on the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil. 12 For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places. 13 Wherefore take unto you the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand. 14 Stand therefore, having your loins girt about with truth, and having on the breastplate of righteousness; 15 And your feet shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace; 16 Above all, taking the shield of faith, wherewith ye shall be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked. 17 And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God: 18 Praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, and watching thereunto with all perseverance and supplication for all saints;...*

The concept of unbelief is found all throughout scripture from GENESIS through REVELATION, and has held back an innumerable multitude from ever becoming an overcomer. Unbelief can simply be defined as a lack of belief, and that is exactly how the Webster’s Dictionary defines it. Unbelief is the opposite of faith. ROMANS 14:23 tells us: ...*for whatsoever is not of faith is sin*. Memorize this little bit of scripture: ...*for whatsoever is not of faith is sin*. These eight words point the way for the full overcomer. Our text of study is HEBREWS 12:1 & 2, which follows the whole 11<sup>th</sup> chapter of HEBREWS 11 that deals with the Old Testament worthies of faith, which chronicles the record of some, who in Old Testament times conquered unbelief. HEBREWS 12:1 & 2 addresses the New Testament worthies of faith. To qualify as a New Testament worthy of faith one must “**lay aside**” ...*the sin which doth so easily beset us...* . In other words to qualify as a New Testament worthy of faith one must be void of unbelief. Let that sink in for a moment. Unbelief will not be part of the wardrobe of a full overcomer. A full overcomer has overcome unbelief. Name one Old Testament worthy of faith who didn’t overcome unbelief. You can’t find one otherwise they wouldn’t be known as worthies of faith.

Consider Abraham again for a moment, who is highlighted as one of the premier worthies of faith in HEBREWS 11. GALATIANS 3:6 & 7 tells us this about Abraham, a guy who in his lifetime didn't have one written word of scripture to fall back on: *Even as Abraham believed God, and it was accounted to him for righteousness. 7 Know ye therefore that they which are of faith, the same are the children of Abraham.* Abraham believed the word of God even though he didn't have one written word of scripture to fall back on. GALATIANS 3:6 references what was said in GENESIS 15:6 concerning Abraham, which reads: *And he believed in the LORD; and he counted it to him for righteousness.* GENESIS 15:6 is also quoted in two other scriptures besides GALATIANS 3:6. ROMANS 4:3 *For what saith the scripture? Abraham believed God, and it was counted unto him for righteousness.* JAMES 2:23 *And the scripture was fulfilled which saith, Abraham believed God, and it was imputed unto him for righteousness: and he was called the Friend of God.* (The daughter-in-law of God will be a friend of God too. Think about it.) Abraham is distinguished in scripture as the father of the faithful, and we read in ROMANS 4:16 that *...Abraham; who is the father of us all,...* that is the father of us all who are of faith; the father of all who believe God. ROMANS 4:19-22 continues to expound on the faith of Abraham, and states: *And being not weak in faith, he considered not his own body now dead, when he was about an hundred years old, neither yet the deadness of Sara's womb: 20 He staggered not at the promise of God through unbelief; but was strong in faith, giving glory to God; 21 And being fully persuaded that, what he had promised, he was able also to perform. 22 And therefore it was imputed to him for righteousness.* Note Abraham was strong in faith being fully persuaded that what God had promised, He was able also to perform, so Abraham staggered not at the promise of God through unbelief; but was strong in faith, giving glory to God. HEBREWS 11:40 speaks of *"some better thing for us,"* which is our promise from God that He has given us everything to the end that we may be sugkleronomos joint-heirs with His Son Jesus Christ. The eighty-word encouragement in HEBREWS 12:1 & 2 explains how this is possible. Again the umbrella that hangs over the eighty-words of HEBREWS 12:1 & 2 is faith. Faith connects HEBREWS 12:1 & 2 with the whole of HEBREWS 11, that exceptional highlight chapter of faith in scripture. Let us be like faithful Abraham, and not stagger at the promises of God through unbelief. Rest assured that the Bride of Christ will be strong in faith having laid aside *...the sin which doth so easily beset us... .*

We mentioned above that the concept of unbelief is found all throughout scripture, and that unbelief is the opposite of faith. Again ROMANS 14:23 states: *...for whatsoever is not of faith is sin.* Let's look at few scriptures where we find classic examples of unbelief, just to further emphasize the point that *...whatsoever is not of faith is sin.* ROMANS 5:12 tells us: *Wherefore, as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned.* 1 TIMOTHY 2:13 and 14 reads: *For Adam was first formed, then Eve. 14 And Adam was not deceived, but the woman being deceived was in the transgression.* So who was the first sinner, Adam or Eve? Eve was in the transgression, thus she gets the distinction of being the very first sinner. Will discuss Adam's roll in this shortly.

Let's go back to GENESIS and read the first account of unbelief in scripture. We will start with some background information found in GENESIS 2:7 *And the LORD God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living soul. 8 And the LORD God planted a garden eastward in Eden; and there he put the man whom he had formed. 9 And out of the ground made the LORD God to grow every tree that is pleasant to the sight, and good for food; the tree of life also in the midst of the garden, and the tree of knowledge of good and evil. ...15 And the LORD God took the man, and put him into the garden of Eden to dress it and to keep it. 16 And the LORD God commanded the man, saying, Of every tree of the garden thou mayest freely eat: 17 But of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it: for in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die.*

Absorb these scriptures for a moment, and recall also what is stated in ROMANS 10:17 *So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.* The emphasis being on hearing the word of God, and hearing with listening ears, and receiving what is heard with receptive hearts of

faith! The word of God that Adam heard here in GENESIS 2:16 & 17 was: *Of every tree of the garden thou mayest freely eat: 17 But of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it: for in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die.*

Now let's read further in GENESIS 2:18 *And the LORD God said, It is not good that the man should be alone; I will make him an help meet for him. ...21 And the LORD God caused a deep sleep to fall upon Adam, and he slept: and he took one of his ribs, and closed up the flesh instead thereof; 22 And the rib, which the LORD God had taken from man, made he a woman, and brought her unto the man. 23 And Adam said, This is now bone of my bones, and flesh of my flesh: she shall be called Woman, because she was taken out of Man.* Eve was also told of this one commandment given by the word of God for her and Adam to follow: *Of every tree of the garden thou mayest freely eat: But of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it: for in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die.*

GENESIS 3:1 *Now the serpent was more subtil than any beast of the field which the LORD God had made. And he said unto the woman, Yea, hath God said, Ye shall not eat of every tree of the garden? 2 And the woman said unto the serpent, We may eat of the fruit of the trees of the garden: 3 But of the fruit of the tree which is in the midst of the garden, God hath said, Ye shall not eat of it, neither shall ye touch it, lest ye die.* Here we find that Eve well knew the one and only commandment that God had given Adam and her to follow. She had with her own ears heard this command. She knew it well. She innocently repeated this command unto the serpent for she had memorized God's instructions. Eve even said to the serpent here in GENESIS 3:3 *...God hath said, Ye shall not eat of it, neither shall ye touch it, lest ye die.* Eve knew that she wasn't even allowed to touch "the tree of life," which was in the midst of the garden, nor "the tree of knowledge of good and evil," which also was in the midst of the garden according to GENESIS 2:9. The point being here is that Eve well knew the little of the word of God that she was given to follow. She could recite God's commandment given her and Adam to follow; she had listened unto these instructions; she had heard this command; she well knew this law given of God, but did she believe in her heart this command of the LORD God? We just noted earlier how that *...Abraham believed God, and it was accounted to him for righteousness...* GALATIANS 3:6; GENESIS 15:6; ROMANS 4:3; and JAMES 2:23. But did Eve believe the word of God? The answer we find in scripture is that no Eve did not believe the word of God at this early point in time in her life. Remember also that unbelief is the opposite of faith. Again ROMANS 14:23 states: *...for whatsoever is not of faith is sin.* So we find in the next verses of GENESIS 3 that Eve gave in to the reasoning of the Satan inspired serpent. Brother Hill used to mention that you are going to believe something, (which is a true statement if you think about it), and Eve we will find believed the words of the serpent more than the word of God. GENESIS 3:4 *And the serpent said unto the woman, Ye shall not surely die: 5 For God doth know that in the day ye eat thereof, then your eyes shall be opened, and ye shall be as gods, knowing good and evil. 6 And when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was pleasant to the eyes, and a tree to be desired to make one wise, she took of the fruit thereof, and did eat,...*

Let's pause in our reading here for a moment, and note that Eve, our great, great, hundreds of times over great grandmother, became the first sinner. And with this one event of unbelief a verse we referenced earlier in this study became scripture: ROMANS 5:12 *Wherefore, as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned.* Eve got the death sentence for her sin, *...and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned.* The Psalmist David knew this too and wrote in PSALMS 51:5 *Behold, I was shapen in iniquity; and in sin did my mother conceive me.*

What about Adam, where was he, and what roll did he have in this tragedy among tragedies? Adam we read above in 1 TIMOTHY 2:14 *...was not deceived, but the woman being deceived was in the transgression.* Adam now had a choice to make, to eat of the forbidden fruit, like his wife Eve just did, and face death; or go back to living alone. Before Eve was formed, Adam had lived alone, and Adam, like no one ever since, knew what it was like being the only person on earth; he knew the empty lonely of it, and Adam knew this with emphasis, it wasn't good to be alone. As we read

above even God had said in GENESIS 2:18 *...It is not good that the man should be alone;... . Adam was created a very intelligent man; a perfect man with the ability to think, and reason. Adam had named all the animals before Eve ever came on the scene, and we read this about Adam in the days before Eve was created: ...but for Adam there was not found an help meet for him... GENESIS 2:20. Think of it like this, before Eve, Adam didn't have a sugkleronomos joint-heir wife to share his every thing with, nor no one here on earth to help him. When God made Adam his wife Eve, Adam was no longer alone, for again God knew that ...It is not good that the man should be alone;... . Adam and Eve were a happy, fully satisfied couple in the garden of Eden before the time frame of GENESIS 3. However now that Eve had sinned here in GENESIS 3:6 the first man Adam had a choice to make, live alone again, or eat of the forbidden fruit, like his wife Eve did, and face death. Adam wanted to live with his bride, the love of his life, the joy that was set before him, so with his eyes fully opened to the consequences, and with time to think about it, Adam willingly did eat. The whole of GENESIS 3:6 reads: *And when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was pleasant to the eyes, and a tree to be desired to make one wise, she took of the fruit thereof, and did eat, and gave also unto her husband with her; and he did eat.**

Here in type Adam pictures Christ, for 2 CORINTHIANS 5:21 tells us: *For he (God the Father) hath made him (Jesus) to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him.* Jesus too wants to forever live with His Bride, but in order to do so He, who knew no sin, willingly had to be made sin for us. Christ's Bride was the joy that was set before Him as He endured the cross for her, for us. *Behold, what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God:...* 1 JOHN 3:1, but the only way to become one of the sons of God is to believe what is said in ROMANS 5:6 that *...Christ died for the ungodly.* ROMANS 5:8 goes on to state: *But God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.* Paul's gospel message in 1 CORINTHIANS 15:3 & 4 says: *For I delivered unto you first of all that which I also received, how that Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures; 4 And that he was buried, and that he rose again the third day according to the scriptures.* Do you too believe this? ROMANS 10:9 states: *That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved.* The first man Adam couldn't redeem Eve, but the last Adam, who is the Lord from heaven, *...gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works...* TITUS 2:14, (along with 1 CORINTHIANS 15:45 & 47).

We are studying some thoughts from this statement found in HEBREWS 12:1 concerning laying aside (apotithemi {ap-ot-eeth'-ay-mee}) *...the sin which doth so easily beset us,...* which we have noted is the unbelief that we so easily seem to latch onto. In our story of Eve above we found that Satan caused her to doubt the word of God, and disobey the commandment her and Adam were given to keep. To doubt the word of God is not a good thing, and is the root cause of so much unbelief. It is interesting to note that the word "doubt" is only found thirteen times in our King James scripture. Thirteen is the number often times associated with REBELLION, a point we noted many years ago in our meaning of Bible numbers study. REBELLION is not a garment that will be found in the wardrobe of a full overcomer. We find in the story of King Saul in 1 SAMUEL 15:23 this statement by the prophet Samuel after King Saul failed to obey the words of the Lord. 1 SAMUEL 15:23 *For rebellion is as the sin of witchcraft, and stubbornness is as iniquity and idolatry. Because thou hast rejected the word of the LORD, he hath also rejected thee from being king.* So we glimpse a little into how unbelief, doubt, rebellion, stubbornness, idolatry, sin and iniquity are all interconnected. Again we repeat what we said above from ROMANS 14:23 *...for whatsoever is not of faith is sin.* The full overcomers are worthies of faith. ROMANS 10:17 *So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.* Let us lay aside unbelief *...the sin which doth so easily beset us,...* and hold fast, and keep the word of God. Jesus tells the church of brotherly love in Philadelphia in REVELATION 3:10 *Because thou hast kept the word of my*

*patience, I also will keep thee from the hour of temptation, which shall come upon all the world, to try them that dwell upon the earth.* This is written to the full overcomers from this church age.

We noted above that the concept of unbelief is found all throughout scripture from GENESIS through REVELATION, and has held back an innumerable multitude from ever becoming an overcomer, a conqueror, and a receiver of the manifold blessings that God intended them to have. It would be a whole other study in itself to search out all the examples of this in scripture. Perhaps we have the best examples of unbelief holding back an innumerable multitude from ever becoming an overcomer, a conqueror, and a receiver of the manifold blessings that God intended them to have in the story of the children of Israel, who as the result of collective unbelief wandered in the wilderness forty years. We will examine more of this directly, but for now let's look at what the Apostle Paul said concerning Israel in the wilderness in 1 CORINTHIANS 10, where Paul points out that the events which happened unto the children of Israel in the wilderness are our examples of what not to do. 1 CORINTHIANS 10:1 *Moreover, brethren, I would not that ye should be ignorant, how that all our fathers were under the cloud, and all passed through the sea; 2 And were all baptized unto Moses in the cloud and in the sea; 3 And did all eat the same spiritual meat; 4 And did all drink the same spiritual drink: for they drank of that spiritual Rock that followed them: and that Rock was Christ. 5 But with many of them God was not well pleased: for they were overthrown in the wilderness. 6 Now these things were our examples, to the intent we should not lust after evil things, as they also lusted. 7 Neither be ye idolaters, as were some of them; as it is written, The people sat down to eat and drink, and rose up to play. 8 Neither let us commit fornication, as some of them committed, and fell in one day three and twenty thousand. 9 Neither let us tempt Christ, as some of them also tempted, and were destroyed of serpents. 10 Neither murmur ye, as some of them also murmured, and were destroyed of the destroyer. 11 Now all these things happened unto them for ensamples: and they are written for our admonition, {instruction; warning} upon whom the ends of the world are come.* Yes "these things happened unto them" Paul wrote, and the reason "these things happened unto them" was that they "were our examples" of what not to do; they "were our examples" of what unbelief can do; and they "were our examples" of where unbelief can take you, which is far short of having God's best! Yes "these things happened unto them" for our learning. *He that hath ears to hear, let him hear...* MATTHEW 11:15; MARK 4:9; LUKE 8:8; LUKE 14:35. Again the last part of ROMANS 14:23 tells us: *...for whatsoever is not of faith is sin.* So with all these examples before us, let us "lay aside" *...the sin which doth so easily beset us...* HEBREWS 12:1.

There are several reminders in different parts of the Bible that the children of Israel were indeed made to wander in the wilderness forty years because of their unbelief. NUMBERS 32:13 states it this way: *And the LORD'S anger was kindled against Israel, and he made them wander in the wilderness forty years, until all the generation, that had done evil in the sight of the LORD, was consumed.* JOSHUA 5:6 said it this way: *For the children of Israel walked forty years in the wilderness, till all the people that were men of war, which came out of Egypt, were consumed, because they obeyed not the voice of the LORD: unto whom the LORD sware that he would not shew them the land, which the LORD sware unto their fathers that he would give us, a land that floweth with milk and honey.* The portion of scripture we just read in 1 CORINTHIANS references Israel's wandering in the wilderness forty years. As we also noted above in 1 CORINTHIANS 10, the children of Israel are examples to us of what not to do if you ever aspire to have God's best. Did God abandon them because of their unbelief? You know God did not forsake them, nor will He ever abandon, or forsake any of His children. The Apostle Paul quoted what Moses himself told the children of Israel in DEUTERONOMY 31:6 & 8 when he wrote in HEBREWS 13:5 *...for he (the Lord) hath said, I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee.* Moses told the children of Israel in DEUTERONOMY 4:31 *(For the LORD thy God is a merciful God;) he will not forsake thee, neither destroy thee, nor forget the covenant of thy fathers which he sware unto them.*

Recall when we did our study on the life of the Apostle Paul that we noted the sermon which is recorded in ACTS 13:16-41, which was preached in the synagogue in Antioch in Pisidia, was a

pattern sermon, in that it was very similar to the kind of sermon Paul first preached in every city he visited. The synagogue services were mainly attended by the Jews, and since Paul was a Pharisee, a sect of the Jews well respected, and looked up to by Jews all over the world, thus when Paul showed up at a synagogue service they allowed him to speak, and preach to them at these synagogues. Furthermore all of the Jews well knew their history as a nation, and knew that their forefathers had wandered in the wilderness for forty years under the guidance of Moses. In ACTS 13:18 the Apostle Paul in his sermon makes reference to this fact, stating: *And about the time of forty years suffered he their manners in the wilderness.* Conybeare and Howson translated this verse like this: *And about the time of forty years, even as a nurse beareth her child, so bare He them through the wilderness.* Did we see much growth and development in the children of Israel while they wandered in the wilderness? No, not really. Of those that crossed the Red Sea only two over the age of twenty got to live on the other side of the Jordan river, that being Joshua and Caleb. Unbelief hindered the majority of the mature Israelites from proper spiritual growth and development, which would take them to their rightful inheritance in the land of Canaan. In a way they picture to us the innumerable multitude of REVELATION 7:9-17, who only have learned the salvation of the Lord, and have grown no further, thus they spent years in a wilderness type place, a place which obviously stymied their growth. The children of Israel could have gone in to the land of Canaan to their rightful inheritance years earlier had it not been for their unbelief, which simply is a lack of faith. Unbelief is like an anchor holding one back from proper growth or making any progress in living a life of faith. The Apostle Paul wrote: *...the just shall live by faith...* and he repeated this statement three times: ROMANS 1:17, GALATIANS 3:11 and HEBREWS 10:38. But what if the just, that is those who are saved, justified by the blood of the Lamb; what if they rebel and refuse to live by faith? Then they are like the children of Israel wandering in the wilderness full of unbelief and lacking spiritual growth. Yet God remains faithful, and we read again what is stated in ACTS 13:18 *And about the time of forty years, even as a nurse beareth her child, so bare He them through the wilderness.*

We read this in EXODUS 13:21 & 22 -- *And the LORD went before them by day in a pillar of a cloud, to lead them the way; and by night in a pillar of fire, to give them light; to go by day and night: 22 He took not away the pillar of the cloud by day, nor the pillar of fire by night, from before the people.* In other words God provided them shade by day, heat by night as He brought them through the wilderness for forty years. Additionally He fed them, watered them, and provided every provision for them these forty years. PSALMS 105:39-41 says it like this: *He spread a cloud for a covering; and fire to give light in the night. 40 The people asked, and he brought quails, and satisfied them with the bread of heaven. 41 He opened the rock, and the waters gushed out; they ran in the dry places like a river.* DEUTERONOMY 8:1-4 gives this account: *All the commandments which I command thee this day shall ye observe to do, that ye may live, and multiply, and go in and possess the land which the LORD sware unto your fathers. 2 And thou shalt remember all the way which the LORD thy God led thee these forty years in the wilderness, to humble thee, and to prove thee, to know what was in thine heart, whether thou wouldest keep his commandments, or no. 3 And he humbled thee, and suffered thee to hunger, and fed thee with manna, which thou knewest not, neither did thy fathers know; that he might make thee know that man doth not live by bread only, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of the LORD doth man live. 4 Thy raiment waxed not old upon thee, neither did thy foot swell, these forty years.* So we see in all of these scriptures that God did not forsake, nor abandon His chosen people, *And about the time of forty years suffered he their manners in the wilderness...* ACTS 13:18. But because of their unbelief they spent the rest of their lifetime wasting in the wilderness, never reaching the land promised them, which they could have lived in but for their unbelief, which was brought to the forefront at Kadesh-barnea, a story of unbelief that we will now get to.

In DEUTERONOMY we read the last speech Moses gave unto the children of Israel after wandering these forty years in the wilderness, and in DEUTERONOMY 1:2 we read: *(There are eleven days' journey from Horeb [where the children of Israel were in EXODUS 17] by the way of*

mount Seir unto Kadesh-barnea.) The actions of the children of Israel at Kadesh-barnea is the epitome of unbelief, and we will look further into this shortly. Again recall what is said in the last part of ROMANS 14:23 *...for whatsoever is not of faith is sin...* and we see this in the story of Kadesh-barnea. Here in DEUTERONOMY 1:3-18 Moses recalls how the children came unto Kadesh-barnea, and then he continues his summary in verse 19 -- *And when we departed from Horeb, we went through all that great and terrible wilderness, which ye saw by the way of the mountain of the Amorites, as the LORD our God commanded us; and we came to Kadeshbarnea. 20 And I said unto you, Ye are come unto the mountain of the Amorites, which the LORD our God doth give unto us. 21 Behold, the LORD thy God hath set the land before thee: go up and possess it, as the LORD God of thy fathers hath said unto thee; fear not, neither be discouraged. 22 And ye came near unto me every one of you, and said, We will send men before us, and they shall search us out the land, and bring us word again by what way we must go up, and into what cities we shall come. 23 And the saying pleased me well: and I took twelve men of you, one of a tribe: 24 And they turned and went up into the mountain, and came unto the valley of Eshcol, and searched it out. 25 And they took of the fruit of the land in their hands, and brought it down unto us, and brought us word again, and said, It is a good land which the LORD our God doth give us. 26 Notwithstanding ye would not go up, but rebelled against the commandment of the LORD your God: 27 And ye murmured in your tents, and said, Because the LORD hated us, he hath brought us forth out of the land of Egypt, to deliver us into the hand of the Amorites, to destroy us. 28 Whither shall we go up? our brethren have discouraged our heart, saying, The people is greater and taller than we; the cities are great and walled up to heaven; and moreover we have seen the sons of the Anakims there. 29 Then I said unto you, Dread not, neither be afraid of them. 30 The LORD your God which goeth before you, he shall fight for you, according to all that he did for you in Egypt before your eyes; 31 And in the wilderness, where thou hast seen how that the LORD thy God bare thee, as a man doth bear his son, in all the way that ye went, until ye came into this place. 32 Yet in this thing ye did not believe the LORD your God, 33 Who went in the way before you, to search you out a place to pitch your tents in, in fire by night, to shew you by what way ye should go, and in a cloud by day. 34 And the LORD heard the voice of your words, and was wroth, and sware, saying, 35 Surely there shall not one of these men of this evil generation see that good land, which I sware to give unto your fathers, 36 Save Caleb the son of Jephunneh; he shall see it, and to him will I give the land that he hath trodden upon, and to his children, because he hath wholly followed the LORD. 37 Also the LORD was angry with me for your sakes, saying, Thou also shalt not go in thither. 38 But Joshua the son of Nun, which standeth before thee, he shall go in thither: encourage him: for he shall cause Israel to inherit it. 39 Moreover your little ones, which ye said should be a prey, and your children, which in that day had no knowledge between good and evil, they shall go in thither, and unto them will I give it, and they shall possess it. 40 But as for you, turn you, and take your journey into the wilderness by the way of the Red sea. 41 Then ye answered and said unto me, We have sinned against the LORD, we will go up and fight, according to all that the LORD our God commanded us. And when ye had girded on every man his weapons of war, ye were ready to go up into the hill. 42 And the LORD said unto me, Say unto them, Go not up, neither fight; for I am not among you; lest ye be smitten before your enemies. 43 So I spake unto you; and ye would not hear, but rebelled against the commandment of the LORD, and went presumptuously up into the hill. 44 And the Amorites, which dwelt in that mountain, came out against you, and chased you, as bees do, and destroyed you in Seir, even unto Hormah. 45 And ye returned and wept before the LORD; but the LORD would not hearken to your voice, nor give ear unto you. 46 So ye abode in Kadesh many days, according unto the days that ye abode there.*

Most of the story concerning the unbelief of Israel at Kadesh-barnea is also told in NUMBERS 14. God told Moses and Aaron what would be the consequences of the unbelief of the children of Israel, and we read this in NUMBERS 14:26 *And the LORD spake unto Moses and unto Aaron, saying, 27 How long shall I bear with this evil congregation, which murmur against me? I have heard the murmurings of the children of Israel, which they murmur against me. 28 Say unto*

*them, As truly as I live, saith the LORD, as ye have spoken in mine ears, so will I do to you: 29 Your carcasses shall fall in this wilderness; and all that were numbered of you, according to your whole number, from twenty years old and upward, which have murmured against me, 30 Doubtless ye shall not come into the land, concerning which I sware to make you dwell therein, save Caleb the son of Jephunneh, and Joshua the son of Nun. 31 But your little ones, which ye said should be a prey, them will I bring in, and they shall know the land which ye have despised. 32 But as for you, your carcasses, they shall fall in this wilderness. 33 And your children shall wander in the wilderness forty years, and bear your whoredoms, until your carcasses be wasted in the wilderness. 34 After the number of the days in which ye searched the land, even forty days, each day for a year, shall ye bear your iniquities, even forty years, and ye shall know my breach of promise. 35 I the LORD have said, I will surely do it unto all this evil congregation, that are gathered together against me: in this wilderness they shall be consumed, and there they shall die.*

You know what is really sad about this whole forty years of wandering? The fact that *...There are eleven days' journey from Horeb* (where the children of Israel were in EXODUS 17) *by the way of mount Seir unto Kadeshbarnea...* DEUTERONOMY 1:2. Eleven is the number of INSUFFICIENCY. Insufficiency or lack of sufficient faith is what held the children of Israel back from obtaining their rightful inheritance nearly forty years earlier than they did. Brother Hawkins wrote a commentary on the book of NUMBERS, and he entitled his chapter on NUMBERS 14 "THE CONSEQUENCES OF UNBELIEF," of which he found seven. NUMBERS 14:1 records that all the children of Israel *"...lifted up their voice, and cried; and people wept that night."* Brother Hawkins here noted: "What should have been a glorious time rejoicing in the Lord at the prospect of going in and possessing such a beautiful and bountiful land, has turned to heartache and misery for Israel, because of unbelief. They shed tears of unbelief, which God never intended that any of His people should shed. Many lives are broken and bruised, and many tears spilled, because men, like Israel, have simply failed to believe God." In NUMBERS 14:2 we read: *And all the children of Israel murmured against Moses and against Aaron.* Brother Hawkins labeled this *"...another devastating blow of unbelief. When people do not lay hold of God's provisions, they may blame God's leaders for their troubles."* Also in NUMBERS 14:2 Brother Hawkins found *"the third very damaging result of unbelief is the development of a defeatist attitude: Would God that we had died in the land of Egypt! or would God we had died in this wilderness!* Neither of these was ever God's purpose for Israel, but when people do not believe Him, their minds turn to negative destruction. Lost in their conscious minds, were all the wonderful purposes and victory, which God ordained for them, and all the provisions which His grace provided. The fourth lie published by unbelief, is *...Wherefore hath the Lord brought us unto this land, to fall by the sword?* NUMBERS 14:3. At first, they only blamed God's representatives, Moses and Aaron; but unbelief and rebellion will eventually find fault with God Himself. It is one thing to take our trials and adversities from the hand of a loving Father, who will work all things for our good; it is another to blame Him for the things that happen to us, and accuse Him of trying to destroy us. We shall see that God will not condone such abuse indefinitely." Brother Hawkins continues with the fifth point of unbelief, which is found in the last statement of NUMBERS 14:3 *...were it not better for us to return to Egypt?* Brother Hawkins here wrote: "Unbelief does not behold the grandeur of Canaan. Those bound by it cannot appreciate the eternal blessings of the heavenly land to which we have been called. Their vision was filled only with Egypt, which pictures the temporal values of the world. Thus, we hear them say next in NUMBERS 14:4 *Let us make a captain, and let us return into Egypt.* They despised and rejected their God-given leader, Moses. God had chosen Moses to lead them OUT of Egypt, and to be sure, if they insisted on returning, they would need a captain of their own choosing. Neither God nor Moses would be a party to it. When we take this attitude, we are assuming leadership of our own lives. Unbelief will cause us to refuse to acknowledge the authority of anyone else, and our own leadership will take us back to Egypt, even though our conduct may be religious. The final result of unbelief is death. NUMBERS 14:36 *And the men, which Moses sent to search the land, who returned, and made all the congregation to murmur against him, by bringing up a slander upon the land, 37 even*

*those men that did bring up the evil report upon the land, died by the plague before the Lord.* The men who were responsible for stirring up such unbelief and bringing up a slander against the land, even those men died before the Lord. The damage done by unbelief is much more than just the loss of eternal wealth, which could have been obtained. It carries with it many painful experiences.” Of course Brother Hawkins had much more to say in his commentary of NUMBERS 14, which you can find on his, and our website, or in his NUMBERS study book.

Let’s move ahead in our time line of the forty years wanderings of the children of Israel in the wilderness, and return to DEUTERONOMY for the rest of the story. In DEUTERONOMY 2:14 Moses continues telling of the wanderings after leaving Kadesh-barnea: *And the space in which we came from Kadeshbarnea, until we were come over the brook Zered, was thirty and eight years; until all the generation of the men of war were wasted out from among the host, as the LORD sware unto them.* Thirty-eight years passed from when they were first at Kadesh-barnea until the Lord allowed them to cross over brook Zered. These thirty-eight years was the lifetime of those unbelievers twenty-years old and above that we read about in NUMBERS 14. Recall what we read in DEUTERONOMY 1:2 (*There are eleven days’ journey from Horeb by the way of mount Seir unto Kadeshbarnea.*) Brother Hill in his Bible next to DEUTERONOMY 2:14 wrote: “They spent a lifetime on a eleven day journey.” {End of quote from Brother Hill.} The point being emphasized here is that unbelief takes you nowhere, which is far short of having God’s best! Therefore let us move forward by faith, and lay aside (apotithemi {ap-ot-eeth'-ay-mee}) unbelief, ...*the sin which doth so easily beset us, and let us run with patience the race that is set before us...* HEBREWS 12:1.

When we began our discussion on unbelief, ...*the sin which doth so easily beset us...* here in HEBREWS 12:1, we mentioned that the concept of unbelief is found all throughout scripture from GENESIS through REVELATION, and that unbelief is like an anchor that has held back an innumerable multitude from ever becoming an overcomer, a conqueror, and a receiver of the manifold blessings that God intended them to have. We noted that unbelief can simply be defined as a lack of belief, and that is exactly how the Webster’s Dictionary defines it. Unbelief is the opposite of faith. Unbelief is a lack of faith. ROMANS 14:23 tells us: *...for whatsoever is not of faith is sin.* **Believing not** is another way to define unbelief. Let’s look at a verse in JUDE that further emphasizes this point. JUDE 1:5 *I will therefore put you in remembrance, though ye once knew this, how that the Lord, having saved the people out of the land of Egypt, afterward destroyed them that believed not.* This is how Jude under the inspiration of the Holy Ghost records the account we just examined above in our discussion concerning the children of Israel wandering forty years in the wilderness; wandering because of their unbelief.

Here is something to make a note of, and that is the phrase “**believed not**,” which we just read in JUDE 1:5, is found nineteen times in scripture. Nineteen as you may recall is the number pointing to FAITH, and our lessons here in HEBREWS 12:1 & 2 concern the New Testament worthies of faith. Yet we also find the phrase “**believed not**” nineteen times in scripture. And “**believed not**” is the opposite of faith is it not? So how are we to correlate the fact that nineteen is the number pointing to FAITH, and the phrase “**believed not**” is also found nineteen times in scripture? Here is the answer. When we find the phrase “**believed not**” in scripture, it often shows us the consequences of not having FAITH. A good example of this is found in HEBREWS 3:7-18, which also makes reference to the children of Israel wandering in the wilderness for forty years because they “**believed not**” the God of their salvation. HEBREWS 3:7 *Wherefore (as the Holy Ghost saith, To day if ye will hear his voice, 8 Harden not your hearts, as in the provocation, in the day of temptation in the wilderness: 9 When your fathers tempted me, proved me, and saw my works forty years. 10 Wherefore I was grieved with that generation, and said, They do alway err in their heart; and they have not known my ways. 11 So I sware in my wrath, They shall not enter into my rest.) 12 Take heed, brethren, lest there be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief, in departing from the living God. 13 But exhort one another daily, while it is called To day; lest any of you be hardened through the deceitfulness of sin. 14 For we are made partakers of Christ, if we hold the beginning of our confidence stedfast unto the end; 15 While it is said, To day if ye will hear his*

voice, harden not your hearts, as in the provocation. 16 For some, when they had heard, did provoke: howbeit not all that came out of Egypt by Moses. 17 But with whom was he grieved forty years? was it not with them that had sinned, whose carcasses fell in the wilderness? 18 And to whom swore he that they should not enter into his rest, but to them that **believed not**? 19 So we see that they could not enter in because of **unbelief**. So here again we see the admonishment to move forward by faith, and lay aside (apotithemi {ap-ot-eeth'-ay-mee}) unbelief, ...*the sin which doth so easily beset us, and let us run with patience the race that is set before us...* HEBREWS 12:1.

We found earlier in this study that Rahab had “eyes of faith,” and that by **faith Rahab was not dismayed** with what God could do, and with what God had already done. Rahab told the spies in JOSHUA 2:9 ...*I know that the LORD hath given you the land, and that your terror is fallen upon us, and that all the inhabitants of the land faint because of you.* 10 *For we have heard how the LORD dried up the water of the Red sea for you, when ye came out of Egypt; and what ye did unto the two kings of the Amorites, that were on the other side Jordan, Sihon and Og, whom ye utterly destroyed.* 11 *And as soon as we had heard these things, our hearts did melt, neither did there remain any more courage in any man, because of you: for the LORD your God, he is God in heaven above, and in earth beneath.* This is a confession of faith is it not? Thus find that Rahab is recorded by name in The Old Testament hall of fame chapter of the worthies of faith, HEBREWS 11, and we read in HEBREWS 11:31 *By faith the harlot Rahab perished not with them that **believed not**, when she had received the spies with peace.* Here again we find the phrase “**believed not**” showing us the consequences of not having FAITH. In Jericho those inhabitants who “**believed not**” perished. Rahab had accepted the messengers sent from Joshua, and believed their message that Joshua was coming soon. Since she mightily believed in the LORD God of Israel, she was allowed, by the grace of God, to remain alive, and to become an important part in the history of Israel, and an outstanding example of a worthy of faith. How did Rahab become an important part in the history of Israel? She married a prominent man of the children of Israel named Salmon, and through this union according to MATTHEW 1:5 came Boaz, who married Ruth, and from that union came Obed the grandfather of David, through which lineage came Jesus Christ! Rahab thus was one of the great-grandmothers of Jesus! And the reason for this was that she believed in the LORD God of Israel, and by **faith Rahab was not dismayed** with what God could do, and did do in her life by faith.

Rahab also was the great-great-great-grandmother to David, another worthy of faith mentioned by name in HEBREWS 11:32, who himself was astonished that at the words Goliath spoke unto all Israel, who when they heard the words of this giant Philistine, they were dismayed, and greatly afraid according to 1 SAMUEL 17:11. 1 SAMUEL 17:16 goes on to tell: *And the Philistine drew near morning and evening, and presented himself forty days.* On the fortieth day we find David being sent by his father Jesse to see how his older brothers were holding up at the front lines of the conflict between Israel and the Philistines. Let’s read starting in 1 SAMUEL 17:23 *And as he talked with them, behold, there came up the champion, the Philistine of Gath, Goliath by name, out of the armies of the Philistines, and spake according to the same words: and David heard them.* 24 *And all the men of Israel, when they saw the man, fled from him, and were sore afraid.* We could say it this way: all the men of Israel **believed not** that they were able to win a fight against Goliath. There was an innumerable multitude among all the men of Israel who were full of such unbelief. But David knew that one with God is a majority. And you all know the story of what happened next, but let’s read it again starting in 1 SAMUEL 17:40 *And he (David) took his staff in his hand, and chose him five smooth stones out of the brook, and put them in a shepherd’s bag which he had, even in a scrip; and his sling was in his hand: and he drew near to the Philistine.* 41 *And the Philistine came on and drew near unto David; and the man that bare the shield went before him.* 42 *And when the Philistine looked about, and saw David, he despised him: (he despised David, and looked on him as worthless) for he was but a youth, and ruddy, and of a fair countenance.* 43 *And the Philistine said unto David, Am I a dog, that thou comest to me with staves? And the Philistine cursed David by his gods.* 44 *And the Philistine said to David, Come to me, and I will give thy flesh unto the fowls of the air, and to the beasts of the field.* 45 *Then said David to the Philistine, Thou comest to me with a*

sword, and with a spear, and with a shield: but I come to thee in the name of the LORD of hosts, the God of the armies of Israel, whom thou hast defied. 46 This day will the LORD deliver thee into mine hand; and I will smite thee, and take thine head from thee; and I will give the carcasses of the host of the Philistines this day unto the fowls of the air, and to the wild beasts of the earth; that all the earth may know that there is a God in Israel. 47 And all this assembly shall know that the LORD saveth not with sword and spear: for the battle is the LORD'S, and he will give you into our hands. (Now of this is not a statement of faith, I don't know what is. There was no doubt in these words. There was no believe not in these words. There was no unbelief in these words. There was only the substance of things hoped for, and the evidence of things not yet seen in these historic words of faith of David.) 48 *And it came to pass, when the Philistine arose, and came and drew nigh to meet David, that David hasted, and ran toward the army to meet the Philistine. 49 And David put his hand in his bag, and took thence a stone, and slang it, and smote the Philistine in his forehead, that the stone sunk into his forehead; and he fell upon his face to the earth. 50 So David prevailed over the Philistine with a sling and with a stone, and smote the Philistine, and slew him.* So again with this Old Testament account, written for our learning, we are again encouraged to move forward by faith, and lay aside (apotithemi {ap-ot-eeth'-ay-mee}) unbelief, ...***the sin which doth so easily beset us, and let us run with patience the race that is set before us...*** HEBREWS 12:1.

We have now examined several accounts of unbelief, ...***the sin which doth so easily beset us...*** (HEBREWS 12:1) from Old Testament scripture, so let's look at a few of the many examples of unbelief that are found in New Testament. We will start in JOHN, the gospel record, which pictures to us Jesus the Son of God as the Supreme Divine Ageless Eternal Heavenly One, typified by the high flying soaring in the heavenlies eagle, the One who causes us to have upward heavenly look, the One whose name is exalted above all names, whose heavenly story is found told in the gospel of JOHN. JOHN 1:1-3 tells us: *In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. 2 The same was in the beginning with God. 3 All things were made by him; and without him was not any thing made that was made.* The Apostle Paul said the very same thing this way concerning Jesus in COLOSSIANS 1:16 & 17 -- *For by him were all things created, that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers: all things were created by him, and for him: 17 And he is before all things, and by him all things consist.* JOHN 1:10 goes on to state that: *He was in the world, and the world was made by him, and the world knew him not.*

For a brief moment let's jump ahead to the time of the last supper, and read a couple of statements found in JOHN 13. JOHN 13:1 *Now before the feast of the passover, when Jesus knew that his hour was come that he should depart out of this world unto the Father, having loved his own which were in the world, he loved them unto the end.* JOHN 13:23 *Now there was leaning on Jesus' bosom one of his disciples, whom Jesus loved. 24 Simon Peter therefore beckoned to him, that he should ask who it should be of whom he spake. 25 He then lying on Jesus' breast saith unto him, Lord, who is it?* Now we know that Jesus loved all of His disciples, and we just read that He loved them to the end, so who is this disciple John is referencing in JOHN 13:23 & 25? We know by studying JOHN 21:20 & 24 that this disciple is none other that the Apostle John himself. JOHN 21:20 *Then Peter, turning about, seeth the disciple whom Jesus loved following; which also leaned on his breast at supper, and said, Lord, which is he that betrayeth thee? 21 Peter seeing him saith to Jesus, Lord, and what shall this man do? 22 Jesus saith unto him, If I will that he tarry till I come, what is that to thee? follow thou me. 23 Then went this saying abroad among the brethren, that that disciple should not die: yet Jesus said not unto him, He shall not die; but, If I will that he tarry till I come, what is that to thee? 24 This is the disciple which testifieth of these things, and wrote these things: and we know that his testimony is true.*

So we see how close the Apostle John was to Jesus, our loving Lord allowing John to lean, and lie on His breast at the time of the last supper. Later in life the Apostle John wrote this in 1 JOHN 1:1 *That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked upon, and our hands have handled, of the Word of life.* With this

information now being revealed, let's go back to JOHN 1:14 and read what the Apostle John wrote there: *And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father,) full of grace and truth.*

I imagine that John as he wrote these words in his 1<sup>st</sup> chapter of JOHN, he must have thought of it like this in his heart: JOHN 1:1 *In the beginning was the Word, (and to think my ...hands have handled... Him, touched Him, and held Him), and the Word was with God, and the Word was God...* (and to think my ...hands have handled... Him, touched Him, and held Him, and I got to behold Him with my own two eyes, wow)! 2 *The same was in the beginning with God.* 3 *All things were made by him; and without him was not any thing made that was made...* (and to think that my ...hands have handled... Him, touched Him, and held Him)! ...10 *He was in the world, and the world was made by him, and the world knew him not...* (and to think my hands have also handled Him, touched Him, and held Him)! ...14 *And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, ...*(and to think what a privilege was mine to have my hands handle Him, to touched Him, and to hold Him, to look into His tender loving eyes as I got to lie upon His breast after the last supper, and feel His breath,) ...*(and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father,) full of grace and truth.* Yes these words that the Apostle John penned under the inspiration, and guidance of the Holy Ghost were powerful words, and brought back a flood of almost unbelievable memories of the three or so years that John was with Jesus.

With so many overwhelming good memories flooding his mind, it must have been rather difficult for the Apostle John to document what is said in JOHN 1:11 *He came unto his own, and his own received him not.* The Greek literal translation of JOHN 1:11 reads: "He came to (His) own, and (His) own did not receive Him." We know with his own two eyes the Apostle John witnessed the fact that Jesus *...came unto his own, and his own received him not...* and the reality of this statement may have triggered the Apostle John to write the whole account called The Gospel According to JOHN. As you ponder for yourself the eleven words of JOHN 1:11, meditate beyond the surface of what is being said here. *He came unto his own...* His own people, whom He created, unto His own country, which He also created. DEUTERONOMY 7:6 records these words of the Moses spoken to the children of Israel: *For thou art an holy people unto the LORD thy God: the LORD thy God hath chosen thee to be a special people unto himself, above all people that are upon the face of the earth.* DEUTERONOMY 14:2 goes on to state: *For thou art an holy people unto the LORD thy God, and the LORD hath chosen thee to be a peculiar people unto himself, above all the nations that are upon the earth.* Here in JOHN 1:11 Jesus came unto his own chosen peculiar people. Furthermore in JOHN 1:11 we again read that *...He came unto his own, and his own received him not.* His own people received Him not. Why? Simply because of **unbelief**, and remember we are still discussing that phrase in HEBREWS 12:1 concerning **unbelief, ...the sin which doth so easily beset us.** Here in JOHN 1:11 we find John telling us that those who **believed not**, also **believed not** that Jesus was the Son of God. They **didn't believe** Jesus was in the beginning with God. They **didn't believe** that Jesus was the Word. They did **not believe** that *...All things were made by him; and without him was not any thing made that was made...* JOHN 1:3. They also **believed not** that Jesus was the Saviour. They also **believed not** that He was *...the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world...* JOHN 1:29. They **didn't believe** Jesus *...was made flesh, and dwelt among us, ... full of grace and truth...* as is recorded in JOHN 1:14. Recall that eleven is the number of INSUFFICIENCY, and as we noted earlier, insufficiency or lack of sufficient faith, which is what held the children of Israel back from obtaining their rightful inheritance nearly forty years earlier than they did. The eleven words of JOHN 1:11 speak to a lack of faith still found in the majority of the children of Israel a the time of Jesus' ministry here on earth. JOHN 1:11 *He came unto his own, and his own received him not.* They indeed were possessors of **unbelief, ...the sin which doth so easily beset us.**

In JOHN 1:12 John turns his attention away from the unbelievers, and writes: *But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name.* Now here is an interesting point: the word "believe" is found 143 times in scripture, and 52

of these times is in the gospel according to JOHN. Furthermore the word “**believeth**” is found 45 times in scripture, and the Apostle John uses the word “**believeth**” more than any other author of scripture, writing it 17 times in his gospel record. Seventeen is the number that has to do with VICTORY IN CHRIST JESUS. I am sure that the Apostle John didn’t know this, but the Holy Ghost did, so it is by Divine design that the Apostle John wrote “**believeth**” seventeen times in the gospel of JOHN. Along these same lines we find the Apostle John using the word “**believed**” 27 times in the book of JOHN. The number 27 concerns the PREACHING OF THE GOSPEL, and the Apostle John certainly did this, as did Jesus. We read Jesus usage of these words recorded by John in that now famous lesson of JOHN 3 where Jesus tells Nicodemus how to get saved. Jesus tells that well educated Pharisee Nicodemus in JOHN 3:14-17 -- *And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of man be lifted up: 15 That whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have eternal life. 16 For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life. 17 For God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world; but that the world through him might be saved. 18 He that believeth on him is not condemned: but he that believeth not is condemned already, because he hath not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God.* Over the centuries millions have received Jesus Christ as their personal Saviour by believing these scriptures. John goes on to write in 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.*

In JOHN 3:18 we just read: *He that believeth on him is not condemned: but he that believeth not is condemned already, because he hath not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God.* “**Believeth not**” and “**not believed**” are two different ways of expressing **unbelief**, ...*the sin which doth so easily beset us*,... HEBREWS 12:1. We wouldn’t expect to find **unbelief** in the home of Jesus would we? Yet we read accounts of this happening in all the gospel records, including John’s. In MATTHEW 13:55 & 56 we read of Jesus brothers and sisters, that is children of the same mother: *Is not this the carpenter's son? is not his mother called Mary? and his brethren, James, and Joses, and Simon, and Judas? 56 And his sisters, are they not all with us?* So we see that Jesus had four brothers, and at least two sisters. These were really half brothers, and half sisters because only Jesus was conceived of the Holy Ghost according to MATTHEW 1:20. Jesus mother Mary was a virgin when Jesus was conceived. Jesus brothers and sisters were conceived by natural means, Joseph being their father. In MARK 6:3 we again read of Jesus brothers and sisters: *Is not this the carpenter, the son of Mary, the brother of James, and Joses, and of Juda, and Simon? and are not his sisters here with us?* We do not find Jesus brothers and sisters mentioned by name in LUKE or JOHN, but they are mentioned in a collective sense in LUKE 8:19 & 20, and JOHN 7:5. LUKE 8:19-21 records: *Then came to him his mother and his brethren, and could not come at him for the press. 20 And it was told him by certain which said, Thy mother and thy brethren stand without, desiring to see thee. 21 And he answered and said unto them, My mother and my brethren are these which hear the word of God, and do it.* JOHN 7:5 says this: *For neither did his brethren believe in him.*

When I first began teaching the adult Sunday School class 29 years ago I had some serious questions about this verse, and went to Brother Hill for some clarification concerning who the “**brethren**” were that are found in JOHN 7:5. Brother Hill said: “well let’s see,” and he showed me an old, and very large expounded reference Bible, which he had upon his desk. He turned to JOHN 7:5 and read that the “**brethren**” that were being referenced here were “**children of the same mother.**” In other words these were the above-mentioned four half brothers of Jesus. Brother Hill told me if I ever had another question like that to come into his office, and we would look up the verse together, and that I could look at that reference book anytime in his office. I never had another question come up again that I needed to use this resource, but I am glad Brother Hill used it in his studies. But think about the magnitude of what is stated here in JOHN 7:5, that during the time of Jesus ministry here on earth, His brothers did not believe in him: *For neither did his brethren believe in him.* Just knowing this fact helps clarify some other points, which we will now look into that will better

connect the dots on what we are studying here in scripture concerning **unbelief, ...the sin which doth so easily beset us...** HEBREWS 12:1.

The fact that Jesus own brothers didn't believe in Him adds another layer of meaning to what is said in JOHN 1:11 *He came unto his own, and his own received him not.* Imagine how Jesus felt about this too, His little brothers, whom He helped His mother take care of when they were growing up, they didn't receive Him as the Son of God full of grace and truth. MARK 6:6 states this concerning Jesus right after the mention of His brothers and sisters: *And he marvelled because of their unbelief.* Jesus was greatly surprised at their unbelief because he came from a place where unbelief did not exist. And MARK 6:5 further informs us: *And he could there do no mighty work, save that he laid his hands upon a few sick folk, and healed them.* Again we find emphasized the fact that unbelief takes you nowhere, which is far short of having God's best! Recall an eleven days journey was stalled by 38 years because of the unbelief of the children of Israel in the wilderness, {study again DEUTERONOMY 1:2 along with DEUTERONOMY 2:14}.

Again JOHN 7:5 tells us: *For neither did his brethren believe in him.* Jesus was close to His earthly family, and the Apostle John first makes mention of them in JOHN 2. Recall in JOHN 2:1-12 we read the story of Jesus first miracle, the turning of water into wine at the marriage in Cana of Galilee. In JOHN 2:11 & 12 we read: *This beginning of miracles did Jesus in Cana of Galilee, and manifested forth his glory; and his disciples believed on him. 12 After this he went down to Capernaum, he, and his mother, and his brethren, and his disciples: and they continued there not many days.* Verse 12 is the last mention of Jesus brothers until JOHN 7. And take careful note what the Apostle John writes in verse 11 *...and his disciples believed on him.* What about Jesus brothers, why weren't they mentioned as having believed on Him? Because as JOHN 7:5 tells us: *For neither did his brethren believe in him.* This fact didn't change until after Jesus was crucified, and the Apostle John helps bring out this point.

Let's turn to JOHN 19 and see while Jesus was dying on the cross He entrusted the care of his mother Mary to the disciple whom He loved, whom we know was the Apostle John. JOHN 19:25 *Now there stood by the cross of Jesus his mother, and his mother's sister, Mary the wife of Cleophas, and Mary Magdalene. 26 When Jesus therefore saw his mother, and the disciple standing by, whom he loved, he saith unto his mother, Woman, behold thy son! 27 Then saith he to the disciple, Behold thy mother! And from that hour that disciple took her unto his own home.* So we see that the Apostle John was the one chosen by our Lord Jesus Christ to take care of His mother Mary after His death upon the cross. No doubt this was a low blow to Jesus brothers, who should of had the care of their mother, but at the time of the crucifixion of Jesus they were not yet believers in Christ. Nothing had changed in Jesus brother's hearts since JOHN 7:5 was written: *For neither did his brethren believe in him.*

In JOHN 20 we read of the resurrection of Jesus Christ, and some of the events that took place that day, and shortly thereafter. Let's read starting in JOHN 20:19, which records what took place on the evening of Jesus resurrection. JOHN 20:19 *Then the same day at evening, being the first day of the week, when the doors were shut where the disciples were assembled for fear of the Jews, came Jesus and stood in the midst, and saith unto them, Peace be unto you. 20 And when he had so said, he shewed unto them his hands and his side. Then were the disciples glad, when they saw the Lord. 21 Then said Jesus to them again, Peace be unto you: as my Father hath sent me, even so send I you. 22 And when he had said this, he breathed on them, and saith unto them, Receive ye the Holy Ghost: 23 Whose soever sins ye remit, they are remitted unto them; and whose soever sins ye retain, they are retained. 24 But Thomas, one of the twelve, called Didymus, was not with them when Jesus came. 25 The other disciples therefore said unto him, We have seen the Lord. But he said unto them, Except I shall see in his hands the print of the nails, and put my finger into the print of the nails, and thrust my hand into his side, I will not believe.* Here Thomas, one of the twelve disciples of Jesus, proves how easy it is to latch on to unbelief, *...the sin which doth so easily beset us...* as is noted in HEBREWS 12:1. Let's read on in JOHN 20. JOHN 20:26 *And after eight days again his disciples were within, and Thomas with them: then came Jesus, the doors being shut, and stood in*

*the midst, and said, Peace be unto you. 27 Then saith he to Thomas, Reach hither thy finger, and behold my hands; and reach hither thy hand, and thrust it into my side: and be not faithless, but believing. 28 And Thomas answered and said unto him, My Lord and my God. 29 Jesus saith unto him, Thomas, because thou hast seen me, thou hast believed: blessed are they that have not seen, and yet have believed. 30 And many other signs truly did Jesus in the presence of his disciples, which are not written in this book: 31 But these are written, that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing ye might have life through his name.*

The Apostle Paul, and Luke tell some of the signs not written in The Gospel According to JOHN, or the other gospel records. Luke writes in ACTS 1:3 this concerning Jesus after His resurrection: *To whom also he shewed himself alive after his passion by many infallible proofs, being seen of them forty days,...* . We know Jesus appeared unto His disciples, but what about His brothers. The Apostle Paul makes it clear that Jesus did appear unto His next oldest half brother, James, and we find this account in 1 CORINTHIANS 15. 1 CORINTHIANS 15:3 *For I delivered unto you first of all that which I also received, how that Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures; 4 And that he was buried, and that he rose again the third day according to the scriptures: 5 And that he was seen of Cephas, then of the twelve: 6 After that, he was seen of above five hundred brethren at once; of whom the greater part remain unto this present, but some are fallen asleep. 7 After that, he was seen of James; then of all the apostles.* The James that is spoken of here in 1 CORINTHIANS 15:7 is James the Lord's brother. Did Jesus tell his half-brother James the same thing He did Thomas? James *...because thou hast seen me, thou hast believed: blessed are they that have not seen, and yet have believed.* Perhaps Jesus said something similar to James, but if he did we are not told this in scripture. How did the Apostle Paul know that Jesus appeared unto James the Lord's brother after His resurrection? By interviewing James during his first visit to Jerusalem after Paul was saved, and we read about this in GALATIANS 1:18 *Then after three years I went up to Jerusalem to see Peter, and abode with him fifteen days. 19 But other of the apostles saw I none, save James the Lord's brother.* Now think about this, after His resurrection Jesus appeared unto James His half-brother, and James became a believer in Jesus much the same way the Apostle Paul did. Furthermore Jesus other brothers became believers also, and ACTS 1:14 helps point this out. Starting in ACTS 1:9 *And when he (Jesus) had spoken these things, while they beheld, he was taken up; and a cloud received him out of their sight. 10 And while they looked stedfastly toward heaven as he went up, behold, two men stood by them in white apparel; 11 Which also said, Ye men of Galilee, why stand ye gazing up into heaven? this same Jesus, which is taken up from you into heaven, shall so come in like manner as ye have seen him go into heaven. 12 Then returned they unto Jerusalem from the mount called Olivet, which is from Jerusalem a sabbath day's journey. 13 And when they were come in, they went up into an upper room, where abode both Peter, and James, and John, and Andrew, Philip, and Thomas, Bartholomew, and Matthew, James [the son] of Alphaeus, and Simon Zelotes, and Judas [the brother] of James.* These are Jesus Apostles, the eleven minus Judas Iscariot. ACTS 1:14 *These all continued with one accord in prayer and supplication, with the women, and Mary the mother of Jesus, and with his brethren.* The brethren spoken of here are the half-brothers of Jesus, who are with their mother Mary, the mother of Jesus, all of whom it seems were also there when a cloud received Jesus out of their sight.

A quick side thought. Mary the Mother of Jesus got to witness it all concerning Jesus. She was the one to whom the angel Gabriel was sent and told she was "highly favoured" meaning the "(one) receiving grace" as the original Greek renders it. Mary was there at the manger when the shepherds came, and told of their being visited by the angel who announced that a Saviour was born who is Christ the Lord. Mary was there when Simeon blessed baby Jesus, and Anna likewise. Mary was there a couple of years later when the wise men came from the east to worship the young child Jesus. Their gifts were gold, and frankincense, and myrrh. Gold was a gift for a royal king; frankincense a gift for a priest, and myrrh a gift for a prophet. These gifts symbolically show that these wise men knew that Jesus was special. Mary was there when twelve year old Jesus was found at the temple asking, and answering questions of the doctors of the law. Mary was there when Jesus

performed His first miracle at the marriage in Cana. Mary was there at many of the events during Jesus ministry. Mary was there at the cross as we just read in JOHN 19:25-27. And now we see in ACTS 1 that Mary was there when a cloud received resurrected Jesus out of their sight. Mary got to see it all concerning Jesus for thirty-three plus years. Wow!!! And the true stories she could tell concerning Jesus, and she did tell some of these stories to Luke, who wrote them down in his gospel record.

Back to Jesus' brothers. We see that Jesus brothers may not have been believers at the time of His crucifixion, but they certainly were by the time of Pentecost some fifty days later. ACTS 2:1-4 records: *And when the day of Pentecost was fully come, they were all with one accord in one place. 2 And suddenly there came a sound from heaven as of a rushing mighty wind, and it filled all the house where they were sitting. 3 And there appeared unto them cloven tongues like as of fire, and it sat upon each of them. 4 And they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance.* The brothers who did not believe in Jesus in JOHN 7:5 did believe in Him after His resurrection, and were a part of those who were filled with the Holy Ghost, and began to speak with other tongues on the day of Pentecost! What a marvel, and what a wonder, and what a blessing to Jesus mother Mary! Her sons who grew up with Jesus were now equipped with the power of the very same ...*God of peace, that brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus...* HEBREWS 13:20. And they went on from this day forward to expound upon the scriptures they heard at the family dinner table growing up with Jesus.

We learned in our study on the life of the Apostle Paul that by the time Paul first got acquainted with James the Lord's brother in GALATIANS 1:19 James is referred to as an Apostle. GALATIANS 1:19 *But other of the apostles saw I none, save James the Lord's brother.* This was several years after Pentecost. When James the Lord's brother became an Apostle is not told us in scripture. Was he chosen as a replacement Apostle for James the brother of John? Scripture doesn't so state. The only conclusion that we can draw is that somewhere along the line James the Lord's brother became an Apostle, for the apostle Paul refers to him as such. And he was an Apostle to the Jews as ACTS 15 and 21 plainly points out. Further the Apostle Paul refers to James as one "*...who seemed to be pillars...*" (GALATIANS 2:9) in the church at Jerusalem. Obviously this could not be the same James the brother of John for he was killed in ACTS 12, and the events of GALATIANS 2 refer to the same events, which took place during the time frame of ACTS 15. James the Lord's brother writes an epistle, and in JAMES 1:1 we read: *James, a servant of God and of the Lord Jesus Christ, to the twelve tribes which are scattered abroad, greeting.* Thus we see James the Lord's brother was an Apostle to the Jews, in other words one of the Kingdom Apostle's.

Now look at JUDE 1:1 *Jude, the servant of Jesus Christ, and brother of James,...* . This younger brother of Jesus, and James also wrote an epistle where some unique things are mentioned in this short book of 25 verses. Jude mentions in verse 9 of Michael the archangel contending with the devil as he disputed about the body of Moses. In verses 14 & 15 Jude writes: *And Enoch also, the seventh from Adam, prophesied of these, saying, Behold, the Lord cometh with ten thousands of his saints, 15 To execute judgment upon all, and to convince all that are ungodly among them of all their ungodly deeds which they have ungodly committed, and of all their hard speeches which ungodly sinners have spoken against him.* Since we don't read these statements anywhere else in scripture, where do you suppose Jude came up with this information? Consider this as you ponder an answer to this question. We read above in JOHN 1:1 & 2 *In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. 2 The same was in the beginning with God.* We also read in ISAIAH 46:9 & 10 -- *Remember the former things of old: for I am God, and there is none else; I am God, and there is none like me, 10 Declaring the end from the beginning, and from ancient times the things that are not yet done, saying, My counsel shall stand, and I will do all my pleasure.* And back again in JOHN 1:14 we also read above that *...the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us... ..full of grace and truth.* Three verses earlier John wrote: JOHN 1:11 *He came unto his own, and his own received him not.* With these scriptures in mind we can easily see that He who was in the beginning with God, who also knew the end from the beginning, who was made flesh

and dwelt among us full of grace and truth, He could have very easily revealed to His own brothers the words spoken by Enoch, and facts about Michael the archangel contending with the devil as he disputed about the body of Moses, even though at the time He made known these facts His brothers didn't believe in Him. However Jesus knowing the end from the beginning, also knew that after His resurrection His brothers would become believers, and the Holy Ghost would remind them of the words they heard from Jesus as He carried on conversations with them during His many years growing up with them. I believe that is where Jude came up with the information he wrote in his little epistle of JUDE. Thus we find a very happy ending to our story of Jesus brothers reaffirming what is said in ISAIAH 55:11 *So shall my word be that goeth forth out of my mouth: it shall not return unto me void, but it shall accomplish that which I please, and it shall prosper in the thing whereto I sent it.*

Let's go back to the epistle that James wrote and see, perhaps for the first time, an underlying theme that is presented in his five chapters. Before we see what this theme is, also take note that James wrote about our Lord Jesus Christ, Abraham, Rahab, Job, and Elijah, all of whom are full overcomers, and commonly acknowledged as heroes of faith. So check that out next time you study the book of JAMES, and wonder how many times these people's names came up in James' conversations with his brother Jesus as they were growing up. One of the underlying themes presented in JAMES is **patience**. The word "**patience**" is found thirty-four times in scripture, all in New Testament scripture. The Apostle Paul writes "**patience**" sixteen times in his epistles; the Apostle John mentions it seven times in REVELATION, a book full of seven's; and James speaks of "**patience**" five times in the epistle of JAMES. Here is what James wrote in JAMES 1:2 *My brethren, count it all joy when ye fall into divers temptations; 3 Knowing this, that the trying of your faith worketh patience. 4 But let patience have her perfect work, that ye may be perfect and entire, wanting nothing.* This is a very important portion of scripture, and I hope you too have studied it out. These verses were among the first I studied after being filled with the Holy Ghost. As I read them it was like having Brother Hill looking over my shoulder, and whispering in my ear the deep meaning of what is being said here. The bottom line here is that if you want "**patience**" in your life, then you are going to have trials. If you read on in JAMES 1:5 he mentions "**wisdom**," which is something you should ask for before requesting "**patience**." The Apostle Paul makes this clear in ROMANS 5. ROMANS 5:1 *Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ: 2 By whom also we have access by faith into this grace wherein we stand, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God. 3 And not only so, but we glory in tribulations also: knowing that tribulation worketh patience; 4 And patience, experience; and experience, hope: 5 And hope maketh not ashamed; because the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost which is given unto us.* Paul didn't mention "**wisdom**" here, but rather wrote "**wisdom**" explaining that *...tribulation worketh patience*. Again ask for wisdom before you ask for "**patience**" in your life, because obtaining "**patience**" requires tests, and trials. "**Patience**" by definition requires a period of time to pass; a waiting period, or a time of endurance. James brings up the topic of "**patience**" again in his closing chapter. JAMES 5:7 *Be patient therefore, brethren, unto the coming of the Lord. Behold, the husbandman waiteth for the precious fruit of the earth, and hath long patience for it, until he receive the early and latter rain. 8 Be ye also patient; stablish your hearts: for the coming of the Lord draweth nigh. 9 Grudge not one against another, brethren, lest ye be condemned: behold, the judge standeth before the door. 10 Take, my brethren, the prophets, who have spoken in the name of the Lord, for an example of suffering affliction, and of patience. 11 Behold, we count them happy which endure. Ye have heard of the patience of Job, and have seen the end of the Lord; that the Lord is very pitiful, and of tender mercy.* When James writes *...that the Lord is very pitiful...* in verse 11, he is expressing how very compassionate, and full of compassion the Lord Jesus Christ is. James also experienced this first hand. A double emphasis of this point is stated by James when he adds that the Lord is also full *...of tender mercy*, a fact James had also witnessed, and experienced first hand, before, and after Jesus death and resurrection.

The advice found in JAMES 5:7 is very sound, Holy Ghost inspired advice: *Be patient therefore, brethren, unto the coming of the Lord.* I think we all here look forward to the coming of the Lord, so ... *Be patient therefore, brethren, unto the coming of the Lord.* In a different sense than we normally think, Job too looked forward unto the coming of the Lord, who presented Himself out of the whirlwind unto Job in JOB chapters 38-41, and Job, as James puts it, saw ...*the end of the Lord; that the Lord is very pitiful, and of tender mercy.* At the end of this trial for Job we find in JOB 42:12 that ...*the LORD blessed the latter end of Job more than his beginning.* How much are we blessed with? Go look in the mirror and realize that it was God the Father ...*who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ: According as he hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before him in love: Having predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to himself, according to the good pleasure of his will, To the praise of the glory of his grace, wherein he hath made us accepted in the beloved.* {EPHESIANS 1:3-6.}

These thoughts presented by James concerning “**patience**” that we just read are a good introduction to the next high calling thoughts the Apostle Paul encourages us with in that eighty word sentence we are studying in HEBREWS 12:1 & 2. HEBREWS 12:1 *Wherefore seeing we also are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset us, and let us run with patience the race that is set before us, 2 Looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith; who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God.* We are now going to examine the forward-looking statement noted in the words: ...*and let us run with patience the race that is set before us.* These words too are rich with encouragement for the New Testament church age potential full overcomer to whom HEBREWS 12:1 & 2 is written.

We just examined the first “**let us**” statement found in HEBREWS 12:1, which was, ...*let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset us,*... where we are encouraged to apothemi {ap-ot-eeth'-ay-mee}, meaning to lay aside, to put off from oneself, to put away, to cast off, to put aside, to lay apart the weights and hindering encumbrances that hold back a potential full overcomer from being a race course runner. One of the biggest obstacles to full overcoming faith we found is unbelief, which is the sin that so easily besets us. These things are to be put off with the help of the Holy Spirit. Again that is why Paul writes: ...*let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset us,*... . With these hindering weights laid aside, Paul writes his second “**let us**” statement found in HEBREWS 12:1 ...*let us run with patience the race that is set before us.* A quick glimpse at this phrase shows a high calling course of action for the New Testament worthy of faith to pursue. How many Christians do you come across that any idea what the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus is? Or what the racecourse is? These are points that are rarely discussed in the majority of Christian assemblies today, because the theme they teach has a focal point of here and now, and not on things here after, and the most important things above. That is why Paul wrote in COLOSSIANS 3:2 *Set your affection on things above, not on things on the earth.*

The phrase “**let us**” that we find used twice here in HEBREWS 12:1 is found in thirty-seven verses penned by Paul. Perhaps the magnitude of this point passes us by until we realize that Bible scholars have found the number thirty-seven to be the number that has to do with **THE WORD OF GOD.** REVELATION 19:13 defines **THE WORD OF GOD** noting that it is one of the many names of Jesus. REVELATION 19:13 *And he was clothed with a vesture dipped in blood: and his name is called The Word of God.* Thus we see that **THE WORD OF GOD** is synonymous with Jesus Christ our Lord and Saviour, and as such we find Him mentioned on every page in the Bible. Brother W. J. Franklin once preached a sermon he entitled “The Him Book,” noting that his Bible was “The Him Book.” The “Him” he referenced was of course Jesus Christ, our precious Lord and Saviour, who is found on every page of the Bible, **THE WORD OF GOD.** This sermon is found in the archive section of the Living Waters Tabernacle web site. Do you think that **THE WORD OF GOD’s** wife will know and love **THE WORD OF GOD?** The fact that the phrase “**let us**” is found

in thirty-seven verses penned by Paul show how the Holy Ghost emphasized Paul's gospel record to us. So we see the fact that the phrase "**let us**" also points us to the importance of Paul gospel in **THE WORD OF GOD**, the one hundred chapters that fill up **THE WORD OF GOD** as is noted in COLOSSIANS 1:25.

Another phrase found thirty-seven times in scripture is the phrase "**by faith**," a phrase written by Paul thirty-four times, the same number of times that "**patience**" is written in scripture. We noted early on in this study of HEBREWS 12:1 & 2 that the Lord took each of the Old Testament worthies of faith through each of the tests He put on their course of life as obstacles for them to face **by faith**. **The darkest of times brought forth the hero's of faith**. Each of the Old Testament icons of faith walked the path that was ordained for them by the Lord to walk, and when they came to these faith defining tests in their lives, they moved forward **by faith**, trusting the Lord to take them through their trials, and their tests, and **were not dismayed with what the Lord could do**, and did do in their overcoming lives of victory. They all went through their trials and tribulations, and came out the other side an overcomer. Paul also wrote this in HEBREWS 13:7 *Remember them which have the rule over you, who have spoken unto you the word of God: whose faith follow, considering the end of their conversation.* That word "conversation" again simply means: manner of life. Paul's manner of life as our Apostle was a life lived **by faith** in our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, who again is **THE WORD OF GOD**. The literal Greek translation of HEBREWS 13:7 reads: Remember your leaders who spoke **THE WORD OF GOD** to you, considering the issue of (their) conduct, imitate (their) faith. The Old Testament worthies all lived their life **by faith** in God. They too were given a course in life to walk, and **by faith** they actually ran upon their individual track in life. In essence they were racecourse runners, who finished their course in life a full overcomer.

So we find the phrase "**let us**" in HEBREWS 12:1 is a phrase the Holy Ghost inspired our Apostle Paul to write in thirty-seven verses, the number that points us to **THE WORD OF GOD**. We found in our studies that the phrase "**by faith**" is also found thirty-seven times in scripture. The last part of PSALMS 2:12 reads: *Blessed are all they that put their trust in him.* The Hebrew word translated "**trust**" here is *chacah* {khaw-saw'}, number 02620 in The Strong's Hebrew Concordance. Here are a couple of points of interest concerning *chacah* {khaw-saw'}, which is translated "**trust**." This word "**trust**" is equivant to the New Testament word "faith," or "believe." "**Trust**" is translated from the Hebrew word *chacah* {khaw-saw'} thirty-seven times in scripture. Thus PSALMS 2:12 could be read like this without loosing any of it's meaning: Blessed are all they who live "**by faith**" in God, for they put their **trust** in Him. All full overcomers shall live **by faith** (see HABAKKUK 2:4, ROMANS 1:17, GALATIANS 3:11, and HEBREWS 10:38), for *...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...* HEBREWS 11:6. Also note this word "**diligently**," which we just read in HEBREWS 11:6. "**Diligently**" means: very earnestly, whole heartily, painstakingly, with careful and steady perseverance, and is done early and often by a seeker of the Lord. Guess how many times we find the word "**diligently**" in **THE WORD OF GOD**. Thirty-seven! In REVELATION 5:8 we read a statement referencing the full overcomers: *And when he had taken the book, the four beasts and four and twenty elders fell down before the Lamb, having every one of them harps, and golden vials full of odours, which are the prayers of saints.* The word "**prayers**" here comes from a Greek noun *proseuche* {pros-yoo-khay'}, number 4335 in The Strong's Greek Concordance, a word which denotes an earnest **prayer** addressed to God. This Greek word (*proseuche*) is also found thirty-seven times in our New Testament! Note how important these "**prayers**" were to The Lamb of God here in REVELATION 5:8, for He, **THE WORD OF GOD**, bottled them up, and saved them in "*golden vials*," allowing the worthies of faith their access. What all of this then shows us is that to achieve the rank of full overcomer, one must "**diligently**" study **THE WORD OF GOD**, one must "**diligently**" run his or her particular race course, one must "**diligently**" seek the Lord with "**prayers**" asked "**by faith**" with complete "**trust**" in our precious Saviour and soon coming Bridegroom, Jesus Christ, **THE WORD OF GOD**! So then *...let us run*

*with patience the race that is set before us...* HEBREWS 12:1. Again here note the word **patience** that we discussed earlier in JAMES, and will go into more detail later in this study, Lord willing, but I want to note a connection between **patience**, and **THE WORD OF GOD**, which can both be found in REVELATION 3:10 a verse written to the Philadelphia full overcomers. REVELATION 3:10 *Because thou hast kept the word of my patience, I also will keep thee from the hour of temptation, which shall come upon all the world, to try them that dwell upon the earth.* “The word of my **patience**” is another name for **THE WORD OF GOD**. So again ...*let us run with patience the race that is set before us...* HEBREWS 12:1.

Let’s do a quick review of some important points that we just went over, and add a couple of more thoughts. The number thirty-seven has to do with **THE WORD OF GOD**. We are instructed in scripture to “**diligently**” study **THE WORD OF GOD**. “**Diligently**” means: very earnestly, whole heartily, painstakingly, with careful and steady perseverance, and done early and often by a seeker of the Lord. HEBREWS 11:6 *But without faith it is impossible to please him (God): for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him.* We have made note many time in this study that HEBREWS chapter 11 highlights the Old Testament worthies of faith, who accomplished many various and sundry tasks in their lives “**by faith.**” The phrase “**by faith**” is found exactly thirty-seven time in **THE WORD OF GOD**, as is the Old Testament word “**trust,**” which comes from the Hebrew word *chacah* {*khaw-saw*}. The Old Testament worthies of faith put their “**trust,**” and confidence in God to take them through their most difficult times, and hardest circumstances. The Old Testament icons, who are the “so great a cloud of witnesses” mentioned earlier in HEBREWS 12:1, “**diligently**” sought God “**by faith**” putting their “**trust**” in Him, and went on to become the full overcomers of the Old Testament by believing His word. It is also interesting to note this additional point, that the phrase “**his word**” is found exactly 37 times in scripture, and often this phrase references the word of the Lord, or **THE WORD OF GOD**. For example in 2 SAMUEL 23 we find the last words of David, and in verse 2 we read: *The Spirit of the LORD spake by me, and his word was in my tongue.* We see this very same truth in some of the PSALMS attributed to David also. For example in PSALMS 56:4 reads: *In God I will praise his word, in God I have put my trust; I will not fear what flesh can do unto me.* David mentions “**his word**” twice in PSALMS 56:10 *In God will I praise his word: in the LORD will I praise his word.* Isaiah wrote in ISAIAH 66:5 *Hear the word of the LORD, ye that tremble at his word;... .* Jeremiah also mentions “**his word**” twice in JEREMIAH 23:18 *For who hath stood in the counsel of the LORD, and hath perceived and heard his word? who hath marked his word, and heard it?* Some New Testament texts that contain the phrase “**his word,**” which also reference Jesus are: MATTHEW 8:16 *When the even was come, they brought unto him many that were possessed with devils: and he cast out the spirits with his word, and healed all that were sick:...* . LUKE 4:32 *And they were astonished at his doctrine: for his word was with power.* 1 JOHN 2:5 *But whoso keepeth his word, in him verily is the love of God perfected: hereby know we that we are in him.* All of these points we have now looked at concerning the number thirty-seven highlight the importance of knowing **THE WORD OF GOD**, which is **His word** that we are to “**diligently**” study, and search. 2 SAMUEL 23:39 tells us of David’s mighty men, that there were ...*thirty and seven in all.* Do you think these men were “**diligent**” warriors? Yes they were. Their accomplishments picture to us what can be achieved “**by faith**” and “**trust**” in believing “**his word.**” Their lives prove to us how we must “**diligently**” learn, and know **THE WORD OF GOD**. Brother Hawkins noted once again in a recent sermon of his that women receive **THE WORD OF GOD** more easily than men because **THE WORD OF GOD** is designed by the Holy Ghost to reach the heart. Women think with their heart, and men think with their head. However men, we need to learn to think with our heart too if we expect to win Christ as our Bridegroom. It will be **THE WORD OF GOD** that will totally enrapture the heart of the Lamb’s wife. Won’t the Lamb’s wife, the Bride of Christ be known in one respect as Mrs. **THE WORD OF GOD**? We repeat what we stated above that **THE WORD OF GOD**’s wife will know and love **THE WORD OF GOD**. And the fact that the phrase “**let us**” is found in thirty-seven verses penned by Paul shows how the Holy Ghost emphasized Paul’s gospel

record to us. So again take note of this encouragement written by Paul to us in HEBREWS 12:1 *...let us run with patience the race that is set before us.*

Of the thirty-seven “let us” statements that Paul wrote in **THE WORD OF GOD**, there is only one “let us run” declaration, and it is found here in HEBREWS 12:1. These words *...let us run with patience the race that is set before us...* express the concluding thoughts of HEBREWS 12:1. And we must make note that the Holy Ghost inspired words of HEBREWS 12:1 primarily addresses the “we,” and “us” of this yet present church age. HEBREWS 12:1 is only half of the whole eighty-word sentence of HEBREWS 12:1 & 2. Recall that the emphasis in scripture of the number 80 points to the STRENGTH of God, and not to the STRENGTH of man. So the “we,” and “us” of HEBREWS 12:1 are strongly encouraged here by Paul to learn the lessons the Old Testament worthies of faith taught us, which was to rely on the STRENGTH of God to deliver us out of all our tests and troubles, and we have in this church age been given a powerful heavenly gift if we will accept it, which is the mighty guiding power of the Holy Ghost, whose main mission is like that of Eliezer of Damascus, to fetch a Bride for our heavenly Isaac, who is Jesus! When Rebekah said “I will go” in GENESIS 24:58, she entrusted her life, and care into her guide, this Eliezer of Damascus, who took her and taught her all about her husband to be, Isaac, a man she he never met, but had agreed to marry at the end of their journey. GENESIS 24:59 tells us that Rebekah also took with her on this journey her nurse, who we find in GENESIS 35:8 was named Deborah. Deborah stayed with Rebekah until the day she (Deborah) died. Rebekah’s nurse Deborah was a great aid or assistant to Rebekah who had many responsibilities revolving around the care of others, as is the charge of all nurses. Deborah’s name means “a bee;” “her speaking;” “the word;” and carries with it the thought of being a spokesman or a teacher, someone who will declare or pronounce something.

In Webster’s Dictionary under “nurse” we find a definition that references a “...worker bee that cares for the young.” This is essentially who Deborah was: a worker bee who, not only cares for the young, but also instructs them and teaches them “the word.” Deborah represents, or is typical of the Apostle Paul and his gospel message. This is further brought out for us in the following scriptures: 1 THESSALONIANS 2:7 *But we were gentle among you, even as a nurse cherisheth her children: 8 So being affectionately desirous of you, we were willing to have imparted unto you, not the gospel of God only, but also our own souls, because ye were dear unto us. 9 For ye remember, brethren, our labour and travail: for labouring night and day, because we would not be chargeable unto any of you, we preached unto you the gospel of God.* The Apostle Paul is the Apostle to the Gentiles {see ROMANS 11:13}, and as such, he, like Deborah, was a worker bee who not only cared for the young in Christ, but also instructed them, and us, and taught us **THE WORD OF GOD**. Again we repeat what we said earlier that Paul’s gospel in **THE WORD OF GOD** cover exactly one hundred chapters that fill up **THE WORD OF GOD** as is noted in COLOSSIANS 1:25. And one hundred is the number of COMPLETION showing us that in order to be a one hundred percent full overcomer from this church age, we need to know Paul’s gospel, the one hundred chapters that fill up **THE WORD OF GOD**.

So we find our beloved Apostle Paul to be as important to us as was nurse Deborah to Rebekah, who taught Rebekah many important things during her life. Our “nurse” Paul wrote to the Saints at Rome the following: ROMANS 1:11 *For I long to see you, that I may impart unto you some spiritual gift, to the end ye may be established;... .* To the Corinthians Paul wrote: 1 CORINTHIANS 4:15 *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.* To the Galatian Saints Paul wrote: GALATIANS 6:6 *Let him that is taught in the word communicate unto him that teacheth in all good things.* To his son in the faith Timothy, Paul wrote: 1 TIMOTHY 2:7 *Whereunto I am ordained a preacher, and an apostle, (I speak the truth in Christ, and lie not;) a teacher of the Gentiles in faith and verity. 2 TIMOTHY 1:11 Whereunto I am appointed a preacher, and an apostle, and a teacher of the Gentiles. 2 TIMOTHY 2:24 And the servant of the Lord must not strive; but be gentle unto all men, apt to teach, patient, 25 In meekness instructing those that oppose themselves; if God peradventure will give them repentance to the acknowledging of the truth; 26*

*And that they may recover themselves out of the snare of the devil, who are taken captive by him at his will. 2 TIMOTHY 3:14 But continue thou in the things which thou hast learned and hast been assured of, knowing of whom thou hast learned them; 15 And that from a child thou hast known the holy scriptures, which are able to make thee wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus.*

Our “nurse” Paul wrote one hundred chapters of Holy Ghost inspired encouragements to us, as we noted earlier. Paul also wrote that we also can be a New Testament worthy of faith, a full overcomer, if we will just follow Paul’s example. Here is what he encouraged us to do: 1 CORINTHIANS 4:16 *Wherefore I beseech you, be ye followers of me.* 1 CORINTHIANS 11:1 *Be ye followers of me, even as I also am of Christ.* PHILIPPIANS 3:17 *Brethren, be followers together of me, and mark them which walk so as ye have us for an ensample.* Add to this the eighty words we have been studying here in HEBREWS 12:1 & 2 -- *Wherefore seeing we also are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset us, and let us run with patience the race that is set before us, 2 Looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith; who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God.* Again notice that the forty-two Holy Ghost inspired words of HEBREWS 12:1 primarily addresses: the “we,” and “us” of this yet present church age. The thirty-eight words of HEBREWS 12:2 plainly points out where the undivided attention of the full overcomer is focused: *Looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith; who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God.*

Back to the last portion of the forty-two Holy Ghost inspired words of Paul found in HEBREWS 12:1 ...*let us run with patience the race that is set before us.* The number forty-two is the number that points to a HEAVENLY APPEARANCE. Are you too looking for the soon coming HEAVENLY APPEARANCE of our Bridegroom Jesus Christ like our Apostle Paul encouraged us to do? Those Saints of this church age, who are looking for the soon coming HEAVENLY APPEARANCE of our Bridegroom Jesus Christ, are doing so with this encouragement of Paul’s in mind: ...*let us run with patience the race that is set before us.*

We noted above that of the thirty-seven “let us” statements that Paul wrote in **THE WORD OF GOD**, there is only one “let us run” declaration, and it is found here in HEBREWS 12:1. This is really the third “let us” thought brought out here in HEBREWS 12:1. The first was to ...*let us lay aside every weight*,... and we here learned that the words “lay aside” is apotithemi {ap-ot-eeth'-ay-mee} in the Greek, meaning to lay aside, to put off from oneself, to put away, to cast off, to put aside, to lay apart the weights and hindering encumbrances that hold back a potential full overcomer from being a race course runner. The second let us statement is implied in Paul’s next words of HEBREWS 12:1 where he writes let us “lay aside” (apotithemi) ...*the sin which doth so easily beset us*,... which sin we found was unbelief. The sin of unbelief is defined in ROMANS 14:23 where we read: ...*for whatsoever is not of faith is sin.* The potential full overcomer should memorize this little bit of scripture: ...*for whatsoever is not of faith is sin*... for these eight words point the way for the full overcomer. On the other hand also take note that unbelief has defeated many a potential full overcomer. The third “let us” statement of HEBREWS 12:1 is found in the portion we are now studying: ...*let us run with patience the race that is set before us.*

This “let us run” declaration is unique in scripture, for there is only one “let us run” statement found in our King James version of the Bible. And before we go any further, ask yourself, how many Pastors expound upon what this “let us run” declaration means? And the majority of those that do expound upon this theme fail to realize the deepest meaning, which Paul intends for all of us to see, which is ...*let us run with patience the race that is set before us*... ever pressing ...*toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus*... as is stated in PHILIPPIANS 3:14. A few verses earlier Paul defined what the prize is: PHILIPPIANS 3:8 ...*that I may win Christ.* Think back when you were in school. Did everyone go out for track? No, because some didn’t want to be race course runners for whatever reason. The same is true in Christendom.

Not every believer wants to be a race course runner. Not every believer wants to let the Lord have His way in their heart and life. In Paul's gospel we find that there is a race course on which all potential full overcomers must run. 1 CORINTHIANS 9:24 tells us: *Know ye not that they which run in a race run all, but one receiveth the prize? So run, that ye may obtain.* Here again with different words our Apostle Paul encourages us to run, and to **diligently** run: *So run, that ye may obtain.* Obtain what? The prize for the full overcomer is winning Christ as Bridegroom. Winning Christ as Bridegroom cannot be achieved without knowing Paul's gospel. So our beloved Apostle writes here in HEBREWS 12:1 "**let us run,**" *...let us run with patience the race that is set before us.* The Greek word translated "**run**" here in HEBREWS 12:1, is the same word translated "**run**" twice in 1 CORINTHIANS 9:24, the Greek word *trecho* {trekh'-o}, number 5143 in The Strong's Greek Concordance, which is used here in HEBREWS 12:1 in the present active tense with the meaning to keep on running the race course. I find it very interesting to note that the Holy Ghost encouraged the Apostle Paul to write this Greek word *trecho* {trekh'-o} in eight different verses: ROMANS 9:16, 1 CORINTHIANS 9:24 & 26, GALATIANS 2:2 & 5:7, PHILIPPIANS 2:16, 2 THESSALONIANS 3:1 where *trecho* {trekh'-o} is translated "course," and here in HEBREWS 12:1. Recall once again that one of the meanings of the number eight is BRIDE, so we see that she will be a race course runner. The Greek word *trecho* {trekh'-o} found here in HEBREWS 12:1 is used as a further encouragement to **run** the race in a highly focused fashion devoting all of ones effort in overcoming all obstacles to obtain the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus. There is only one way that we can **run** in such a fashion, and that is with the help of the Holy Ghost, who was sent to us of the church age for the express purpose of helping us in all aspects of our lives to be full overcomers, and preparing us to rule and reign with Christ Jesus as His wife. Recall once again what Jesus told His disciples concerning the Holy Ghost, that he is a Comforter (JOHN 14:16 & 26), a teacher of all things (JOHN 14:26), a guide into all truth (JOHN 16:13), a revealer of things to come (JOHN 16:13-15), and a powerful enabler (ACTS 1:8). Paul's life's testimony, and Paul's gospel record reveals that the Holy Ghost is the energy source of every high calling race course runner. The purpose of receiving the Holy Ghost is not to speak in tongues, but to have living in your life the **power** that is required to be a full overcomer. Again we repeat what is recorded in ACTS 1:8 that *...ye shall receive power,* (*dunamis* {doo'-nam-is}) *after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you...* and it is by the mighty *dunamis* {doo'-nam-is} **power** of the Holy Ghost that we can be fully guided into all truth, and be shown the deeper things of God. LUKE 11:13 *If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children: how much more shall your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to them that ask him?* ACTS 19:2 *Have ye received the Holy Ghost since ye believed?* Those yearning to be a full overcomer, those who want God's best, those who are running the race to win Christ as bridegroom, all want the same thing, to win Christ, and by faith God will let them have it, yet each one of us will have his own God designed special racecourse full of obstacles to overcome; obstacles carefully placed there by the Author and Finisher of our faith, who simply wants us to live our lives by faith in Him. Those like Paul who fight a good fight, and keep the faith, and finish their particular racecourse will be those in the Bride of Christ, the full overcomers of this church age. The Bride of Christ hath made herself ready by yielding to the divine guidance of the Holy Ghost in her life. So *...let us run with patience the race that is set before us...* HEBREWS 12:1.

Before we move on looking further into this powerful Holy Ghost inspired encouragement to *...run with patience the race that is set before us...* consider this: the Apostle Paul is the only one of the Apostles who writes us like a personal trainer encouraging us to be race course runners, explaining to us the goal, and informing us of the many obstacles we will face, which can only be overcome by faith in God. Paul's gospel message is unique; it was given him to fill up the word of God, (COLOSSIANS 1:25); Paul's gospel was given him by the revelation of Jesus Christ, (GALATIANS 1:12); Paul's gospel message was given to establish us, (ROMANS 16:25); the gospel of the Apostle Paul was given to show us mysteries not made known in other ages, (EPHESIANS 3:1-10); the gospel of the Apostle Paul was given to build us up, and bring us to our inheritance, (ACTS 20:32); the gospel of the Apostle Paul was given to tell us about the race course:

(HEBREWS 12:1); the gospel of Paul was given to tell us who it is that can run on the race course, and to fight the good fight of faith (1 CORINTHIANS 9:24-26 & 2 TIMOTHY 4:7); the gospel of Paul was given to tell us that Christ is the prize for winning the race (PHILIPPIANS 3:14); and the gospel of Paul was for the express purpose that the Bride of Christ would be prepared, and ready to marry Jesus (REVELATION 19:7). So again ...*let us run with patience the race that is set before us*... HEBREWS 12:1.

These concluding twelve words of HEBREWS 12:1 ...*let us run with patience the race that is set before us*... are a treasure chest of encouragement to the race course running Bridal Saint who wishes to make herself ready to marry Christ Jesus. There are many components involved running this race, and we have spent several years in our Sunday School lessons learning, and going over these thoughts. Here in HEBREWS 12:1 Paul emphasizes the prospect that is “set before us.” The Greek word translated “set before us” is prokeimai {prok'-i-mahee}, number 4295 in The Strong's Greek Concordance, a word used only five times in New Testament scripture. Since prokeimai {prok'-i-mahee} is found only five times in scripture, it speaks to us of GRACE, and the focal point of GRACE is our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, who came to us full of GRACE and truth as the Apostle John wrote in JOHN 1:14 & 17. The focal point of all full overcomers is our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, the prize at the end of ...*the race that is set before us*. Prokeimai is first found in 2 CORINTHIANS 8:12 in these words: *For if there be first a willing mind...* . We should note that all full overcomers will have a willing mind if they are to ...*run with patience the race that is set before us*. The second time we find the Greek word prokeimai is in HEBREWS 6:18 where we are encouraged ...*to lay hold upon the hope set before us: Which hope we have as an anchor of the soul, both sure and stedfast, and which entereth into that within the veil; Whither the forerunner is for us entered, even Jesus, made an high priest for ever after the order of Melchisedec...* HEBREWS 6:18-20. In short ...*the hope set before us*... is Jesus. The third and fourth time we find the Greek word prokeimai is in our eighty-word sentence of HEBREWS 12:1 & 2. HEBREWS 12:1 ...*let us run with patience the race that is set before us*. In HEBREWS 12:2 we see ...*Jesus the author and finisher of our faith; who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God*. So we find Greek word prokeimai referencing those first with a willing mind, whose focus is upon the Lord Jesus Christ, who is ...*the hope set before us*... and the focal point of the race course runner, who is running ...*with patience the race that is set before us, Looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith; who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God*. Note this too, that the prospect “set before us” who is Christ, had a like prospect “set before Him” who is His Bride to be, potentially you and me. Lord willing we will probe the depths of this thought later in this study. The fifth, and last time we find the Greek word prokeimai is in JUDE 1:7 where is set forth before us an example of what not to do, and whose course not to follow in the example left of those unbelievers of Sodom and Gomorrha, who suffered the vengeance of eternal fire.

Now we know that the Apostle Paul wrote these words of encouragement of HEBREWS 12:1 ...*let us run with patience the race that is set before us*... and that we are to follow Paul as he followed Christ (1 CORINTHIANS 11:1), so let's ask ourselves when did the Apostle Paul first become aware that there was a race course to run? And when did he begin running with patience the race that was set before him? As we answer these questions realize again that no other author of scripture was given this gospel message to proclaim, that there is a race to run, and that winning Christ is the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus. So when did our Apostle Paul first become aware that there was a race course to run? Paul was first introduced to this concept, which became part of his doctrine, on the road to Damascus. Recall that on the road to Damascus Jesus Christ arrested Paul, and gave him a life sentence, which Paul willingly accepted. This life sentence that the Lord Jesus Christ gave Paul is found in ACTS 26:16-18, a 99 word sentence in our King James version that gave Paul, then still known as Saul of Tarsus, direction for the rest of his life, which in turn led him to write the one hundred chapters of New Testament scripture that fulfills the

word of God according to COLOSSIANS 1:25! We spent 61 pages of notes in our Apostle Paul study going over all that is found in this 99 word sentence, and noted that these words of Jesus spoken to Saul of Tarsus in ACTS 26:16-18 reach down to you and me! Realize again also that these words of Jesus spoken to Saul of Tarsus on the road to Damascus recorded in ACTS 26:16-18 were not recorded until some twenty-five years later! Why? There are several reasons for this, but the main one that jumps out to me is the tremendous impact of this sentence couldn't be fully appreciated, and fully grasped for twenty-five plus years. Also the full impact of this sentence wouldn't be fully revealed unto Paul right there on the road to Damascus, it would take a revelation of Jesus Christ as is noted in GALATIANS 1:12 before Paul would be made known the full meaning of this 99 word sentence. Then at an appointed time when Paul stood before a king, King Agrippa, the Holy Ghost brought back to vivid memory the exact words, which Jesus had spoken to him on the road to Damascus. By this time Paul could better see the magnificence, and profoundness of this far reaching 99 word sentence, which reads this way in our King James version of ACTS 26:16-18 -- *But rise, and stand upon thy feet: for I have appeared unto thee for this purpose, to make thee a minister and a witness both of these things which thou hast seen, and of those things in the which I will appear unto thee; 17 Delivering thee from the people, and from the Gentiles, unto whom now I send thee, 18 To open their eyes, and to turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins, and inheritance among them which are sanctified by faith that is in me.*

On the road to Damascus one of the things Jesus told Saul of Tarsus, our Apostle Paul here in ACTS 26:18 was about an eternal inheritance that he would also teach the Gentiles about. Saul of Tarsus didn't know a thing about this when he met the Saviour on the road to Damascus. And he was one of the most educated men of his day, knowing full well the doctrine of the law of Moses, which he had been taught by his Pharisee father, and one of the best teachers of his day, Gamaliel. But Paul couldn't teach about this subject yet, for on that day on the road to Damascus, he was still Saul of Tarsus, a new born babe in Christ Jesus, and you can't teach what you don't know. Three day later ACTS 9 tells us that Ananias of Damascus laid hands on Saul of Tarsus, and he was filled with the Holy Ghost. ACTS 9:20 tells us when Paul preached his first sermon: *And straightway he preached Christ in the synagogues, that he is the Son of God.* He knew little else at that time to preach, and he certainly didn't know how to go about preaching unto the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ that he later wrote about in EPHESIANS 3:8. Consequently he couldn't yet go about encouraging others to *...let us run with patience the race that is set before us...* for even Paul himself hadn't learned this concept. Paul explains in GALATIANS 1 when it was that he received the gospel message he later went about teaching, which was first foretold him in the 99 word sentence spoken unto him by Jesus on the road to Damascus. GALATIANS 1:11 *But I certify you, brethren, that the gospel which was preached of me is not after man. 12 For I neither received it of man, neither was I taught it, but by the revelation of Jesus Christ.* The Greek word translated "revelation" here is apokalupsis {ap-ok-al'-oop-sis}; number 602 in The Strong's Greek Concordance, which means among many other things: a manifestation, or appearance; a disclosure of truth, or instruction concerning things before unknown. So when did the Apostle Paul first become aware that there was a race course to run? And when did he begin running with patience the race that was set before him? It was after this "revelation of Jesus Christ," which occurred during the approximate three years next mentioned in GALATIANS 1. GALATIANS 1:13 *For ye have heard of my conversation in time past in the Jews' religion, how that beyond measure I persecuted the church of God, and wasted it: 14 And profited in the Jews' religion above many my equals in mine own nation, being more exceedingly zealous of the traditions of my fathers. 15 But when it pleased God, who separated me from my mother's womb, and called me by his grace, 16 To reveal his Son in me, that I might preach him among the heathen; immediately I conferred not with flesh and blood: 17 Neither went I up to Jerusalem to them which were apostles before me; but I went into Arabia, and returned again unto Damascus.*

Paul was now equipped with the gospel message he was to preach, but it took a few more

years before he was officially sent out to preach his gospel message, which is recorded in the chapters of ACTS 13 and beyond. We mentioned above that Paul was first introduced to this concept of a race course on the road to Damascus, a concept, which became part of his doctrine, and we find it alluded to in his teaching about an inheritance in Christ Jesus. So let's look at some scriptures that show us how Paul taught this doctrine of inheritance. One such example is found in ACTS 20:32 where Paul states: *And now, brethren, I commend you to God, and to the word of his grace, which is able to build you up, and to give you an inheritance among all them which are sanctified.* Note again that it is the word of God, the word of His grace, which worketh also in you that believe, that is able to build you up, and to give you an inheritance among all them which believe. When Paul spoke the words recorded in ACTS 20:32 he was speaking to the Ephesian elders, with whom he had already spent much time. Later he would write them the epistle unto the EPHESIANS, and again emphasize facts concerning their, and our eternal inheritance. We turn to EPHESIANS 1 and pick up our reading concerning some of the things Christ Jesus purchased for us with His own precious blood there on the cross of Calvary. EPHESIANS 1:11 *In whom also we have obtained an inheritance, being predestinated according to the purpose of him who worketh all things after the counsel of his own will: 12 That we should be to the praise of his glory, who first trusted in Christ. 13 In whom ye also trusted, after that ye heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation: in whom also after that ye believed, ye were sealed with that holy Spirit of promise, 14 Which is the earnest of our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession, unto the praise of his glory.* Paul knew that not all believers would understand, or be able at first to latch on to such wonderful doctrines, so he writes out a prayer of his, also found in EPHESIANS 1, and there in states: *17 That the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give unto you the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of him: 18 The eyes of your understanding being enlightened; that ye may know what is the hope of his calling, and what the riches of the glory of his inheritance in the saints, 19 And what is the exceeding greatness of his power to us-ward who believe, according to the working of his mighty power, 20 Which he wrought in Christ, when he raised him from the dead, and set him at his own right hand in the heavenly places,...* . To the COLOSSIANS Paul writes out another prayer of his, and states starting in COLOSSIANS 1:9 *For this cause we also, since the day we heard it, do not cease to pray for you, and to desire that ye might be filled with the knowledge of his will in all wisdom and spiritual understanding; 10 That ye might walk worthy of the Lord unto all pleasing, being fruitful in every good work, and increasing in the knowledge of God; 11 Strengthened with all might, according to his glorious power, unto all patience and longsuffering with joyfulness; 12 Giving thanks unto the Father, which hath made us meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light: 13 Who hath delivered us from the power of darkness, and hath translated us into the kingdom of his dear Son: 14 In whom we have redemption through his blood, even the forgiveness of sins:...* .

Let me quote something here about inheritance from Brother Copley found in his study book of ACTS. "There is an inheritance for believers. Salvation from sin is not the inheritance. Salvation is God's free gift to undeserving, guilty men, when they repent, and believe the Gospel. A rich young ruler came to Jesus, thinking to inherit eternal life by doing something -- LUKE 18. The Lord showed him at once what he would have to do, if he would gain it by his own works. He was very sorrowful; for he was very rich. He would not trade his wealth for the lasting riches of eternal life. No, he would not if he could -- *"the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God"* - - 1 CORINTHIANS 2:14. He could not if he would -- *"for by grace are ye saved thru faith; not of works, lest any man should boast"* -- EPHESIANS 2:8 & 9. Jesus proceeded to show him and the disciples that salvation is not obtained by inheritance, but by faith in Himself, the world's Sin-bearer. By faith in Jesus we become children of God (JOHN 1:12 & 13); *"and if children, then heirs, heirs of God and joint-heirs with Christ, if so be that we suffer with Him, that we may be also glorified together"* --ROMANS 8:17. Children justly inherit, or fall heir to, their parents' riches. Likewise God's children are His rightful inheritors. But parents divide their possessions to their children usually upon certain deserving conditions, as good behavior etc. Likewise God's children will come

into the divine inheritance upon certain prescribed scriptural conditions. Sinners are saved by faith upon the merit of Christ, because of His death in their behalf; but believers will obtain an inheritance because of their own merit, by divine enabling, of course. If this is not the truth, why Paul's exhortation to give heed to the Word of grace? (ACTS 20:32). If eternal life is the inheritance; if believers shall all obtain an inheritance by the fact only of their being saved, there is no meaning to the Apostles words here. Observe closely that the joint-heirship with Christ hereafter, depends upon joint-heirship with Him here. Being glorified together with Jesus, depends upon our suffering and groaning in fellowship with Him on earth. ROMANS 8:17-39 teaches that, or nothing at all. Study also 2 TIMOTHY 2:9-14."

"Let no Christian worker imagine that he will inherit alike with others, and be rewarded on a par with others, no matter how he lives, or labors, or what he teaches. Let no believer think that he can live after the flesh, and expect an inheritance and a reward after the Spirit. Impossible! Unreasonable! Unjust! Unscriptural! Children cannot remain dwarfs and receive an inheritance. They would not appreciate and enjoy it, if they did receive it. Just so it is in the spiritual. Neither can dwarfs be of much use in service; therefore, for them there is little reward. *"Be not deceived. God is not mocked. Whatsoever any man soweth, that shall he also reap."* (GALATIANS 6:7.)"

"So what is the inheritance someone may ask. REVELATION 21:7 answers the question in a comprehensive way, giving also the chief condition upon which the inheritance is obtained. REVELATION 21:7 *He that overcometh shall inherit all things; and I will be his God, and he shall be my son.* There is a present inheritance for those who are born again. All that the death of Christ has purchased, as for example, divine healing for the body and the anointing with the Spirit. The latter is the earnest of our inheritance in its fulness --EPHESIANS 1:14. Through faith and patience, saints inherit the promises -- HEBREWS 6:12. Now if you wish to know what is the full inheritance of the Church, study Paul's epistles. If you would know the rewards of the saints, study also the seven letters to the seven churches in Asia --REVELATION 2 and 3. In those various writings, we learn also upon what conditions both will be obtained." (End of quote from Brother Copley.)

We noted earlier that concluding twelve words of HEBREWS 12:1 *...let us run with patience the race that is set before us...* are a treasure chest of encouragement to the race course running Bridal Saint who wishes to make herself ready to marry Christ Jesus. Brother Hawkins summed it up in the Grace and Glory magazine writing "the race set before us is that of winning Christ." We have seen in the preceding statements the fact that not all Christians are race course runners, nor do they have any interest in going much further with the Lord other than just being born again, and remain, as Paul puts it in 1 CORINTHIANS 3:1, "babes in Christ." However during this church age there also is a small rib company of Saints that will be taken out of the body of Christ that will become the Lamb's wife, "who hath made herself ready" as is noted in REVELATION 19:7. She is the race course runner, who has run with patience the race that was set before her. We also noted earlier that the Apostle Paul is the only one of the Apostles who writes to us like a personal trainer, encouraging us to be race course runners, explaining to us the goal, and informing us of the many obstacles we will face, which can only be overcome by faith in God. Paul's mention of "patience" here in HEBREWS 12:1 is the last of the eighteen times he uses the Greek word that is translated "patience" here. The Greek word is hupomone {hoop-om-on-ay'}, number 5281 in The Strong's Greek Concordance, and hupomone comes from two Greek words that are put together. Hupo meaning "under," and meno (mone) meaning to abide, thus hupomone literally means: an abiding under. Perhaps we could better understand this literal meaning by recalling the patience of Job, who under extreme testing allowed his faith and trust in God to abide prominent in his life, and even stated: "Though he slay me, yet will I trust in Him" JOB 13:15, thus we find Job abiding under his faith and trust in God. Vine's Expository Dictionary of New Testament Words spends a page of notes defining the Greek word hupomone, thus we find that "patience" has a broad scope of implications, which we will now look further into.

As we *...run with patience the race that is set before us...* there are three components of patience that bring us to Godly perfection. First and foremost, we as race course runners, must be

patient with the Lord, and His divine working in our lives. Secondly we must be patient with ourselves as we by divine guidance allow the Lord Jesus Christ to have His way in our hearts, and lives. We must learn to be anxious for nothing; to let our moderation be known unto all men; and to rejoice in the Lord always, and at all times, for all things are divinely orchestrated to work together for our good. {Study PHILIPPIANS 4:4-6, and ROMANS 8:28.} Thirdly, and perhaps one of the more difficult aspects of running *...with patience the race that is set before us...* is being patient with others. The full overcomers will be those who put these three components of patience in their proper order, which is the Lord first, and everything else will fall in its proper place. If we have our eyes one us first, or others first, then we do not have the Lord first in our lives, and in order to be a race course winner we need to follow Paul's instruction of HEBREWS 12:2, which is to be *...Looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith.*

The Apostle Paul began expressing the components of patience in his very first epistle, and wrote in 1 THESSALONIANS 3:11-13: *Now God himself and our Father, and our Lord Jesus Christ, direct our way unto you. 12 And the Lord make you to increase and abound in love one toward another, and toward all men, even as we do toward you: 13 To the end he may stablish your hearts unblameable in holiness before God, even our Father, at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ with all his saints.* Note here how Paul put God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ first, us second, and all men third in his thought process. In Paul's second epistle, which is 2 THESSALONIANS, Paul writes a quick note in 2 THESSALONIANS 3:2 telling us that *"...all men have not faith."* In that same verse Paul calls these men that have not faith to be *"unreasonable and wicked men,"* and requested prayer for himself to be delivered from such men. In 2 THESSALONIANS 3:3 Paul writes: *But the Lord is faithful, who shall stablish you, and keep you from evil.* Here again we find Paul putting the Lord first, us second, and other people third. Then in 2 THESSALONIANS 3:5 Paul gives us an education in **patience**: *And the Lord direct your hearts into the love of God, and into the patient waiting for Christ.* Let's look at this verse a little closer for it amplifies the thought we are studying in HEBREWS 12:1 of how we are to *...run with patience the race that is set before us.*

2 THESSALONIANS 3:5 *And the Lord direct your hearts...* . Note that we are to let the Lord direct **our heart**, for by doing so we are really putting Him first in our lives. Paul here requests that *...the Lord direct your hearts...* because when we allow the Lord to direct **our hearts** *...the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost which is given unto us...* ROMANS 5:5. When **the Holy Ghost does not guide our hearts, and minds**, oh the trouble we can find. JEREMIAH 17:9 & 10 reads: *The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked: who can know it? 10 I the LORD search the heart, I try the reins, even to give every man according to his ways, and according to the fruit of his doings.* So important is this scripture, that Jesus quotes it again in REVELATION 2:23 where we read: *...I am he which searcheth the reins (used of the inmost thoughts, feelings, purposes, of the soul) and hearts: and I will give unto every one of you according to your works.* Our **hearts** need proper direction, and it is the **heart examiner** who needs to direct our **hearts**. Here in 2 THESSALONIANS 3:5 the word "direct" is a verb giving action to *"the Lord"* in its usage here. "Direct" in this verse means: to guide or direct. We are told in JOHN chapters 14-16 of the Holy Ghost, who is also known as the Comforter, and the Spirit of truth. In JOHN 16:13-15 Jesus says: *Howbeit when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth: for he shall not speak of himself; but whatsoever he shall hear, that shall he speak: and he will shew you things to come. 14 He shall glorify me: for he shall receive of mine, and shall shew it unto you. 15 All things that the Father hath are mine: therefore said I, that he shall take of mine, and shall shew it unto you.* We see here then in 2 THESSALONIANS 3:5 that the Lord who directs, or guides our **hearts** references the Holy Ghost. (The phrase *...the Lord direct your hearts...* is only found this one time in scripture.) So *...let us run with patience the race that is set before us...* allowing the Holy Ghost to guide, and direct our **hearts**. It is His job to guide us unto God's best!

When the Lord searches our **hearts**, what is it He is looking for? Remember the **heart examiner** sees it all. The **heart examiner**, who is our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, looks for a

**heart** that seeks the Lord, with an open **heart** willing to receive faith, hope, understanding and divine wisdom. He is looking for a **perfect heart**, a **clean heart**, a **heart that loves the Lord God with all thy heart**, with all thy soul, and with thy entire mind. Our gracious **heart examiner** is looking for the man after **God's own heart**, who seeks first the will of God in his own **heart**. He that **searcheth the hearts** is looking an **established heart**, a **focused heart**, a **heart full of the Holy Ghost**, and a **heart that has Him as first love!** Wow, that's a Bible full of information right there for all of these thoughts concerning **the heart** are found in scripture.

In 1 CHRONICLES 28:9 we read these words of King David: *And thou, Solomon my son, know thou the God of thy father, and serve him with a **perfect heart** and with a willing mind: for the LORD searcheth all hearts, and understandeth all the imaginations of the thoughts: if thou seek him, he will be found of thee; but if thou forsake him, he will cast thee off for ever.* This was good Godly advice that David gave his son Solomon. Who wrote this statement found in PROVERBS 3:5 *Trust in the LORD with all thine heart; and lean not unto thine own understanding... ?* Solomon was the one who wrote this, for unto him was given by the Lord a wise and **understanding heart** like unto no man before or after him. Let's read where this wisdom came from. 1 KINGS 3 is where we find King Solomon praying unto God, and starting in verse 7 we read: *And now, O LORD my God, thou hast made thy servant king instead of David my father: and I am but a little child: I know not how to go out or come in. 8 And thy servant is in the midst of thy people which thou hast chosen, a great people, that cannot be numbered nor counted for multitude. 9 Give therefore thy servant an **understanding heart** to judge thy people, that I may discern between good and bad: for who is able to judge this thy so great a people? 10 And the speech pleased the Lord, that Solomon had asked this thing. 11 And God said unto him, Because thou hast asked this thing, and hast not asked for thyself long life; neither hast asked riches for thyself, nor hast asked the life of thine enemies; but hast asked for thyself understanding to discern judgment; 12 Behold, I have done according to thy words: lo, I have given thee a wise and an **understanding heart**; so that there was none like thee before thee, neither after thee shall any arise like unto thee.* A **wise and an understanding heart** would be a **heart after God own heart**, and yet we find in 1 KINGS 11:4 that even Solomon's **heart** was turned from God. 1 KINGS 11:4 *For it came to pass, when Solomon was old, that his wives turned away his heart after other gods: and his heart was not perfect with the LORD his God, as was the heart of David his father.* Do you recall finding Solomon mentioned in HEBREWS 11 as an Old Testament worthy of faith? No, but his father David is mentioned by name in HEBREWS 11:32 as being one of the Old Testament icons of faith, whose **heart** was perfect with the LORD his God. (Keep in mind as you *...run with patience the race that is set before...* you that the **heart examiner** sees who your first love is, and knows those who are *...Looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of...* their faith.)

David was probably the most famous king of Israel, and is noted in ACTS 13:22 to be a **man after God's own heart**. ACTS 13:22 in part reads: *...he raised up unto them David to be their king; to whom also he gave testimony, and said, I have found David the son of Jesse, a **man after mine own heart**, which shall fulfil all my will.* 1 SAMUEL 13:14 states this in reference to David: *...the LORD hath sought him a man after his own heart...* . In REVELATION 3:7 we find Jesus addressing the church of Philadelphia, and He makes reference to David. REVELATION 3:7 *And to the angel of the church in Philadelphia write; These things saith he that is holy, he that is true, he that hath the key of David, he that openeth, and no man shutteth; and shutteth, and no man openeth;...* . In this verse Jesus gives a four-fold description of Himself, one of which is that Jesus Himself is the One *...that hath the key of David.* What does this mean? Those in the Philadelphian rank will have learned and know what this statement means. REVELATION 1:18 indicates that a key is a badge of power or authority. The fact that David sought the will and the **heart** of God, his **love of God** in other words, was the key in the life of David that opened unto him all that God would have him to be. David went from being a lowly shepherd boy to the greatest king in the history of Israel, and he did so because he was a man after God's own **heart**. In simplest terms, in return for David loving, and pursuing **the heart** of God, the Lord gave him the keys to the kingdom of Israel,

making him king. David is an example to us of a worthy of faith, mentioned by name in HEBREWS 11:32. The New Testament full overcomer will allow the Lord to direct their **hearts into the love of God** just like David did.

Now we in this church age have been given something far beyond what David had given him, which includes among other things the opportunity to rule and reign with Christ! As an added gift to help us get ready for this eternal opportunity, the Lord gave us of this church age the Holy Ghost for the purpose of directing, and guiding our **hearts**. We have discussed aspects of this many times before. For example in ROMANS 5:5 above we read: *...the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost which is given unto us.* Now let's look at what the Apostle Paul wrote in ROMANS 8:26 & 27 concerning the Holy Ghost. ROMANS 8:26 *Likewise the Spirit also helpeth our infirmities: for we know not what we should pray for as we ought: but the Spirit itself maketh intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered. 27 And he that searcheth the hearts knoweth what is the mind of the Spirit, because he maketh intercession for the saints according to the will of God.* So we see the Holy Spirit helps our infirmities, makes intercession for us, and as noted above in 2 THESSALONIANS 3:5 the Holy Ghost directs our **hearts** into the love of God, and as potential full overcomers let's think of it this way; the Holy Ghost will direct our **hearts** to our first love! The New Testament full overcomer will allow the Lord to direct their **hearts into the love of God** just like David did.

2 THESSALONIANS 3:5 *And the Lord direct your hearts into the love of God, and into the patient waiting for Christ.* Look at the little word "into" found twice in 2 THESSALONIANS 3:5. The first "into" here directs our *...hearts into the love of God...* . All believers have experienced the **love of God**, having let the Lord direct their **hearts** into believing JOHN 3:16 *For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.* REVELATION 3:20 explains salvation likening the **heart** to a door. REVELATION 3:20 gives these words of Jesus: *Behold, I stand at the door, and knock: if any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with me.* The first door that a believer opens to *...the love of God...* is the door of salvation, allowing Jesus to come into their **heart**. 2 THESSALONIANS 3:5 *And the Lord direct your hearts into the love of God,...* . The **love of God** has no bounds, no limitations, no restrictions, and in trying to describe this for us the Apostle Paul wrote in ROMANS 8, after years of having his own **heart** directed **into the love of God**, and probing the Lord's bounds of love: 38 *For I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, 39 Nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.*

The second "into" found in 2 THESSALONIANS 3:5 opens the door *...into the love of God...* that the Philadelphian Saint walks through, which allows the Lord to direct their **hearts ...into the patient waiting for Christ...**! We read about the Philadelphian church in REVELATION 3:7-13. REVELATION 3:7 & 8 states: *And to the angel of the church in Philadelphia write; These things saith he that is holy, he that is true, he that hath the key of David, he that openeth, and no man shutteth; and shutteth, and no man openeth; 8 I know thy works: behold, I have set before thee an open door, and no man can shut it: for thou hast a little strength, and hast kept my word, and hast not denied my name.* The Lord Jesus is *...he that hath the key of David, he that openeth, and no man shutteth; and shutteth, and no man openeth...* . It is Jesus Christ who has the key of authority to open the multitudes of door of truth in our lives that we as overcomers are to walk through by faith. The biggest door we are all looking forward to fly through at the speed of a twinkle of an eye is the door of translation! By faith may that be the way we finish the race that is set before us! Again the key, as described here in REVELATION 3:7, is a badge of power, or authority, and as such it opens doors, by faith, and through faith. Our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ is the One who has such power. As we noted above, it was the Lord who gave David the keys to the kingdom of Israel, making him king, because he was a man after God's own **heart**, a man of faith, who, even as a youth, slew Goliath, believing God would enable him to do the seemingly impossible. We know

from HEBREWS 11:6 that *...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.* By faith we will reign with Christ as the Lamb's wife in the kingdom of God, because she is the one who by faith walked through the open door that was set before her and ran with patience the race that was set before her, trusting in, and keeping the word of God!

Where does full overcoming faith come from? ROMANS 10:17 gives us the answer: *So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.* **The Word of God** is the scriptures Jesus referenced in REVELATION 3:8 when He stated *...for thou hast... ..kept my word,...* . Paul acknowledged the importance of learning, and knowing scripture, **the word of God**, in several places. For example in ROMANS 15:4 he wrote: *For whatsoever things were written aforetime were written for our learning, that we through **patience and comfort of the scriptures** might have hope.* Ponder for a moment the interesting words portrayed here: the *...**patience and comfort of the scriptures**...* is the encouragement, the exhortation, and the admonition the race course runner needs to lay hold upon the hope set before us, who is Jesus Christ Himself. Recall that **patience** means an abiding under, and here we find the race course runner abiding under the power of the Holy Ghost to be encouraged by the scriptures, which were written for our learning that we may win Christ! The scriptures is a reference to **The Word of God**, who is Jesus, and in HEBREWS 4:12 Paul wrote: *For the **word of God** is quick, and powerful, and sharper than any twoedged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart.* Let's think of what is being said here like this in the light of 2 THESSALONIANS 3:5: *And the Lord direct your hearts into the love of God,...* into *...the word of God... ..that we through **patience and comfort of the scriptures** might have hope... ..into the **patient** waiting for Christ.*

2 THESSALONIANS 3:5 *And the Lord direct your hearts into the... ..**patient** waiting for Christ.* JAMES 1:3 tells us: *...that the trying of your faith worketh **patience**.* We just read in ROMANS 10:17 *So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God,...* and now we see *...that the trying of your faith worketh **patience**.* ROMANS 5:3 further tells us *...that tribulation worketh **patience**...* . One thing about **patience**, it requires time, and it requires waiting, and it requires that we be **patient** with the Lord, with ourselves, and with others. JAMES 1:4 *But let **patience** have her perfect work, that ye may be perfect and entire, wanting nothing.*

The phrase "*...**patient** waiting...*" in 2 THESSALONIANS 3:5 is only found this one time in scripture, and note the reference again: *And the Lord direct your hearts into the... ..**patient** waiting for Christ.* The first assumption we correctly make concerning *...the **patient** waiting for Christ...* concerns Jesus soon coming, whose return we all should be **patiently** waiting for. Jesus coming to catch His Bride away will be the greatest event of this church age, for which a small rib company of Saints are **patiently** waiting. Their focus is upon Jesus in every thing, which brings us to the second and most important point of this statement: *And the Lord direct your hearts into the... ..**patient** waiting for Christ.* The Philadelphian Saint has learned from studying, and learning **the word of God**, *...through **patience and comfort of the scriptures**...* to let the Lord direct their **hearts** into the **patient** waiting for Christ in everything, and in every event, big or seemingly tiny, that is in their life! That is why we so often hear the race course running saying aloud "Praise the Lord," for they acknowledge Him first in every aspect of their life. They have learned 1 THESSALONIANS 5:18 *In every thing give thanks: for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus concerning you.*

Have you ever said to yourself "I sure didn't need that?" If you have, where was your focus? Probably your focus was upon yourself first of all, then on the Lord, perhaps. Recall our text of HEBREWS 12:1 & 2 states: *Wherefore seeing we also are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset us, and let us run with **patience** the race that is set before us, 2 Looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith; who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God.* The next time an event takes place in your life, and you feel like saying "I sure didn't need this," realize that this event, this thing, this test in your life, this obstacle

on your race course, is being brought to you by Jesus the author and finisher of your faith, who is working **patience** into you **heart**, and life. Look unto Him. Let the Lord Jesus Christ be the first thought in your **heart** in everything. You are His first thought, and the joy that was set before Him, so shouldn't He be your first thought in everything? Jesus will be first on the **hearts**, and minds of the full overcomer, and you know this to be true. The next time something you don't like, or want, or didn't expect happens unto you, instead of saying "I sure didn't need this," quote 2 THESSALONIANS 3:5 to yourself: *And the Lord direct your hearts into the love of God, and into the patient waiting for Christ.* Then you can say "thank you Lord for bringing this event into my life." This is how *...tribulation worketh patience;*... and this is how *...the Lord directs your heart into the... ..patient waiting for Christ.* Do you love His appearing? You do if you see the Lord in everything that comes your way! Praise the Lord. Again we repeat what is written in 1 THESSALONIANS 5:18 *In every thing give thanks: for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus concerning you.*

We are currently looking at this portion of HEBREWS 12:1 *...and let us run with patience the race that is set before us...* considering the importance of **patience**. As we began looking into this broad concept of "**patience**" we noted that the Greek word that is translated "**patience**" here is hupomone {hoop-om-on-ay'}, number 5281 in The Strong's Greek Concordance, which is taken from two Greek words that are put together. Hupo meaning "under," and meno (mone) meaning to abide, thus hupomone literally means: an abiding under. We referenced the **patience** of Job, who under extreme testing allowed his faith and trust in God to abide prominent in his life, and even stated: "Though he slay me, yet will I trust in Him" JOB 13:15, thus we find Job abiding under his faith and trust in God. We also pointed out that as we *...run with patience the race that is set before us...* there are three components of **patience** that bring us to Godly perfection. First and foremost, we as race course runners, must be **patient** with the Lord, and His divine working in our lives.

Secondly we must be **patient** with ourselves as we by divine guidance allow the Lord Jesus Christ to have His way in our hearts, and lives. That is why the context of 2 THESSALONIANS 3:5 is so important to our lives: *And the Lord direct your hearts into the love of God, and into the patient waiting for Christ.* We need to allow the Holy Ghost to direct **our hearts into the love of God, and into the patient waiting for Christ** in our daily walk, and in every event that is on our individual race course. We must learn to be anxious for nothing; to let our moderation be known unto all men; and to rejoice in the Lord always, and at all times, for all things are divinely orchestrated to work together for our good. {Study PHILIPPIANS 4:4-6, and ROMANS 8:28.} To be a full overcomer we must have hope. Our Apostle Paul wrote this in 1 TIMOTHY 1:1 *Paul, an apostle of Jesus Christ by the commandment of God our Saviour, and Lord Jesus Christ, which is our hope.* Thus we find that our hope is in the Lord Jesus Christ. Old Testament worthy of faith David knew this too, and wrote in PSALMS 39:7 *And now, Lord, what wait I for? my hope is in thee.* One of the more profound scriptures concerning both patience and hope is found in ROMANS 15:4, which we also looked at above: ROMANS 15:4 *For whatsoever things were written aforetime were written for our learning, that we through patience and comfort of the scriptures might have hope.*

Thirdly, and perhaps one of the more difficult aspects of running *...with patience the race that is set before us...* is being **patient** with others, all seven billion plus of them. The full overcomers will be those who put these three components of **patience** in their proper order, which is the Lord first, and everything else will fall in it's proper place. If we have our eyes one us first, or others first, then we do not have the Lord first in our lives, and in order to be a race course winner we need to follow Paul's instruction of HEBREWS 12:2, which is to be *...Looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith...* for He indeed is the prize that is set before the race course runner.

As we consider for a moment being **patient** with others always keep the Lord first and foremost in your heart, and mind. Be **patient** with the Lord's working in your own life. This is the only way you can be **patient** with yourself, and then with others. The Apostle Paul many times encouraged us how to interact with others. Here are a few examples from scriptures penned by our

Apostle Paul. ROMANS 12:10 Be kindly affectioned one to another with brotherly love; in honour preferring one another; 11 Not slothful in business; fervent in spirit; serving the Lord; 12 Rejoicing in hope; patient in tribulation; continuing instant in prayer; 13 Distributing to the necessity of saints; given to hospitality. 14 Bless them which persecute you: bless, and curse not. 15 Rejoice with them that do rejoice, and weep with them that weep. 16 Be of the same mind one toward another. Mind not high things, but condescend to men of low estate. Be not wise in your own conceits. 17 Recompense to no man evil for evil. Provide things honest in the sight of all men. 18 If it be possible, as much as lieth in you, live peaceably with all men. 19 Dearly beloved, avenge not yourselves, but rather give place unto wrath: for it is written, Vengeance is mine; I will repay, saith the Lord. 20 Therefore if thine enemy hunger, feed him; if he thirst, give him drink: for in so doing thou shalt heap coals of fire on his head. 21 Be not overcome of evil, but overcome evil with good. GALATIANS 6:10 As we have therefore opportunity, let us do good unto all men, especially unto them who are of the household of faith. PHILIPPIANS 4:5 Let your moderation be known unto all men. The Lord is at hand. We read this one earlier: 1 THESSALONIANS 3:12 And the Lord make you to increase and abound in love one toward another, and toward all men, even as we do toward you. 1 TIMOTHY 2:1 I exhort therefore, that, first of all, supplications, prayers, intercessions, and giving of thanks, be made for all men. 2 TIMOTHY 2:24 And the servant of the Lord must not strive; but be gentle unto all men, apt to teach, patient, 25 In meekness instructing those that oppose themselves; if God peradventure will give them repentance to the acknowledging of the truth; 26 And that they may recover themselves out of the snare of the devil, who are taken captive by him at his will. TITUS 3:1 Put them in mind to be subject to principalities and powers, to obey magistrates, to be ready to every good work, 2 To speak evil of no man, to be no brawlers, but gentle, shewing all meekness unto all men. In HEBREWS 12:14 Paul writes: Follow peace with all men, and holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord. One more thought concerning our being **patient** with others is found in the very first epistle Paul wrote, 1 THESSALONIANS 5:14 Now we exhort you, brethren, warn them that are unruly, comfort the feebleminded, support the weak, be patient toward all men. 15 See that none render evil for evil unto any man; but ever follow that which is good, both among yourselves, and to all men. 16 Rejoice evermore. 17 Pray without ceasing. 18 In every thing give thanks: for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus concerning you. So to sum up our being **patient** with others we find that we first need to be **patient** with the Lord, then **patient** with ourselves, so we can be **patient** toward all men. Rest assured that we cannot be **patient** towards all men without the help, and guidance, and direction of the Holy Ghost being evident in our own hearts and lives. Again we reference the context of 2 THESSALONIANS 3:5: And the Lord direct your hearts into the love of God, and into the patient waiting for Christ. We need to allow the Holy Ghost to direct our hearts into the love of God, and into the patient waiting for Christ in our daily walk, and in every event that is on our individual race course, which includes being **patient** toward all men.

As we study this part of HEBREWS 12:1 ...and let us run with patience the race that is set before us... our recent attention has been on **patience**, and we have looked at **patience** from three different view points so far, that being **patient** with the Lord, **patient** with ourselves, and **patient** with others. We also briefly considered the **patience** of scriptures, which point we will now look further into. In ROMANS 15:4 Paul wrote: For whatsoever things were written aforetime were written for our learning, that we through patience and comfort of the scriptures might have hope. We noted that the ...patience and comfort of the scriptures... is the encouragement, the exhortation, and the admonition the race course runner needs to lay hold upon the hope set before us, who is Jesus Christ Himself. The importance of the ...patience and comfort of the scriptures... is further emphasized by the Lord Jesus Christ Himself in REVELATION 3:10 where He says: Because thou hast kept the word of my patience, I also will keep thee from the hour of temptation, which shall come upon all the world, to try them that dwell upon the earth. Brother Hawkins noted here in REVELATION 3:10 that “**patience** simply means: willing to remain in their place until He has worked in them.” {End of quoting Brother Hawkins.} What a profoundly simple explanation of

**patience.** This statement of REVELATION 3:10 is written to the full overcomers of this church age represented by the Philadelphia church, which are the full overcoming Saints still alive when the Lord comes again. This is the very same crowd who heeded Paul's eighty-word sentence of HEBREWS 12:1 & 2, which we are studying in great depth, that encourages us of this church age to be race course runners, and New Testament worthies of faith. All full overcomers will be found to have this quality, **patience.** It was the same for all of the Old Testament worthies of faith too. Enoch walked with God most all of the 365 years he lived before God translated him. That's a long time as we measure time, yet in Enoch's day he wasn't yet considered old. Do you have the **patience** to walk with God 365 years? 365 days? 365 hours? Obviously Enoch had **patience.** How about Noah, did he too have **patience?** The indications in scripture show that it took Noah about 120 years to build the ark. Do you have 120 years worth of **patience** for a project like that? Noah did. God was **patient** with Noah too, for we read in 1 PETER 3:20 ...*God waited in the days of Noah, while the ark was a preparing...* . Furthermore Noah manifested **patience** with others as they constantly asked him about this ship he was building in his back yard. 2 PETER 2:5 tells us that Noah was "a preacher of righteousness" unto those ungodly people that lived in his world, and he preached unto them 120 years. That took **patience.** Yes Noah had full overcoming **patience,** and is Old Testament proof that this quality of **patience** will be found in the New Testament worthies of faith also. Did Old Testament worthy of faith Abraham have **patience?** God promised him an heir when his name was Abram, and told him his seed would be multiplied as the stars in heaven. Some years pass, no son. Finally when Abraham was 100 years old he had the promised son Isaac. Yes Abraham had **patience.** Did Isaac have **patience** too? Yes, he married Rebecca when he was forty, but Rebecca was barren GENESIS 25:21 tells us, and the promise God made to Abraham of having his seed multiplied as the stars in heaven seemed impossible. Isaac intreated the Lord for Rebecca being barren, and she conceived, and bare twins, Esau and Jacob. Isaac was now sixty years old when Rebecca gave birth to these boys. Did any of you fathers have children after being married twenty years? Isaac had **patience.** We read in JAMES 5:11 "of the **patience** of Job," who we mentioned earlier under extreme testing allowed his faith and trust in God to abide prominent in his life, and even stated: "Though he slay me, yet will I trust in Him" in JOB 13:15. This icon of faith is a testimony to us of an Old Testament overcomer full of faith, and a man of **patience,** who waited on the Lord to deliver him out of all his fiery trials. On your own review the lives of the rest of the Old Testament worthies of faith, and realize that all full overcomers will be found to have this quality, **patience:** they were willing to remain in their place until God finished working in them.

Let's look at some characters from the New Testament and see who was willing to remain in their place until the Lord God worked in them **patience.** Let's start with Jesus. Jesus is the ultimate overcomer, having overcome the world, death, and the grave! But did Jesus have **patience?** In LUKE 2:41-52 we find Jesus when he was twelve years old. He was a perfect child, yet his parents paid Him no attention, so much so that they lost Him for over a day and didn't realize that He was missing!!! Jesus however was already about His Father's business, and was found in the temple astounding the doctors of the law with His answers, and His questions. His parents didn't understand at that time what was taking place, yet we find Jesus was **patient** with them, and let God continue to work **patience** in His life too, for Jesus spent the next 18 years being subject unto His parents. Have you ever been **patient** 18 years for anything? By the time Jesus started His ministry, His Mother had learned to pay enough attention to Him, and had learned that "Whatsoever He saith unto you, do it." {JOHN 2:5.} Obviously Mary had learned **patience** during these 18 years too. Yet Jesus Brothers and Sisters didn't seem to learn much from Him during this same 18 years.... (more on this in a minute.)

Jesus starts His ministry and ends up with several disciples, twelve who became prominent. Jesus was very **patient** with them too, as they were slow to learn what He was constantly teaching them. Jesus spent more than three years with these very same disciples, and was very **patient** with them, having Himself chosen them to be His Apostles!!! {Study JOHN 15:16; JOHN 15:19 and ACTS 1:2.} Again these disciples of Jesus weren't the top in their class, and even though they were

slow learners, Jesus was very **patient** with them. What about His **patience** with me, ...and you? On the day of Pentecost they were filled with the Holy Ghost, and begin to be the fishers of men that Jesus told them they would be when they first started following Him. Obviously these disciples were willing to remain in their place until the Lord had worked in them those things he told them He would. {See MATTHEW 4:19 & MARK 1:17.}

Jesus was very **patient** with His Brother and Sisters also, who are found listed in MARK 6:3 *Is not this the carpenter, the son of Mary, the brother of James, and Joses, and of Juda, and Simon? and are not his sisters here with us?* Apparently they didn't believe Jesus was the Messiah either, and JOHN 7:5 says it this way: *For neither did his brethren believe in him.* The word "brethren" here means: children of the same Mother. Since Jesus Brothers and Sisters didn't believe in Him, while on the cross Jesus turned the care of His Mother Mary over to the Apostle John, saying to him in JOHN 19:26 *When Jesus therefore saw his mother, and the disciple standing by, whom he loved, he saith unto his mother, Woman, behold thy son! 27 Then saith he to the disciple, Behold thy mother! And from that hour that disciple took her unto his own home.* Imagine the care of your own Mother being turned over to someone outside the family. Jesus was the firstborn of Mary, and had basically taken care of her since Joseph had died probably since before the time of Jesus ministry. James the next oldest would be the one in line to take care of his Mother, but since James wasn't a believer at the time of Jesus death, Jesus entrusted the care of His Mother over to one of His most trusted disciples, who it turns out to be the Apostle John. Study ACTS 1:3 and see that Jesus spent forty days of time after His resurrection showing Himself alive by many infallible proofs. In 1 CORINTHIANS 15:7 Paul writes that one of these who saw Jesus alive after His resurrection was James, which is James the Lord's Brother. In GALATIANS 1:19 Paul writes of himself also seeing "James the Lord's Brother" upon his first visit back to Jerusalem after getting saved. Probably that is when James the Lord's Brother told Paul that he too saw Jesus after His resurrection. So we next read in ACTS 1:14 of some events that took place between when Jesus was taken up with a great cloud of witnesses in ACTS 1:8, and the day of Pentecost in ACTS 2. Here is what ACTS 1:14 says: *These all continued with one accord in prayer and supplication, with the women, and Mary the mother of Jesus, and with his brethren.* Obviously Jesus was very **patient** with His Brothers and Sisters, knowing that they would become believers after His death.

So we don't find it unusual that James, the Brother of Jesus, writes much about **patience** in his epistle of JAMES. JAMES 1:2 *My brethren, count it all joy when ye fall into divers temptations; 3 Knowing this, that the trying of your faith worketh **patience.** 4 But let **patience** have her perfect work, that ye may be perfect and entire, wanting nothing.* Do you think the New Testament worthies of faith will have **patience** like the Old Testament worthies of faith did? Certainly, and here James, the Brother of Jesus, who had been shown so much **patience** by our lovely Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ Himself, writes of *...the trying of your faith worketh **patience.*** Have you every had your faith tried? If so be assured that *...the trying of your faith worketh **patience.*** Do you want New Testament worthy of faith type **patience**? The New Testament full overcomers do, and will learn *...that tribulation worketh **patience...*** ROMANS 5:3. So it looks like **patience** doesn't come without trials, tests, and tribulation.

James learned **patience** from the Lord, and used **patience** like books ends in his epistle. James concludes his thoughts on **patience** in JAMES 5:7 *Be **patient** therefore, brethren, unto the coming of the Lord. Behold, the husbandman waiteth for the precious fruit of the earth, and hath long **patience** for it, until he receive the early and latter rain. 8 Be ye also **patient**; stablish your hearts: for the coming of the Lord draweth nigh. ...10 Take, my brethren, the prophets, who have spoken in the name of the Lord, for an example of suffering affliction, and of **patience.** 11 Behold, we count them happy which endure. Ye have heard of the **patience** of Job, and have seen the end of the Lord; that the Lord is very pitiful, and of tender mercy.* When James writes *...that the Lord is very pitiful...* in verse 11, he is expressing how very compassionate, and full of compassion the Lord Jesus Christ is. James also experienced this first hand. A double emphasis of this point is stated by James

when he adds that the Lord is also full ...of tender mercy, a fact James had also witnessed, and experienced first hand, before, and after Jesus death and resurrection.

How about our Apostle Paul, was he a man of **patience**? Of course he was. Our Apostle Paul was the one who wrote one hundred chapters of scripture through which we find **patience** and comfort and hope as noted in ROMANS 15:4 -- *For whatsoever things were written aforetime were written for our learning, that we through **patience and comfort of the scriptures might have hope.*** Our Apostle Paul wrote to Timothy in his last letter these words found in 2 TIMOTHY 3:10 -- *But thou hast fully known my doctrine, manner of life, purpose, faith, longsuffering, charity, **patience**, 11 Persecutions, afflictions, which came unto me at Antioch, at Iconium, at Lystra; what persecutions I endured: but out of them all the Lord delivered me. 12 Yea, and all that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution.* Paul here was reminding Timothy of many things, one of which was that he had manifested **patience** as he ran his race course. Paul wrote the following in ROMANS: 5:3 & 4 -- *And not only so, but we glory in tribulations also: knowing that tribulation worketh **patience**; 4 And **patience**, experience; and experience, hope.* ROMANS 8:25 *But if we hope for that we see not, then do we with **patience** wait for it.* To the Corinthians Paul writes this about himself in 2 CORINTHIANS 12:12 *Truly the signs of an apostle were wrought among you in all **patience**, in signs, and wonders, and mighty deeds.* Our Apostle Paul faced a myriad of tests and trials that he **patiently** endured as he ran his race. That is why he wrote in HEBREWS 12:1 *...let us run with **patience** the race that is set before us.* **Patience** is a feature, a high quality, an attribute of faith. Bridal Saints, the New Testament full overcomers will have learned **patience**, that is they are willing to remain in their place until the Lord has finished working in them. Our Apostle Paul was **patient** with the Lord working in his life until the end where he wrote: *I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith; Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give me at that day: and not to me only, but unto all them also that love his appearing...* 2 TIMOTHY 4:7 & 8. Again it was our Apostle Paul who wrote in 2 THESSALONIANS 3:5 *And the Lord direct your hearts into the love of God, and into the **patient** waiting for Christ.* ROMANS 5:5 points out that it is the Holy Ghost who directs our hearts into the love of God, saying within this verse that *...the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost which is given unto us.* Thus our director, the Holy Ghost, also directs our hearts into the **patient** waiting for Christ if we only yield to His directing. Are you running your race with **patience**? To do so we must yield to the Holy Ghost's directing, for after all He was sent for that very purpose to guide, and direct our steps. JEREMIAH 10:23 says it this way: *O LORD, I know that the way of man is not in himself: it is not in man that walketh to direct his steps.* Rebecca never would have been a bride to Isaac without following the guiding, and directing of Eliezer. Likewise the Bride of Christ will never become the Lamb's wife without yielding unto the guiding, and directing of the Holy Ghost. Again 2 THESSALONIANS 3:5 gives us this encouragement: *And the Lord direct your hearts into the love of God, and into the **patient** waiting for Christ.* Are you willing, and **patient** enough to remain in the place the Lord has put you until He has finished the good work He began in you? The Philadelphian Saint is found to have this kind of Holy Ghost directed **patience**, and it is to them that Jesus said in REVELATION 3:10 *Because thou hast kept the word of my **patience**, I also will keep thee from the hour of temptation, which shall come upon all the world, to try them that dwell upon the earth.* So once again we repeat Paul's Holy Ghost inspired words of encouragement *...let us run with **patience** the race that is set before us...* HEBREWS 12:1.

In the past several Sunday School sessions we have examined many thoughts from these last twelve words of HEBREWS 12:1 *...let us run with **patience** the race that is set before us,..* noting among many things that the majority of the body of Christ falls into the category of not wanting to be race course runners for whatever reason. Let that fact sink into your heart for a few moments, that not all Christians want to be race course runners for whatever reason.

After camp this year I was reviewing some of what Brother Copley wrote in his PHILLIPPIANS study book, and I came across this paragraph, which reads: "Thank God for the race

course, and for the victorious racer. I thank the Lord for the words of the Apostle Paul concerning the racers and the race course. I praise God for the Holy Spirit who has opened the eyes of some saints to understand these wonderful truths and who has wrought in their hearts a desire to run for the Prize.” {End of Brother Copley quote.} Brother Copley also knew as he wrote these words that not all believers were race course runners, noting that it is only some Saints who have a desire to run for the prize of the high calling of God in Christy Jesus as is noted in PHILIPPIANS 3:14. Brother Hill also commented on this very same point after reading PHILIPPIANS 3:10-14, which are Paul’s words concerning running the race: PHILIPPIANS 3:10 *That I may know him, and the power of his resurrection, and the fellowship of his sufferings, being made conformable unto his death; 11 If by any means I might attain unto the resurrection of the dead. 12 Not as though I had already attained, either were already perfect: but I follow after, if that I may apprehend that for which also I am apprehended of Christ Jesus. 13 Brethren, I count not myself to have apprehended: but this one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before, 14 I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus.* Here is what Brother Hill said after reading these verses: “Let’s pause her for one minute. If you’re a child of God and you are sitting in this meeting, God has laid a hold of you for this. It is as simple as that. It will have to be your negligence or your rejection if you don’t have it. This is for you. He has laid a hold of you.” {End of quoting Brother Hill.} At camp this year (2017) two of the Pastors, Brother Henry Smith, and Brother Golden zeroed in on the word “resurrection” in PHILIPPIANS 3:11, both of them noting the very same thing. The Greek word translated “resurrection” here in verse 11 is only found this one time in scripture. The Greek word is exanastasis {ex-an-as'-tas-is}, number 1815 in the Strong’s Greek Concordance. Brother Copley further noted that exanastasis is built of three words -- “ex” meaning: out of; “ana” meaning: “up,” and “histemi” meaning: to make to stand, to place, etc. Hence exanastasis in it’s fulness means: “standing up out of, or out from among.” Thus the original Greek of PHILIPPIANS 3:11 reads: “If somehow I may attain to a resurrection out from among the dead.” As Brother Copley expound it, “Paul persisted in running so that if by any means he might arrive into the out-resurrection, up from among other sleeping Saints.”

Again we repeat what we stated earlier, which is the fact that not all Christians want to be race course runners for whatever reason. In fact scripture rightly divided by the Holy Ghost plainly teaches that only a rib portion from the sleeping body of Christ will be taken out, and given a body that will *...be fashioned like unto his glorious body...* according to PHILIPPIANS 3:21. This small rib portion of Saints from the body of Christ are indeed the Bride of Christ, the great mystery that Paul speaks of in EPHESIANS 5:32 *This is a great mystery: but I speak concerning Christ and the church.* It is the race course winners that will be the Bride of Christ!

We have made several references to the rib portion of Saints taken out from the body of Christ earlier in this study, but perhaps some are only hearing this for the first time, so rather than assuming all have learned this before, let’s take the time to review what the rib portion speaks about. We will start with JOHN 4:24 *God is a Spirit: and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth.* God uses natural things which we can see to often times explain the spiritual things, which we can only see with our spiritual eyes. 1 CORINTHIANS 2:13 tells us in part that *...the Holy Ghost teacheth; comparing spiritual things with spiritual.* To properly see spiritual things one must be filled with the Holy Ghost, who can reveal spiritual things unto us.

Now let’s consider Adam’s rib, and connect the dots to see how this correlates to the rib portion of Saints taken out from the body of Christ. In GENESIS 1:26 & 27 we read: *And God said, Let us make man in our image, after our likeness: and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth. 27 So God created man in his own image, in the image of God created he him; male and female created he them.* Then in GENESIS 2:7 we see more information concerning the creation of man: *And the LORD God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living soul.* Note the word formed here meaning: like a potter forms clay. Now go to 1 CORINTHIANS 15:45 *And so it is written, The*

*first man Adam was made a living soul; the last Adam was made a quickening spirit. 46 Howbeit that was not first which is spiritual, but that which is natural; and afterward that which is spiritual. 47 The first man is of the earth, earthy: the second man is the Lord from heaven. 48 As is the earthy, such are they also that are earthy: and as is the heavenly, such are they also that are heavenly. 49 And as we have borne the image of the earthy, we shall also bear the image of the heavenly. The next dot takes us to 1 TIMOTHY 4:13 For Adam was first formed, then Eve. Note here that Adam was formed, and then Eve was formed, like a potter forms clay. Now back to GENESIS 2. GENESIS 2:18 And the LORD God said, It is not good that the man should be alone; I will make him an help meet for him. ...21 And the LORD God caused a deep sleep to fall upon Adam, and he slept: and he took one of his ribs, and closed up the flesh instead thereof; 22 And the rib, which the LORD God had taken from man, made he a woman, and brought her unto the man. 23 And Adam said, This is now bone of my bones, and flesh of my flesh: she shall be called Woman, because she was taken out of Man. 24 Therefore shall a man leave his father and his mother, and shall cleave unto his wife: and they shall be one flesh. Eve was the first bride, and verse 24 is often quoted at weddings. Note also here in verse 22 the little word “made.” Made -- means to build. Building something takes time.*

Here we read of the first operation in the Bible. In the natural if a rib is removed it has to be taken out by a sharp object, like a scalpel. HEBREWS 4:12 reveals the spiritual application here, stating: *For the word of God is quick, and powerful, and sharper than any twoedged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart.*

Let’s consider our ribs for a moment. The ribs in our body have to expand and retract (work and rest) for as long as we live. This is done in response to a signal from our head. Our spiritual head is Christ. The work of the ribs is silent. Attached to the upper ribs are the muscles of the neck, which actually lift our head (Christ) up. The underside of the ribs are hollow, allowing room for blood veins, arteries, nerves, cartilage, and tissue; everything that is necessary to maintain life. If a rib is removed by a physician to repair damage from an injured lung, or something of that nature, it usually is the fifth rib that is taken out. The ribs above have muscles attached, and the ribs below hold the diaphragm in place. If any other ribs are damaged, it causes one to be lopsided, and not able to breath correctly. Having a rib injury is very painful. After a rib is removed, the only way a patient can get real relief is by holding something like a pillow near to their heart. Adam was told to “cleave” unto his wife; hold her close to his heart in other words. Thus he would get relief from the pain of having a rib removed is the spiritual implication here.

Jesus Christ is the head of the church EPHESIANS 3:23 tells us, and COLOSSIANS 1:18 states: *And he is the head of the body, the church: who is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead; that in all things he might have the preeminence.* The church for the most part is asleep today. 1 THESSALONIANS 5:6 *Therefore let us not sleep, as do others; but let us watch and be sober.* Out of this sleeping church a small rib portion is being taken out, and a bride is being formed; a help meet for Him! This is the joy that was set before Him, while Jesus endured the cross. Those in this rib portion will allow the work of the Holy Ghost to take place in their lives: *Being confident of this very thing, that he which hath begun a good work in you will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ:* PHILIPPIANS 1:6. Those in this rib portion have learned the lessons of HEBREWS 12:1 & 2. HEBREWS 12:1 *Wherefore seeing we also are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset us, and let us run with patience the race that is set before us, 2 Looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith; who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God.* Those in this rib portion have learned the deeper truths of EPHESIANS 5. EPHESIANS 5:25 *Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it;... ...31 For this cause shall a man leave his father and mother, and shall be joined unto his wife, and they two shall be one flesh.* Here Paul is quoting from GENESIS 2:24 above concerning Adam and Eve, then he adds in EPHESIANS 5:32 *This is a great mystery: but I speak*

*concerning Christ and the church.* ROMANS 5:14 tells that Adam ...*is the figure of him that was to come.* "Him that was to come" references Christ. Furthermore Paul writes in 1 CORINTHIANS 15:22 & 23 *For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive. 23 But every man in his own order: Christ the firstfruits; afterward they that are Christ's at his coming.* Thus it remains a mystery to the majority of Christians that only a very small rib portion from the church will be in that company of Saints known as the Bride of Christ. Let's spend a moment resolving this mystery.

All bible students know the 15th chapter of 1 CORINTHIANS to be the resurrection chapter. Hopefully you are familiar with this chapter, and if not, become familiar with this chapter. Let's read a few verses from 1 CORINTHIANS 15. 1 CORINTHIANS 15:20 *But now is Christ risen from the dead, and become the firstfruits of them that slept. 21 For since by man came death, by man came also the resurrection of the dead. 22 For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive. 23 But every man in his own order: Christ the firstfruits; afterward they that are Christ's at his coming.* PAY SPECIAL ATTENTION TO THIS PHRASE: "EVERY MAN IN HIS OWN ORDER." The word "order" comes from the Greek word "tagma" (number 5001 in The Strong's Greek Concordance) found only this one time in scripture, and it means: (1) that which has been arranged in order, thing placed in order; (2) a body of soldiers, a corps; (3) a band, a troop, a class, A RANK. There are different ranks in an army, and each rank, or band, or troop, marches in different orders at different times. The Apostle Paul likens the resurrection to this. Simply put there are different ranks in the resurrection. The first rank will be the Bride of Christ.

We have a picture of ranks in the army in EXODUS 12 and 13. In EXODUS 12:17 & 51 we see the Lord God bringing the children of Israel out of the land of Egypt by their armies. Now we also know that the children of Israel had been slaves in the land of Egypt for over four hundred years at this time, and that they didn't have organized armies, but that is not how God saw them, for He saw them by their armies. Armies are arranged by their ranks, is this not true. In EXODUS 13:18 we read: *But God led the people about, through the way of the wilderness of the Red sea: and the children of Israel went up harnessed out of the land of Egypt.* This word harnessed comes from a Hebrew word chamush {khaw-moosh'} (number 2571 in Strong's Hebrew Concordance), and is a military term meaning: in battle array, arrayed for battle by five's, armed; by five in a rank; and thus shows us that it was by grace that the children of Israel were redeemed by the might hand of the Lord out of the land of bondage in Egypt, just like it is by grace that we were redeemed from the life of sin that we were conceived in. What we need to see here is that there were ranks in the redeemed out of Egypt, and that there are ranks in the redeemed in the resurrection.

Now turn to REVELATION 7 and note the "great multitude, which no man could number" found in REVELATION 7:9. This innumerable multitude comes from an order of believers, or rank of believers from this church age, who were not ready when the Lord Jesus Christ came to catch His Bride away. Again this group constitutes the majority of the vast multitudes, which happens to be mainly Gentiles that have believed on Jesus Christ throughout this church age. The church age has gone on now nearly 2000 years. If the current population of the earth is nearly seven billion or more, then how many people have lived during this nearly 2000 year period known as the church age? An unknown number to you and me, and probably an unknown number to man. We could say then that during this church age a ...*great multitude, which no man could number*,... has lived. Furthermore during this nearly 2000 year period known as the church age an unknown number of people to you and me have accepted the Lord Jesus Christ as their own personal Saviour. Thus we come to a count of innumerable as to those who have been saved during this church age. Those who have been saved during this church age fall into two basic groups; (1) those who go on with the Lord to become full-overcomers in the Bride of Christ; and (2) those who don't. Unfortunately the later group constitutes the "great multitude, which no man could number" found here in REVELATION 7:9. The Apostle Paul encourages us to be full overcomers in many different places in his epistles, and among his many words in his one hundred chapters he wrote: *Therefore let us not sleep, as do others; but let us watch and be sober... ..let us run with patience the race that is set before us...* (1 THESSALONIANS 5:6 and HEBREWS 12:1).

We have in this study spent much time discussing the race course runner, which HEBREWS 12:1 & 2 expounds upon. Though the term “race course” is not found in scripture, the teaching of a race course, and a race course runner certainly is, and this very subject has been expounded upon for decades in this assembly. In fact the word “race” is only found four times in scripture. Four again is the number that points to HUMAN WEAKNESS and MAN’S WEAKNESS; four also is the number of CREATION, and is an EARTHLY number. Isn’t it interesting that Jesus Christ will have a Bride taken from amongst humanly weak man? The first bride was Eve as we also noted above, and her name is only mentioned four times in scripture also. So perhaps there is similar significance into why the word “race” is only found four times in scripture. Bridal Saints will make this connection. The four scriptures are PSALMS 19:5; ECCLESIASTES 9:11; 1 CORINTHIANS 9:24, and HEBREWS 12:1. Let’s look at them a little closer.

PSALMS 19:4 & 5 reads: *Their line is gone out through all the earth, and their words to the end of the world. In them hath he set a tabernacle for the sun, 5 Which is as a bridegroom coming out of his chamber, and rejoiceth as a strong man to run a race.* The Hebrew word translated “race” here in verse 5 is 'orach {o'-rakh}, number 0734 in The Strong’s Hebrew Concordance. Take the time to study it out, for this Hebrew word points to the ways, the paths, and course of life, and even highlights mighty men not breaking their ranks in JOEL 2:7.

The wisest man so called by God in 1 KINGS 3:12 was Solomon, who also wrote these words in ECCLESIASTES 9:11 *I returned, and saw under the sun, that the race is not to the swift, nor the battle to the strong, neither yet bread to the wise, nor yet riches to men of understanding, nor yet favour to men of skill; but time and chance happeneth to them all.* Here the Hebrew word translated “race” is merowts {may-rotēs'} (number 04793 in The Strong’s Hebrew Concordance), used only this one time in scripture, and it references running, a race, or a course, thus we can think of it like a race course. Let me ask you race course runners, is the race you are running to win Christ as Bridegroom a sprint, or a life long trial filled triathlon? Solomon answered this question already.

1 CORINTHIANS 9:24 *Know ye not that they which run in a race run all, but one receiveth the prize? So run, that ye may obtain. 25 And every man that striveth for the mastery is temperate in all things. Now they do it to obtain a corruptible crown; but we an incorruptible.* Perhaps you too have spent hours studying these verses. I hope you have. Here in verse 24 the word “race” is the Greek word stadion {stad'-ee-on} (number 4712 in The Strong’s Greek Concordance), and here references the distance of a furlong, which is about 600 feet. The Corinthians to whom he wrote this would be very familiar with this terminology of a “race,” for courses of this kind were found most often in the larger Greek cities, where running contests were held. The race course runner also knows that we are to follow the Apostle Paul, and study his life to learn what this race course consists of, and what is the prize at the end of our race course. The Apostle Paul explains this a little further in PHILIPPIANS 3:14 where he writes: *I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus.* Earlier in PHILIPPIANS 3:8 Paul had written about winning Christ, stating: *Yea doubtless, and I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord: for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and do count them but dung, that I may win Christ,...* . Paul wasn’t writing about winning Christ as Saviour, for Jesus Christ was already His Saviour, but rather he was writing about winning Christ as his Bridegroom, a fact that remains a mystery to so many Christians yet today. We should also realize, especially as a race course runner, the great responsibility that is ours in following the Apostle Paul, especially if we ever expect to have God’s best in our lives. Paul’s gospel was given unto us specifically for that purpose, that is so that we could have God’s best in our lives. Paul faced all kinds of adversity to bring us his gospel message. We too may face various kinds of adversity in learning the truth of Paul’s gospel, though this is not a popular message, thus it is seldom preached, especially in the Laodicean churches which prevail in the world today.

HEBREWS 12:1 *Wherefore seeing we also are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset us, and let us run with patience the race that is set before us, 2 Looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith; who*

*for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God.* Race course runners embrace this scripture. Here the word “race” is agon {ag-one’}, number 73 in The Strong’s Greek Concordance. Agon {ag-one’} is only used by Paul, and he uses it a total of six times: once as “race” here in HEBREWS 12:1, once as “contention” in 1 THESSALONIANS 2:2, twice as “conflict” (PHILIPPIANS 1:30 and COLOSSIANS 2:1), and twice as “fight,” such as *...Fight the good fight of faith...* 1 TIMOTHY 6:12, and *...I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith...* in 2 TIMOTHY 4:7. Yes to the race course runner Paul wrote fighting words, which were said to encourage each of us to run with patience the race that is set before us.

Before we begin our examination of HEBREWS 12:2 Let’s make note, and pay attention to how HEBREWS 12:1 begins, and how it ends, for by doing so we will be prepared to receive the full benefit of what is being said in verse 2. HEBREWS 12:1 begins with these two words *...Wherefore seeing...* . These two words are not to be taken lightly, or over looked without some pause. We have repeated several times here in Sunday School that the words “wherefore,” and “therefore” should cause us to reflect on the thought just presented, especially so in Paul’s epistles. “Wherefore,” and “therefore” are words which gather all the things that have taken place in the verses prior, and put a spotlight on the very important things that follow in the verse, or verses that are next. Knowing this key will very much enhance your, and my Bible study, and unlock truths we may have skipped, or over looked before. That being said the word “wherefore” in HEBREWS 12:1 is the first word found after the whole chapter of HEBREWS 11 is fully expounded. Most everyone who has studied scripture knows that HEBREWS 11 (for the most part) spends its energy addressing the Old Testament worthies of faith, and brings to our remembrance all of their accounts of faith, and summarizes them into this one chapter. Also in HEBREWS 11 there is a sprinkling of “we” and “us” found as follows: HEBREWS 11:1 *Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen. 2 For by it the elders obtained a good report. 3 Through faith we understand that the worlds were framed by the word of God, so that things which are seen were not made of things which do appear.* Here we find faith defined, and see that *...Through faith we understand that the worlds were framed by the word of God, so that things which are seen were not made of things which do appear.* Paul ends HEBREWS 11 with these words found in verses 39 & 40 -- *And these all, having obtained a good report through faith, received not the promise: 40 God having provided some better thing for us, that they without us should not be made perfect...* (or complete). So in essence the word “wherefore” in HEBREWS 12:1 references all of the Old Testament putting the emphasis on the Old Testament full overcomers, and having now drawn our attention to the full overcomers of old, the spotlight is now turned forward, and focused upon “we” and “us” the potential New Testament church age worthies of faith. The New Testament full overcomers from this church age will be that small rib portion company taken from the body of Christ, His church, and be for ever known as the race course winners who are called the Bride, the Lamb’s wife in REVELATION 21:9!

Again HEBREWS 12:1 begins with these two words *...Wherefore seeing...* and how are we to behold these things? We have discussed this previously in the study, and bridal Saints know how to see the depths of marvelous truths of the Word of God, for these things can only be clearly seen by having our spiritual eyes of faith enlightened by the Holy Ghost, and without our spiritual eyes being enlightened by the Holy Ghost we can not “behold” the deeper things of God. Jesus told His disciples in JOHN 16:13 about the Spirit of Truth, who is the Holy Ghost, whose job it is to *...guide you into all truth...* and to *...shew you things to come.* The Lord Jesus Christ Himself some seven years later then anointed our Apostle Paul to write as part of his ministry one hundred chapters of church age truth to complete, or fill up the Word of God as noted in COLOSSIANS 1:25. We read a prayer that Paul prays in EPHESIANS 1:18, part of which reads: *The eyes of your understanding being enlightened...* . What is Paul requesting of the Lord here? He is asking that the Holy Ghost enlighten our spiritual eyes so that we too can behold the deeper truths of the Word of God, which the Holy Ghost inspired our Apostle Paul to write in scripture. Paul writes more that this in

EPHESIANS 1:18 praying that *...The eyes of your understanding being enlightened; that ye may know what is the hope of his calling, and what the riches of the glory of his inheritance in the saints.* Are you there yet? Can you see these things with your Holy Ghost enlightened eyes of faith? Eyes of faith see eternal things, and these eyes look forward, and look and learn from things that have taken place before. Such eyes are *...Wherefore seeing...* eyes of faith found in the full overcomers in the midst of the throne of God in REVELATION 4:6-8. We read this in REVELATION 4:6 & 8 -- *...and in the midst of the throne, and round about the throne, four living creatures full of eyes before and behind...* and *...are full of eyes round about and within.* What the Apostle John saw here was the Bride of Christ, a group of Saints here called the four living creatures, who were in the midst of the throne, that is right in the middle of the throne, obviously closest to Jesus. Their eyes before, behind, and within shows that they could see the past, they could see the future, and they could see within the present. In other words they could see what God has done, what He is going to do in the future, and what He is doing right now in the present tense. These are clearly seeing eyes of faith being spoken of here.

Think about this also, Paul's gospel message is a message of what God has done, what He is going to do, and what He is doing right **now**! Paul wrote *Now the just shall live by faith...* in HEBREWS 10:38. Paul wrote in HEBREWS 11:1 *Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen.* Paul in his concluding statements of HEBREWS wrote: HEBREWS 13:20 *Now the God of peace, that brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus, that great shepherd of the sheep, through the blood of the everlasting covenant, 21 Make you perfect in every good work to do his will, working in you that which is wellpleasing in his sight, through Jesus Christ; to whom be glory for ever and ever. Amen.* This working of the Holy Ghost is taking place in the lives of Spirit filled believers **now**. "**The God of peace**" is another name of the Holy Ghost. Imagine having this same power working in us that was wrought in Christ when the Holy Ghost, **the God of peace** raised Him from the dead, and set Him at God the Father's own right hand, yet this is the very same power we having working in us if you have received the Holy Ghost since you believed!!!! In total Paul references "**the God of peace**" five times in his epistles, and writes in ROMANS 15:33 *Now the God of peace be with you all. Amen.* Our text of HEBREWS 12:1 & 2 deals with **now**. Let's look at it this way: *Wherefore (now) seeing we also are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses, let us (now) lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset us, and let us (now) run with patience the race that is set before us, 2 Looking (now) unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith; who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is (now) set down at the right hand of the throne of God.* Yes indeed Paul's gospel message is a message concerning us **now**.

So we find that the words *...Wherefore seeing...* in HEBREWS 12:1 are addressing bridal Saints, who have seen through the Old Testament scriptures what it takes to be a full overcomer. Then the final words of HEBREWS 12:1 brings the attention to the race course runner to not only be aware of those who have gone before to be full overcomers, but to **now** continue to focus on *...the race that is set before us.* The race course runner has a goal in mind, a goal *...that is (now) set before us.* A goal that is only seen by eyes of faith. HEBREWS 12:1 begins by looking back, and ends with going forward **now** more focused than ever.

HEBREWS 12:2 *Looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith; who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God.* HEBREWS 12:2 starts out telling us where to have our focus: *Looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith;*... and this is a twenty-four-seven occupation. I heard a Holy Spirit filled preacher the other day on television say he wakes up thinking about Jesus, thinks about Jesus all day long, and goes to sleep thinking about Jesus. Jesus is on his mind twenty-four-seven. All full overcomers from this church age all have Jesus on their heart and mind twenty-four-seven. So too did our apostle Paul who wrote here in HEBREWS 12:2 for us to be *...Looking unto Jesus...* meaning *Looking unto Jesus...* twenty-four-seven. There is only one way to run with patience this

race that is set before us, and that is by ...*Looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith...* HEBREWS 12:2. There is only one way to become a race course winner, and that too is by ...*Looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith.*

We have now barely introduced the depths of what is here in HEBREWS 12:2. HEBREWS 12:2 has us looking up! HEBREWS 12:1 had us first looking back and recalling the faith of the Old Testament overcomers, and then observing where the Author of our faith has currently placed us. HEBREWS 12:2 has the goal orientated race course runner seeing by faith where he, or she is to be looking. And again we are to be *Looking unto Jesus...* twenty-four-seven.

Realize also before we get to far here in examining HEBREWS 12:2 that these words of the Apostle Paul in this eighty-word sentence of HEBREWS 12:1 & 2 are addressed to Holy Spirit filled believers of the church age we are now living in. It is the New Testament Holy Ghost filled believers who can have ...*The eyes of your understanding being enlightened; that ye may know what is the hope of his calling, and what the riches of the glory of his inheritance in the saints...* as Paul prayed in EPHESIANS 1:18. Again we repeat what Jesus told his disciples in JOHN 16 concerning some of the purposes of the Holy Ghost. JOHN 16:13 *Howbeit when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth: for he shall not speak of himself; but whatsoever he shall hear, that shall he speak: and he will shew you things to come. 14 He shall glorify me: for he shall receive of mine, and shall shew it unto you. 15 All things that the Father hath are mine: therefore said I, that he shall take of mine, and shall shew it unto you.* The Holy Ghost is the One who enables us to see the things we cannot see with our natural eyes, but opens our spiritual eyes to see the thing, or things we need to focus upon. We need to be looking unto Jesus as is noted here in HEBREWS 12:2, and it is the Holy Spirits job to direct the eyes of our hearts to see Him, and see Him in every thing in our lives. We also talked about this earlier in this study noting that it is the Holy Ghost's job to direct our hearts as we found in 2 THESSALONIANS 3:5 *And the Lord direct your hearts into the love of God, and into the patient waiting for Christ.*

Recall a story involving Elisha and his servant found in 2 KINGS 6 where they were surrounded by a host of Syrians. We read this in 2 KINGS 6:15 *And when the servant of the man of God was risen early, and gone forth, behold, an host compassed the city both with horses and chariots. And his servant said unto him, Alas, my master! how shall we do? 16 And he answered, Fear not: for they that be with us are more than they that be with them. 17 And Elisha prayed, and said, LORD, I pray thee, open his eyes, that he may see. And the LORD opened the eyes of the young man; and he saw: and, behold, the mountain was full of horses and chariots of fire round about Elisha.* Elisha saw this by his eyes of faith, and the Holy Ghost opened the eyes of Elisha's servant to see the same thing, a heavenly host of horses and chariots of fire about Elisha. Note that Elisha was looking up; looking unto the Lord for his help, and if you read the rest of this story you will find that Elisha captures the whole host who came to seize him. The Psalmist wrote in PSALMS 121:1 *I will lift up mine eyes unto the hills, from whence cometh my help. 2 My help cometh from the LORD, which made heaven and earth.* Thus we find the Old Testament worthies of faith also looking unto the Lord above.

One more thought before we digger deeper into our text of HEBREWS 12:2. Recall the Cherubims in scripture. They are representative of the full overcomers, and are seen in many places in scripture from GENESIS through REVELATION. In EXODUS 25 & 37 we find them a beaten work of gold covering the mercy seat with their wings, and their faces toward each other focused upon the mercy seat, (EXODUS 37:7-9). This shows in type that they were looking unto Jesus. Ezekiel also saw the Cherubims in EZEKIEL 1 and 10. Ezekiel saw their eyes, and found it hard to describe them, seeing that they had eyes everywhere, noting in both EZEKIEL 1:18, and 10:12 that they "were full of eyes round about." We saw this earlier in this study also in REVELATION 4:6 & 8, where we found ...*and in the midst of the throne, and round about the throne, four living creatures full of eyes before and behind...* and ...*full of eyes round about and within.* What both Ezekiel and the Apostle John saw here was the Bride of Christ, a group of Saints here called the four living creatures. EZEKIEL 1:5, and other places also mentions the four living creatures. Their eyes before,

behind, and within shows that they could see the past, they could see the future, and they could see within the present. In other words by the enlightening of the Holy Ghost they could see what God has done, what He is going to do in the future, and what He is doing right now in the present tense. These eyes are clearly seeing eyes of faith being spoken of here. These Cherubim eyes are always looking unto Jesus.

HEBREWS 12:2 starts out *...Looking unto Jesus...* . It is most interesting to note that the word “looking” is only found in twenty-four scriptures in our King James Version of the Bible. Twenty-four we learned in our meaning of the Bible numbers study has to do with the PRIESTHOOD. HEBREWS 4:14 tells us who our great high priest is, saying: *Seeing then that we have a great high priest, that is passed into the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold fast our profession.* So we see a double emphasis here in HEBREWS 12:2 of who we are to be “looking unto:” *Looking unto Jesus... ...the Son of God,... our ...great high priest, that is passed into the heavens.* And then for further emphasis the Holy Ghost has the Apostle Paul write the Greek word “aphorao,” {af-or-ah'-o}, which is translated as “Looking” here in HEBREWS 12:2. Aphorao {af-or-ah'-o}, number 872 in The Strong’s Greek Concordance, is only found this one time in scripture. Aphorao {af-or-ah'-o} means: to look away from one thing so as to see another. We learned what we are to look away from in HEBREWS 12:1, which was the weights and hindering encumbrances that hold back a potential full overcomer from being a race course runner. Paul said it like this: *...let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset us,...* . If our focus is upon such things, then we are not *Looking unto Jesus... ...the Son of God,... our ...great high priest, that is passed into the heavens.* So in HEBREWS 12:1 we are in the strongest terms encouraged to look away from the things that are weights and hindering encumbrances so we can clearly see *...Jesus the author and finisher of our faith...* HEBREWS 12:2.

In doing my research for this lesson I came across some of my old notes from a sermon I gave on Sunday morning about three years ago. My text then was HEBREWS 12:1 & 2 also. In the message that morning I asked several questions concerning what are we looking at? I asked: **What has your attention? Where is your focus? What are you looking at? What are you looking for? Who are you looking for? How is it with you? What’s taking place in the caverns of your mind? And what is going on in your own heart?** And of course these are questions only you can answer, and each and everyone one of us needs to take this kind of inventory for ourselves. But the point remains that we all are looking at something. Something has our attention. Who, or what are you looking for? In HEBREWS 11:10 we read that Old Testament worthy of faith Abraham *...looked for a city which hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God.* The New Testament worthies of faith are *...Looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ...* TITUS 2:13. Who, or what has your attention. Are you looking up, and looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of your faith? Are you *...Looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ...* that Paul encouraged Titus to look for in TITUS 2:13?

There are a number of examples in scripture of those being encouraged to look away from one thing so as to see another. We see an example of this in Jesus’ disciples. We read in MATTHEW 4:18-22 of the day when Peter, Andrew, James and John were first encouraged to follow Jesus. MATTHEW 4:18 *And Jesus, walking by the sea of Galilee, saw two brethren, Simon called Peter, and Andrew his brother, casting a net into the sea: for they were fishers. 19 And he saith unto them, Follow me, and I will make you fishers of men. 20 And they straightway left their nets, and followed him. 21 And going on from thence, he saw other two brethren, James the son of Zebedee, and John his brother, in a ship with Zebedee their father, mending their nets; and he called them. 22 And they immediately left the ship and their father, and followed him.* MARK 1:16-20 also records the same story. LUKE 5 fills in some more details of how Jesus disciples began to follow Him. LUKE 5:1 *And it came to pass, that, as the people pressed upon him to hear the word of God, he stood by the lake of Gennesaret, 2 And saw two ships standing by the lake: but the fishermen were gone out of them, and were washing their nets. 3 And he entered into one of the ships, which was Simon’s, and*

*prayed him that he would thrust out a little from the land. And he sat down, and taught the people out of the ship. 4 Now when he had left speaking, he said unto Simon, Launch out into the deep, and let down your nets for a draught. 5 And Simon answering said unto him, Master, we have toiled all the night, and have taken nothing: nevertheless at thy word I will let down the net. 6 And when they had this done, they inclosed a great multitude of fishes: and their net brake. 7 And they beckoned unto their partners, which were in the other ship, that they should come and help them. And they came, and filled both the ships, so that they began to sink. 8 When Simon Peter saw it, he fell down at Jesus' knees, saying, Depart from me; for I am a sinful man, O Lord. 9 For he was astonished, and all that were with him, at the draught of the fishes which they had taken: 10 And so was also James, and John, the sons of Zebedee, which were partners with Simon. And Jesus said unto Simon, Fear not; from henceforth thou shalt catch men. 11 And when they had brought their ships to land, they forsook all, and followed him.*

There are several sermons in just this portion of scripture from LUKE 5, and it is hard to pass over all of the lessons taught here without some pause. First of all we should already know from MATTHEW 10:2, and some other scriptures, that Simon is also called Peter, and sometimes Simon Peter. Brother Hawkins in his study book on LUKE notes that "Jesus' manner with Simon wonderfully reflects what He can do in our own lives. "Launch out into the deep" is the exhortation, followed by His promise, "let down your nets for a draught." Simon's response is typical of all men, as he said, "We have toiled all the night, and have caught nothing!" This expresses the plight of those who go their own way, toiling through their own dark hours, trying to achieve their desires. Would to God that all people followed Simon's lead as he said "Nevertheless at Thy Word I will let down the net!" {End of quoting Brother Hawkins for now.} Let me interject something here. Jesus instructions were to "let down your nets" plural, and Simon only let down one net, so we find that Simon didn't exactly follow Jesus instructions, but he did let down one net. Brother Hawkins continues: "This is a marvelous statement of faith. Regardless of what he had already experienced of fruitless toil, he was willing to let down the net once more, just because Jesus asked him to do it. He was not disappointed. They "enclosed a great multitude of fishes: and their net broke." This is the catch which Jesus promised, but it was only a type of the greater, spiritual draught, available to all who are willing to launch out into the depths of God's grace and let down their nets, only because Jesus says it." {End of quoting Brother Hawkins.} These fishermen were only successful here because they followed Jesus command, and we find that *...when they had brought their ships to land, they forsook all, and followed him...* LUKE 5:11.

For three plus years these disciples followed Jesus, and continued looking unto Jesus as He guided them through life. Along the way they were further encouraged to follow Jesus. One account of this is found in the story of the transfiguration recorded in MATTHEW 17:1-8; MARK 9:2-8; and LUKE 9:27-36. Let's look at Luke's record of this. LUKE 9:28 *And it came to pass about an eight days after these sayings, he took Peter and John and James, and went up into a mountain to pray. 29 And as he prayed, the fashion of his countenance was altered, and his raiment was white and glistering. 30 And, behold, there talked with him two men, which were Moses and Elias: 31 Who appeared in glory, and spake of his decease which he should accomplish at Jerusalem. 32 But Peter and they that were with him were heavy with sleep: and when they were awake, they saw his glory, and the two men that stood with him. 33 And it came to pass, as they departed from him, Peter said unto Jesus, Master, it is good for us to be here: and let us make three tabernacles; one for thee, and one for Moses, and one for Elias: not knowing what he said. A special note is made here concerning Peter's words, which were said perhaps in haste without too much thought behind them. Peter here was unknowingly putting the law (represented by Moses), and the prophets (represented by Elijah), on an equal status with Jesus. Because of Peter's words we next read: 34 *While he thus spake, there came a cloud, and overshadowed them: and they feared as they entered into the cloud. 35 And there came a voice out of the cloud, saying, This is my beloved Son: hear him.* Here God the Father was making it plain to Jesus disciples that the law, and the prophets had their place, but they were the forerunners who pointed the way to Jesus. "Hear Him"*

was God's words spoken to these three disciples. His message was to follow Jesus, for there was no other way for them to "**hear Him**." The gospel record shows they all followed Jesus the rest of His time here on earth. In other words they truly looked away from what they were previously doing, and saw another more important One to follow, who of course was Jesus. But did they really "**hear Him**" with open hearts of faith? Asking it another way, were Jesus words received with the full impact that they were spoken? We will find the answers to these tough questions in the following discussion on following Jesus.

The gospel records also shows Peter to be a leader among the disciples. After following Jesus for about three and a half years they come to the time when Jesus spent His last evening with them before being crucified. And we read some of what Jesus told them in JOHN chapters 13 through 16. Note what Jesus said in JOHN 13:33 *Little children, yet a little while I am with you. "Little children" is a term that requires some explanation. The Greek word here translated "little children" here is teknon {tek-nee'-on}, number 5040 in The Strong's Greek Concordance, and is a figurative expression of great tenderness showing a deep love, and interest in the welfare of the addressee. It also shows the need of further teaching, and guidance in order grow up into a fully developed mature Son of God. Our Apostle Paul wrote it like this in EPHESIANS 4:14 & 15 -- *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; 15 But speaking the truth in love, may grow up into him in all things, which is the head, even Christ.* Paul here was emphasizing the importance of Apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors and teachers being given for the perfecting of the Saints so that they can grow up fully mature sons of God. Jesus too on His last evening with His disciples was expressing the same concern as he began to introduce to them the importance of receiving the Holy Ghost a few days hence. Proper parents want their children to mature, and grow up, and learn things beyond what they can teach them, so they send them to school for higher learning. Jesus too encouraged His disciples along these very same lines, and said in JOHN 16:12 *I have yet many things to say unto you, but ye cannot bear them now. 13 Howbeit when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth: for he shall not speak of himself; but whatsoever he shall hear, that shall he speak: and he will shew you things to come. 14 He shall glorify me: for he shall receive of mine, and shall shew it unto you. 15 All things that the Father hath are mine: therefore said I, that he shall take of mine, and shall shew it unto you.* Here Jesus was telling His disciples the importance of receiving the Holy Ghost, so for one thing that they could **grow up** into Him in all things. Jesus was also expressing the fact in order for them to benefit from all that He had already told them, they would need to receive the Holy Ghost. The eyes of their understanding would be further enlightened after receiving the Holy Ghost, and the words He had already spoken unto them would have greater meaning, and greater impact beyond what "little children" could comprehend.*

On that last evening here on earth with them Jesus also told them this in JOHN 14:26 *But the Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my name, he shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you.* For a moment let's think back to what we read above of the word God the Father spoke to Peter, James, and John at the transfiguration in LUKE 9:35 *...This is my beloved Son: hear him.* We know that they indeed did hear Jesus words, but the words Jesus spoke unto them had a greater impact upon them after His resurrection, and even more so after they received the Holy Ghost. And the Apostle John recorded some of the things that were brought back to his remembrance after Jesus death and resurrection. One example of this is found in JOHN 2, where John tells on himself, and the other disciples. JOHN 2:19 *Jesus answered and said unto them, Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up. 20 Then said the Jews, Forty and six years was this temple in building, and wilt thou rear it up in three days? 21 But he spake of the temple of his body. 22 When therefore he was risen from the dead, his disciples remembered that he had said this unto them; and they believed the scripture, and the word which Jesus had said.* John also noted again in JOHN 12 that he, and the other disciples had heard Jesus speak some things that didn't register in their minds when Jesus spoke these words, and he

wrote in JOHN 12:16 *These things understood not his disciples at the first: but when Jesus was glorified, then remembered they that these things were written of him, and that they had done these things unto him.* We see here that Jesus' words had a greater impact on His disciples after His resurrection.

Luke records another instance of the disciples memory being jogged after Jesus resurrection. Let's read the whole story starting in LUKE 9:18 *And it came to pass, as he was alone praying, his disciples were with him: and he asked them, saying, Whom say the people that I am? 19 They answering said, John the Baptist; but some say, Elias; and others say, that one of the old prophets is risen again. 20 He said unto them, But whom say ye that I am? Peter answering said, The Christ of God. 21 And he straitly charged them, and commanded them to tell no man that thing; 22 Saying, The Son of man must suffer many things, and be rejected of the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be slain, and be raised the third day.* Now turn to LUKE 24, and we will read starting in verse 1: *Now upon the first day of the week, very early in the morning, they came unto the sepulchre, bringing the spices which they had prepared, and certain others with them. 2 And they found the stone rolled away from the sepulchre. 3 And they entered in, and found not the body of the Lord Jesus. 4 And it came to pass, as they were much perplexed thereabout, behold, two men stood by them in shining garments: 5 And as they were afraid, and bowed down their faces to the earth, they said unto them, Why seek ye the living among the dead? 6 He is not here, but is risen: remember how he spake unto you when he was yet in Galilee, 7 Saying, The Son of man must be delivered into the hands of sinful men, and be crucified, and the third day rise again. 8 And they remembered his words, 9 And returned from the sepulchre, and told all these things unto the eleven, and to all the rest. 10 It was Mary Magdalene, and Joanna, and Mary the mother of James, and other women that were with them, which told these things unto the apostles. 11 And their words seemed to them as idle tales, and they believed them not.* Here we find the answer to our earlier question of did Jesus disciples really "hear Him" with open hearts of faith? Jesus words had not yet reached the full impact upon the hearts of His disciples, and they were still shown the need of further teaching, and guidance in order grow up into a fully developed mature Son of God.

In JOHN 20 we read a little more concerning Jesus resurrection, and some of the events that took place during the next eight days. In JOHN 20:22 we find something Jesus said unto his disciples after His resurrection. JOHN 20:22 *And when he had said this, he breathed on them, and saith unto them, Receive ye the Holy Ghost.* Here again Jesus was emphasizing the importance of receiving the Holy Ghost, which His disciples would need in their lives in order to become the fishers of men Jesus promised them they would be. Then we read in JOHN 21 a separate account of what took place after these eight days, and before the time frame of ACTS 1:8. Recall that the Apostle John had already written the conclusion of why his gospel record was written, saying in JOHN 20:30 & 31 -- *And many other signs truly did Jesus in the presence of his disciples, which are not written in this book: 31 But these are written, that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing ye might have life through his name.* But the events recorded in JOHN 21 were deemed too important to ignore, so John wrote an epilogue, and recorded the following: JOHN 21:1 *After these things Jesus shewed himself again to the disciples at the sea of Tiberias; and on this wise shewed he himself. 2 There were together Simon Peter, and Thomas called Didymus, and Nathanael of Cana in Galilee, and the sons of Zebedee, and two other of his disciples.* These were the very same disciples to whom Jesus said in MATTHEW 4:19 *Follow me, and I will make you fishers of men.* And while they followed Jesus, He had sustained them, and provided their every need. Now that He was not in their physical sight every day, Peter came up with a plan that had nothing to do with being fishers of men. JOHN 21:3 *Simon Peter saith unto them, I go a fishing.* Peter had made a living fishing before Jesus said "Follow me, and I will make you fishers of men,..." so Peter must have felt that he could do so again. JOHN 21:3 continues: *They say unto him, We also go with thee.* Thus we find these seven disciples going fishing, following Peter's leading. Note that they were in essence now looking unto Peter for guidance. JOHN 21:3 concludes: *They went forth, and entered into a ship immediately; and that night they caught nothing.*

They used to make a living at fishing before Jesus came along, and now after fishing all night they had caught nothing, thus they on their own couldn't provide for themselves, and no doubt they were hungry. What an empty feeling when not looking unto Jesus! Recall what we read earlier in LUKE 5:5 on the very day they first decided to follow Jesus, how that Peter had told Jesus: *...Master, we have toiled all the night, and have taken nothing.* How here in JOHN 21:3 we find the same results after fishing all night, *...and that night they caught nothing.*

Keep in mind as we go through this that these still are the very same disciples to whom Jesus said: *Follow me, and I will make you fishers of men.* Yet they were not fully equipped to be the fishers of men Jesus promised them they would be for at this time they were not yet filled with the Holy Ghost. That event on the day of Pentecost was still approximately about a month off as we continue with what took place here in JOHN 21.

Jesus knew that His disciples went fishing that night, and caught nothing, but He had a far greater plan for them than they make a living being fishers of fish. Jesus intended for them to be fishers of men, but in order for them to be the fishers of men that He told them they would be, they still had to follow Jesus leading. So reading on in JOHN 21 we find Jesus on the shore when it was now morning inquiring in verse 5: *Children, have ye any meat?* Note that Jesus once again addresses them as "children" much like He did in JOHN 13:33 a few nights earlier before His death when He began showing them the importance of receiving the Holy Ghost, the teacher who would help them grow up spiritually. Let's read on here in JOHN 21:5 *Then Jesus saith unto them, Children, have ye any meat? They answered him, No. 6 And he said unto them, Cast the net on the right side of the ship, and ye shall find. They cast therefore, and now they were not able to draw it for the multitude of fishes. 7 Therefore that disciple whom Jesus loved saith unto Peter, It is the Lord.* The Apostle John was the first to recognize that it was Jesus who was on the shore giving them instructions. You can read on how that they had caught a hundred and fifty three great fishes by their following Jesus instructions, and then we read starting in verse 12 *Jesus saith unto them, Come and dine. And none of the disciples durst ask him, Who art thou? knowing that it was the Lord.*

Let's pause here for a moment and flash back some three plus years from this point, and recall Jesus first miracle. Do you remember what His first miracle was? We find it recorded in JOHN 2, and for arguments sake let's properly note that this was Jesus first miracle recorded during His time here on earth. His real first miracle started in GENESIS 1:1 when He created the heaven and the earth. And there were billions of miracles done by Him after that, but John records Jesus first miracle during His public ministry that He performed while here on earth. JOHN 2:1 *And the third day there was a marriage in Cana of Galilee; and the mother of Jesus was there: 2 And both Jesus was called, and his disciples, to the marriage. 3 And when they wanted wine, the mother of Jesus saith unto him, They have no wine. 4 Jesus saith unto her, Woman, what have I to do with thee? mine hour is not yet come. 5 His mother saith unto the servants, Whatsoever he saith unto you, do it. 6 And there were set there six waterpots of stone, after the manner of the purifying of the Jews, containing two or three firkins apiece. 7 Jesus saith unto them, Fill the waterpots with water. And they filled them up to the brim. 8 And he saith unto them, Draw out now, and bear unto the governor of the feast. And they bare it. 9 When the ruler of the feast had tasted the water that was made wine, and knew not whence it was: (but the servants which drew the water knew;) the governor of the feast called the bridegroom, 10 And saith unto him, Every man at the beginning doth set forth good wine; and when men have well drunk, then that which is worse: but thou hast kept the good wine until now. 11 This beginning of miracles did Jesus in Cana of Galilee, and manifested forth his glory; and his disciples believed on him.*

The above text we just read from JOHN 2:1-11 is rich with typical meaning, which we will not cover here. However for now let's consider a couple of points of note. First notice in verse 2 that Jesus disciples were with Him here. Second note in verse 5 that Jesus mother voiced her instructions for she was the one person who had spent the most time with Jesus, more than anyone; she had the experience to know that *...Whatsoever he saith unto you, do it...* no questions asked! She indeed was a disciple of Jesus herself, a follower of Jesus all of His life here on earth. She had

learned to be “looking unto Jesus” as is also noted in HEBREWS 12:2. With great faith she said unto the servants in JOHN 2:5 *...Whatsoever he saith unto you, do it...* and they followed Jesus commands, and what followed was Jesus first miracle of turning the water in wine. Between this time in JOHN 2, and what we are reading in JOHN 21, Jesus disciples saw Him perform miracle, after miracle. The latest miracle they witnessed took place in JOHN 21:6 *And he said unto them, Cast the net on the right side of the ship, and ye shall find. They cast therefore, and now they were not able to draw it for the multitude of fishes.* The miracle here was that Jesus disciples here had caught a hundred and fifty three great fishes by their following Jesus instructions showing that they had learned at least this much in three plus years of following Jesus: *...Whatsoever he saith unto you, do it.*

Let continue from JOHN 21:12 *Jesus saith unto them, Come and dine. And none of the disciples durst ask him, Who art thou? knowing that it was the Lord. 13 Jesus then cometh, and taketh bread, and giveth them, and fish likewise. 14 This is now the third time that Jesus shewed himself to his disciples, after that he was risen from the dead.* Jesus then addresses Peter in verses 15-22. Three times Jesus asks Peter “lovest thou me?” Each time this question was asked Jesus was instructing Peter on the different degrees of love, and showing him that it would take the divine agape love of God ruling and reigning in his heart in order for Peter to properly feed Jesus’ sheep. To obtain this kind of love would require being filled with the Holy Ghost, for as ROMANS 5:5 explains it *...the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost which is given unto us.*

In JOHN 21:18 & 19 Jesus reveals unto Peter how he would die. JOHN 21:18 *Verily, verily, I say unto thee, When thou wast young, thou girdedst thyself, and walkedst whither thou wouldst: but when thou shalt be old, thou shalt stretch forth thy hands, and another shall gird thee, and carry thee whither thou wouldst not. 19 This spake he, signifying by what death he should glorify God.* In 2 PETER 1:14 the Apostle Peter writes of this event mentioned here in JOHN 21:18 & 19. 2 PETER 1:14 *Knowing that shortly I must put off this my tabernacle, even as our Lord Jesus Christ hath shewed me.*

After Jesus revealed unto Peter how he would die, Jesus adds these words in JOHN 21:19 *And when he had spoken this, he saith unto him, Follow me.* “Follow me” are the same exact words we find that Jesus first spoke unto Peter back in MATTHEW 4 when Peter first met the Lord Jesus. MATTHEW 4:18 *And Jesus, walking by the sea of Galilee, saw two brethren, Simon called Peter, and Andrew his brother, casting a net into the sea: for they were fishers. 19 And he saith unto them, Follow me, and I will make you fishers of men. 20 And they straightway left their nets, and followed him.*

Now we would think with all of this encouragement given unto Peter by the Lord Jesus Christ Himself that Peter would by now be looking unto Jesus as our text of HEBREWS 12:2 also instructs us to do. However Jesus had one more lesson to teach Peter in JOHN 21. JOHN 21:20 *Then Peter, turning about, seeth the disciple whom Jesus loved following; which also leaned on his breast at supper, and said, Lord, which is he that betrayeth thee? 21 Peter seeing him saith to Jesus, Lord, and what shall this man do? 22 Jesus saith unto him, If I will that he tarry till I come, what is that to thee? follow thou me.* Here we find Peter already backing away for Jesus words of “follow me” as he inquires about what is going to happen to John. But Peter was not instructed to follow John, so for emphasis *...Jesus saith unto him, If I will that he tarry till I come, what is that to thee? follow thou me...* JOHN 21:22. Remember the word translated “Looking” in HEBREWS 12:2, it comes from the Greek word *aphorao* {af-or-ah'-o}, number 872 in The Strong’s Greek Concordance, which means: to look away from one thing so as to see another? This is what Jesus was trying to get Peter to do here in JOHN 21:22, to look away from one thing (John) so as to see another (Jesus). Thus we find Jesus’ final words to Peter to be *...follow thou me.* And reading on in the first twelve chapters of ACTS we find that after Peter was filled with the Holy Ghost on the day of Pentecost that he became prominent among the Kingdom Apostles, and because of his ministry literally thousands were added to the kingdom of God! Peter did follow Jesus, and later wrote in his last

words of his second epistle the following: 2 PETER 3:18 *But grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. To him be glory both now and for ever. Amen.*

Back to our text of current study, HEBREWS 12:2 *Looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith...* . This whole phrase is unique, meaning it is only found this one time in scripture. Furthermore when we look at the individual words and phrases found in just this portion of HEBREWS 12:2 we find several one-time thoughts, and statements. For example we already have seen that the word “looking” here in HEBREWS 12:2 is unique, coming from the Greek word *aphorao* {af-or-ah'-o}, number 872 in The Strong’s Greek Concordance, which means: to look away from one thing so as to see another, and is only found this one time in scripture. The phrase “looking unto Jesus” is only found this one time in scripture. The word “finisher” is also only found this one time in scripture, thus the phrase “author and finisher” is also unique. All these unique words, and phrases point to the fact that our focus is to be upon seeing Jesus, and seeing Him in everything. We are instructed here by our beloved Apostle Paul to be *...Looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith*. Our Apostle Paul also encouraged us to *...Set your affection on things above, not on things on the earth...* in COLOSSIANS 3:2. Such also was the focus of the Old Testament champions of faith. By faith Abel was looking unto Jesus when he *...offered unto God a more excellent sacrifice than Cain...* (HEBREWS 11:4) seeing his need of a Redeemer from on high. Enoch had his affection on things on high, and walked with God, and talked with God, and learned from God of the time yet future when *...the Lord cometh with ten thousands of his saints...* as noted in JUDE 1:14. Enoch was the first to be translated while *...Looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of faith...* which is how HEBREWS 12:2 should be translated, the “our” being added by the translators. Elijah was the second man translated in 2 KINGS 2 while *...Looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of faith...* HEBREWS 12:2. Noah in essence saw his Redeemer from on high in the ark he was instructed by God on high to build. His focus was *...on things above, not on things on the earth...* COLOSSIANS 3:2. Abraham too had his *...affection on things above, not on things on the earth...* for we read in HEBREWS 11:10 that *...he looked for a city which hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God*. Recall also that Job looked *...unto Jesus the author and finisher of faith...* when he said in JOB 19:25 *For I know that my redeemer liveth, and that he shall stand at the latter day upon the earth: 26 And though after my skin worms destroy this body, yet in my flesh shall I see God: 27 Whom I shall see for myself, and mine eyes shall behold, and not another; though my reins be consumed within me*. Rahab acknowledged in JOSHUA 2:11 *...the LORD your God, he is God in heaven above, and in earth beneath*. In short she believed on the Lord Jesus Christ and she was saved along with her house. And how about one of Rahab’s descendants, David, a man after God’s own heart as noted in 1 SAMUEL 13:14, and ACTS 13:22. Did he not also continually look *...unto Jesus the author and finisher of faith...* ? In 2 SAMUEL 22 we read one such acknowledgement that David set his *...affection on things above, not on things on the earth...* where we read in 2 SAMUEL 22:2 *And he said, The LORD is my rock, and my fortress, and my deliverer; 3 The God of my rock; in him will I trust: he is my shield, and the horn of my salvation, my high tower, and my refuge, my saviour; thou savest me from violence. 4 I will call on the LORD, who is worthy to be praised: so shall I be saved from mine enemies*. And this is just a tiny sampling the many times we read how David’s heart was focused on high. All of the Old Testament worthies of faith were in essence looking away from one thing so as to see another, and in this process they were *...Looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of faith...* HEBREWS 12:2. Who, or what has your attention? Where is your focus? Are you running the race *...Looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of faith...* HEBREWS 12:2? Those who will be the full overcomers from this church age are *...Looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of faith...* HEBREWS 12:2.

The Apostle Paul under the inspiration of the Holy Ghost makes it very plain in unique terms here HEBREWS 12:2 that Jesus is *...the author and finisher of faith*. It was Paul who also wrote in ROMANS 10:17 *So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God*. So we see that faith and hearing the word of God are interconnected. Scripture also plainly tells us that Jesus is the Word, and in JOHN 1:14 we read that *...the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us...* . If you

still have doubts about Jesus being The Word of God then read REVELATION 19:13, which says: *And he was clothed with a vesture dipped in blood: and his name is called The Word of God.* So we see that Jesus is *...the author and finisher of faith...* and that *...faith cometh by hearing...* and that *...hearing by the word of God.* Remember what we read in LUKE 9:35 earlier how that God the Father came in the form of a cloud and overshadowed the disciples on the mount of transfiguration: *And there came a voice out of the cloud, saying, This is my beloved Son: hear him.* Well we too are told the very same thing, that is, to hear The Word of God, who is Jesus, who also is *...the author and finisher of faith.* We are to “**hear Him**” from GENESIS 1:1 to REVELATION 22:21. And we of this church age are especially encouraged to pay very close attention to Paul’s one hundred chapters of scripture, which are given to complete The Word of God. Note again what is said in COLOSSIANS 1:25, words written by our Apostle Paul under the inspiration of the Holy Ghost: *Whereof I am made a minister, according to the dispensation of God which is given to me for you, to fulfil {to fill up, to fill to the top, to fill to the full, to complete, to make complete in every particular} the word of God.* In short we are to “**hear Him**,” hear Jesus, The Word of God through the ears of Paul’s gospel. This is why Paul wrote: 1 CORINTHIANS 4:16 *Wherefore I beseech you, be ye followers of me.* 1 CORINTHIANS 11:1 *Be ye followers of me, even as I also am of Christ.* PHILIPPIANS 3:17 *Brethren, be followers together of me, and mark them which walk so as ye have us for an ensample.* This is how we are to be *...Looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith...* HEBREWS 12:2, for He is the One who has provided Divine direction unto God’s best.

We have made reference earlier in this study that it is faith that is being further amplified here in HEBREWS 12:1 & 2, expanding on what was previously mentioned of the Old Testament worthies of faith in HEBREWS 11, with the spotlight now being turned upon “we,” and “us,” the potential New Testament full overcomers here in HEBREWS 12:1 & 2. We, the potential New Testament worthies of faith, must have our one hundred per cent attention upon Jesus in order to achieve such a lofty status as can be ours by faith. By faith we can be the Lamb’s wife who hath made herself ready as is noted in REVELATION 19:7. Here in HEBREWS 12:2 Paul tells us how this is possible, by *...Looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith.* Let’s examine tis thought further.

Jesus has been the main subject Paul has discussed all through out his HEBREWS epistle, and all of his other epistles also. But for now let’s note the different titles, and names Paul has mentioned of Jesus in HEBREWS. Starting in HEBREWS 1:1 we read: *God, who at sundry times and in divers manners spake in time past unto the fathers by the prophets, 2 Hath in these last days spoken unto us by his Son, whom he hath appointed heir of all things, by whom also he made the worlds; 3 Who being the brightness of his glory, and the express image of his person, and upholding all things by the word of his power, when he had by himself purged our sins, sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high; 4 Being made so much better than the angels, as he hath by inheritance obtained a more excellent name than they.* Here Paul introduces Jesus as the “**Son of God**” a common title of His found in forty-seven scriptures. Recall in Paul’s first sermons, when he was still known as Saul of Tarsus, that according to ACTS 9:20 *...he preached Christ in the synagogues, that he is the Son of God.* In his epistles Paul uses the phrase “**the Son of God**” eight times, “**His Son**” referencing God’s only begotten **Son** ten times, and in several scriptures Paul just addresses Jesus as “**Son**” with such statements as “**my Son**,” “**the Son**,” “**His Son**,” “**dear Son**,” and God’s “**own Son**.” Note that “**His Son**” is appointed “**Heir of all things**,” which some have noted to be another title of Jesus. Reading on here in HEBREWS 1 we find a couple more of these times Jesus is called “**Son**.” HEBREWS 1:5 *For unto which of the angels said he at any time, Thou art my Son, this day have I begotten thee? And again, I will be to him a Father, and he shall be to me a Son? 6 And again, when he bringeth in the firstbegotten into the world, he saith, And let all the angels of God worship him. 7 And of the angels he saith, Who maketh his angels spirits, and his ministers a flame of fire. 8 But unto the Son he saith, Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever: a sceptre of righteousness is the sceptre of thy kingdom.* The Old Testament scriptures Paul references here are PSALMS 2:7, and 2 SAMUEL 7:14. Paul also quoted part of PSALMS 2:7 in ACTS 13:33, and in

HEBREWS 5:5. Recall that in ACTS 13 we read a pattern sermon of Paul's, which he presented at Antioch in Pisidia, where he said in ACTS 13:33 *God hath fulfilled the same unto us their children, in that he hath raised up Jesus again; as it is also written in the second psalm, Thou art my Son, this day have I begotten thee.*

Another title that we just read of Jesus here in HEBREWS 1:6 is "**firstbegotten**" meaning: **firstborn, or first begotten.** Paul wrote this also of Jesus the **firstborn, or first begotten:** ROMANS 8:29 *For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the **firstborn** among many brethren.* Note how Paul describes Jesus in COLOSSIANS 1 starting in verse 12: *Giving thanks unto the Father, which hath made us meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light: 13 Who hath delivered us from the power of darkness, and hath translated us into the kingdom of his dear Son: 14 In whom we have redemption through his blood, even the forgiveness of sins: 15 Who is the image of the invisible God, the **firstborn** of every creature: 16 For by him were all things created, that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers: all things were created by him, and for him: 17 And he is before all things, and by him all things consist. 18 And he is the head of the body, the church: who is the beginning, the **firstborn** from the dead; that in all things he might have the preeminence.* The Apostle John also referenced Jesus as the **first begotten** in REVELATION 1:5 where we read of *...Jesus Christ, who is the faithful witness, and the **first begotten** of the dead, and the prince of the kings of the earth.*

We just read this of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ in COLOSSIANS 1:16 *For by him were all things created, that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers: all things were created by him, and for him.* Our Apostle Paul also wrote in EPHESIANS 3:9 of *...God, who created all things by Jesus Christ.* The Apostle John also acknowledged the very same thing in JOHN 1:1-3, where we read: *In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. 2 The same was in the beginning with God. 3 All things were made by him; and without him was not any thing made that was made.* In HEBREWS 1:10 we find Jesus Christ addressed as Lord, and again the work of creation is attributed to Him. HEBREWS 1:10 *And, Thou, Lord, in the beginning hast laid the foundation of the earth; and the heavens are the works of thine hands.* Paul continues in HEBREWS 2:10 expounding upon the title of Jesus as the Creator, writing: *For it became him, for whom are all things, and by whom are all things, in bringing many sons unto glory, to make the captain of their salvation perfect through sufferings.* Here we find our Lord and Saviour called "**Captain,**" which is the very same title He addressed Joshua in JOSHUA 5. JOSHUA 5:13 *And it came to pass, when Joshua was by Jericho, that he lifted up his eyes and looked, and, behold, there stood a man over against him with his sword drawn in his hand: and Joshua went unto him, and said unto him, Art thou for us, or for our adversaries? 14 And he said, Nay; but as **captain of the host of the LORD** am I now come. And Joshua fell on his face to the earth, and did worship, and said unto him, What saith my lord unto his servant? 15 And **the captain of the LORD'S host** said unto Joshua, Loose thy shoe from off thy foot; for the place whereon thou standest is holy. And Joshua did so.* Who is the captain of the Lord's host? Is it not our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ Himself? Jesus wanted Joshua to see that *...we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them...* EPHESIANS 2:10. Truly *...by him were all things created, that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers: all things were created by him, and for him: And he is before all things, and by him all things consist...* COLOSSIANS 1:16 & 17. He is the **Captain of our salvation.**

So thus far in the above discussion starting in HEBREWS 1:1, and the associated scriptures that we have looked at we have found the following things said concerning Jesus. He is the **Son of God, the first begotten, the firstborn** of every creature, and He is the **Creator** of all things, the "**Heir of all things,**" and the **One** by whom all things consist. He is the **image of the invisible**

**God, the Redeemer, the forgiver of sin, and the head of the body, the church. He is the beginning, and in the beginning, and is also known as The Word of God.**

And now we come to HEBREWS 3:1 where we read: *Wherefore, holy brethren, partakers of the heavenly calling, consider the Apostle and High Priest of our profession, Christ Jesus.* Here we find Jesus called “**The Apostle and High Priest.**” This is the only time in scripture where we find the word “**Apostle**” capitalized, and rightfully so as here it speaks of Jesus. Recall what an “**Apostle**” is by definition: an **Apostle** is a delegate, a messenger, He that is sent, and One sent forth with orders. 1 JOHN 4:10 says it this way: *Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins.* The Apostle Paul defined Jesus Apostleship like this in GALATIANS 4:4 *But when the fulness of the time was come, God sent forth his Son, made of a woman, made under the law, 5 To redeem them that were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons.* “Jesus was God’s **Apostle** sent to the world to represent God” is what Brother Hill wrote in the margin of his Bible.

Also here in HEBREWS 3:1 we find Jesus noted to be a “**High Priest.**” Here again we find in HEBREWS 3:1 the only time in scripture where “**High Priest**” is capitalized, for here again “**High Priest**” in this verse speaks of Jesus. But Paul goes on to reference Jesus several more times in HEBREWS as “**High Priest**” without using capital letters. For example look at HEBREWS 4:14 *Seeing then that we have a great high priest, that is passed into the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold fast our profession.* Paul goes on to write in HEBREWS 4:15 & 16 -- *For we have not an high priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin. 16 Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need.*

In HEBREWS chapters 5 through 9 Paul goes on to say much about Jesus our “**Great High Priest.**” Let’s continue reading about this. HEBREWS 5:1 *For every high priest taken from among men is ordained for men in things pertaining to God, that he may offer both gifts and sacrifices for sins: 2 Who can have compassion on the ignorant, and on them that are out of the way; for that he himself also is compassed with infirmity. 3 And by reason hereof he ought, as for the people, so also for himself, to offer for sins. 4 And no man taketh this honour unto himself, but he that is called of God, as was Aaron. 5 So also Christ glorified not himself to be made an high priest; but he that said unto him, Thou art my Son, to day have I begotten thee.* (Here again Paul references PSALMS 2:7 as he did in HEBREWS 1:5.) *6 As he saith also in another place, Thou art a priest for ever after the order of Melchisedec.* (Here Paul is quoting PSALMS 110:4.) *7 Who in the days of his flesh, when he had offered up prayers and supplications with strong crying and tears unto him that was able to save him from death, and was heard in that he feared; 8 Though he were a Son, yet learned he obedience by the things which he suffered; 9 And being made perfect, he became the author of eternal salvation unto all them that obey him;... .*

Here in verse 9 we find another title of Jesus similar to the title we read of Him in HEBREWS 12:2. In HEBREWS 12:2 Jesus is called “**The Author and Finisher,**” and here in HEBREWS 5:9 Jesus is also called “**The Author of Eternal Salvation.**” Here in HEBREWS 5:9 we find a different Greek word translated “**Author**” than is found in HEBREWS 12:2. The Greek word here in HEBREWS 5:9 translated “**Author**” is aitos {ah'-ee-tee-os}, number 159 in The Strong’s Greek Concordance, and is found only this one time in scripture. Aitos means: that which causes something. Here Jesus Christ is exalted and glorified as our **High Priest** on the ground of His finished work on earth, which He finished on the cross, thus He is become the personal mediating cause of **Eternal Salvation.** In HEBREWS 12:2 the Greek word translated “**Author**” is archehos {ar-khay-gos'}, number 747 in The Strong’s Greek Concordance, which signifies One who takes a lead in, or provides the first occasion of anything. Archehos is found four times in scripture in three of our English words: **Prince, Captain, and Author.** Archehos is translated “**Prince**” in these next two verses. ACTS 3:15 *And killed the Prince of life, whom God hath raised from the dead; whereof we are witnesses.* ACTS 5:31 *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.* Archehos is

translated “**Captain**” in HEBREWS 2:10 *For it became him, for whom are all things, and by whom are all things, in bringing many sons unto glory, to make the captain of their salvation perfect through sufferings.* And archegos is translated “**Author**” in our text of study in HEBREWS 12:2 *Looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith; who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God.*

Reading on again from HEBREWS 5:9 *And being made perfect, he became the author of eternal salvation unto all them that obey him; 10 Called of God an high priest after the order of Melchisedec.* Here again Paul quotes PSALMS 110:4, which is also a reference to the story found in GENESIS 14 of when Abram delivered Lot in the days before Abram was called Abraham. Rather than turning back to GENESIS 14, and reading the account, we will continue on here in HEBREWS, for the Apostle Paul explains here in HEBREWS what it means to be ...*Called of God an high priest after the order of Melchisedec.* And Paul does so starting in HEBREWS 6:13 *For when God made promise to Abraham, because he could swear by no greater, he swore by himself, 14 Saying, Surely blessing I will bless thee, and multiplying I will multiply thee. 15 And so, after he had patiently endured, he obtained the promise. 16 For men verily swear by the greater: and an oath for confirmation is to them an end of all strife. 17 Wherein God, willing more abundantly to shew unto the heirs of promise the immutability of his counsel, confirmed it by an oath: 18 That by two immutable things, in which it was impossible for God to lie, we might have a strong consolation, who have fled for refuge to lay hold upon the hope set before us: 19 Which hope we have as an anchor of the soul, both sure and stedfast, and which entereth into that within the veil; 20 Whither the forerunner is for us entered, even Jesus, made an high priest for ever after the order of Melchisedec.* Note here in HEBREWS 6:19 & 20 that we also find Jesus called “**an Anchor of the soul,**” and “**The Forerunner,**” which are two more unique titles of His. Also note here once again in HEBREWS 6:20 that Paul quotes from PSALMS 110:4, which in part reads: ...*Thou art a priest for ever after the order of Melchizedek.*

HEBREWS 7:1 *For this Melchisedec, king of Salem, priest of the most high God, who met Abraham returning from the slaughter of the kings, and blessed him; 2 To whom also Abraham gave a tenth part of all; first being by interpretation King of righteousness, and after that also King of Salem, which is, King of peace; 3 Without father, without mother, without descent, having neither beginning of days, nor end of life; but made like unto the Son of God; abideth a priest continually. 4 Now consider how great this man was, unto whom even the patriarch Abraham gave the tenth of the spoils.* There are several things to note about Melchisedec that are brought out here. Melchisedec’s name means: “My king is righteous,” or “King of righteousness” as is noted here in HEBREWS 7:2. 1 TIMOTHY 6:15 points out that Jesus Christ is the Sovereign, ...*and only Potentate, the King of kings, and Lord of lords,*... which also are three more names and titles of Jesus. Melchisedec foreshadowed who Christ is. Melchisedec was the king of Salem, which name means “peace,” thus Melchisedec was the king of peace. Here again Melchisedec foreshadowed who Christ is, for 2 THESSALONIANS 3:16 tells us that Jesus, our **King of kings, and Lord of Lords,** is “**the Lord of peace.**” In time Salem became Jerusalem, whose name means double peace. In REVELATION 3:12, and 21:2 we read of New Jerusalem. Who is the **KINGS OF KINGS, and LORD OF LORDS** who rules there? Is it not the true King of Righteousness, who is Jesus Christ Himself? Melchisedec was not only a king, but he was also a priest, a priest of the most high God as we also find mentioned here in HEBREWS 7:1. So Melchisedec was a king priest. His priesthood was universal, and had no expiration date. As such Melchisedec once again foreshadowed who Christ is. Melchisedec had no recorded genealogy, which means he had no predecessor, or successors like the priests in the line of Aaron. Thus once again Melchisedec foreshadowed who Christ is. And because of this Melchisedec’s priesthood was superior to Aaron’s. Thus we read that Melchisedec was “made like unto the **Son of God,**” that is a priest by divine sovereign appointment for the time during which he lived. Paul continued in HEBREWS 7 proving that Melchisedec foreshadowed who Christ is stating this starting in verse 14 *For it is evident that our Lord sprang out of Juda; of which tribe Moses spake nothing concerning priesthood. 15 And it is yet far more evident: for that after the similitude*

of Melchisedec there ariseth another priest, 16 Who is made, not after the law of a carnal commandment, but after the power of an endless life. 17 For he testifieth, Thou art a priest for ever after the order of Melchisedec. Here again Paul is referencing PSALMS 110:4.

Paul begins to summarize in chapter 8 about Jesus Christ being our **High Priest** stating in HEBREWS 8:1 *Now of the things which we have spoken this is the sum: We have such an **high priest**, who is set on the right hand of the throne of the Majesty in the heavens; 2 A minister of the sanctuary, and of the true tabernacle, which the Lord pitched, and not man.* Note here also that Jesus is called “**A Minister of the Sanctuary.**” In HEBREWS 9:11-14 Paul continues: *But Christ being come an **high priest** of good things to come, by a greater and more perfect tabernacle, not made with hands, that is to say, not of this building; 12 Neither by the blood of goats and calves, but by his own blood he entered in once into the holy place, having obtained eternal redemption for us. 13 For if the blood of bulls and of goats, and the ashes of an heifer sprinkling the unclean, sanctifieth to the purifying of the flesh: 14 How much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself without spot to God, purge your conscience from dead works to serve the living God?* Paul concludes HEBREWS 9 by writing in verse 28 -- *So Christ was once offered to bear the sins of many; and unto them that look for him shall he appear the second time without sin unto salvation.*

Paul in HEBREWS 10:12 then reiterates what he has been writing in HEBREWS concerning “this man” Jesus, whom he has also written to be the **Son of God**, the **first begotten**, the **firstborn** of every creature, the **Creator** of all things, the “**Heir of all things,**” the **One** by whom all things consist, the **beginning**, and who was in the beginning, also known as **The Word of God**, the **image of the invisible God**, the **Redeemer**, the **forgiver of sin**, and the **head of the body**, the church, the **Captain of our salvation**, **A Minister of the Sanctuary**, and **The Apostle and High Priest**. HEBREWS 10:12 *But this man, after he had offered one sacrifice for sins for ever, sat down on the right hand of God.* This statement agrees with what Paul wrote in HEBREWS 1:3 concerning Jesus: *Who being the brightness of his glory, and the express image of his person, and upholding all things by the word of his power, when he had by himself purged our sins, sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high.* Again Paul had wrote nearly the same thing in HEBREWS 8:1 *Now of the things which we have spoken this is the sum: We have such an **high priest**, who is set on the right hand of the throne of the Majesty in the heavens.* And our text of HEBREWS 12:2 *Looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith; who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God.*

So let’s now answer this question after reading the above verses of scripture: If we are looking unto Jesus, where is He? He is sitting at the right hand of the throne of the Majesty on high. And what is he doing there? ROMANS 8:34 answers this question: *It is Christ that died, yea rather, that is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us.* Let’s pause for a moment here and see something in a little more depth. We find here in ROMANS 8:34 Jesus on the right hand of the throne of the Majesty on High making intercession for us. But note that little word “also:” *It is Christ that died, yea rather, that is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us.* Who is “also” referring to? Who else has such close access to God the Father that He can make intercession for us? This question is answered in ROMANS 8:26 & 27, which reads: *Likewise the Spirit also helpeth our infirmities: for we know not what we should pray for as we ought: but the Spirit itself (Himself) maketh intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered. 27 And he that searcheth the hearts knoweth what is the mind of the Spirit, because he maketh intercession for the saints according to the will of God.* Here in verse 26 The Spirit Himself is the Holy Spirit who makes *...intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered.* This is just another reason among many why we need to receive the Holy Ghost, for one of His functions is to make *...intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered.* In ROMANS 8:27 we find “He that searcheth the hearts.” Who is “He that searcheth the hearts?” We find our answer in REVELATION 2:23 in the words of Jesus. REVELATION 2:23 *...and all the churches shall know that I am he which searcheth the reins and hearts... .* Again this is Jesus

speaking here, and He is quoting from Himself, The Word of God, quoting from JEREMIAH 17:10 which reads: *I the LORD search the heart, I try the reins, even to give every man according to his ways, and according to the fruit of his doings.* Again “I the LORD” here is Jesus. Now let’s read again ROMANS 8:27 *And he that searcheth the hearts knoweth what is the mind of the Spirit, because he maketh intercession for the saints according to the will of God.* He that searcheth the hearts is Jesus, and Jesus sees the need for which the Holy Spirit is making intercession, thus we read again in ROMANS 8:34 *It is Christ that died, yea rather, that is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us.*

With this background information let us read some more concerning our **High Priest** reading this time from HEBREWS 7 starting from verse 24, and reading from the Greek literal translation of these verses. HEBREWS 7:24 *But He has the priesthood not to be passed on, because of his remaining to the age. 25 And from this He is able to save to perfection those that come unto God through Him, ever living to intercede on their behalf. 26 For such a **High Priest** was fitting for us: holy, without evil, undefiled, having been separated from sinners, and having become higher than the heavens; 27 Who has no need, as do the high priests, to offer up sacrifices day by day, first for his own sins, and then for the people’s: for He did this once for all, having offered up Himself.* Now let go back once more to HEBREWS 4, and tie all of this together. HEBREWS 4:14 *Seeing then that we have a **great high priest**, that is passed into the heavens, **Jesus the Son of God**, let us hold fast our profession. 15 For we have not an **high priest** which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin. 16 Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need.* Jesus told His disciples in JOHN 14:13 *And whatsoever ye shall ask in my name, that will I do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son. 14 If ye shall ask any thing in my name, I will do it.* We also read this in 1 JOHN 5:14 & 15 -- *And this is the confidence that we have in him, that, if we ask any thing according to his will, he heareth us: 15 And if we know that he hear us, whatsoever we ask, we know that we have the petitions that we desired of him.* Then Paul wrote in EPHESIANS 3:20 *Now unto him that is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that worketh in us.* Again we make note of what is said in HEBREWS 4:16 *Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need.* And concluding our thoughts for now concerning Jesus the **Captain of our salvation**, and **The Apostle and High Priest**, let’s read what Paul wrote in HEBREWS 10:19-22 -- *Having therefore, brethren, boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus, 20 By a new and living way, which he hath consecrated for us, through the veil, that is to say, his flesh; 21 And having an high priest over the house of God; 22 Let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith,...*

Recall what we learned earlier concerning Jesus being “**The Author and Finisher**” of faith. Again the Greek word translated “**Author**” in HEBREWS 12:2 is archegos {ar-khay-gos’}, number 747 in The Strong’s Greek Concordance, which signifies One who takes a lead in, or provides the first occasion of anything. Archegos is found four times in scripture in three of our English words: **Prince**, **Captain**, and **Author**. Archegos is translated “**Prince**” in ACTS 3:15 where Jesus is called “**The Prince of Life**,” and in ACTS 5:31 where He is noted to be a “**Prince and a Saviour**.” Archegos is translated “**Captain**” in HEBREWS 2:10 where Jesus is noted to be “**The Captain**” of our Salvation. And archegos is translated “**Author**” in our text of study in HEBREWS 12:2 *Looking unto Jesus the **author and finisher of our faith**.* As the **Author** of faith Jesus is the originator of faith; He is the beginner of faith, or as one commentator put it, Jesus is “the leader on of faith.”

We also find the word “**Author**” in the word “**authority**,” and Jesus is presently seated upon the throne of **Authority** at the right hand of the Majesty on high. We find the word “**authority**” thirty-seven times in **the word of God**. Recall that the number thirty-seven points to **THE WORD OF GOD**, and **The Word of God** is Jesus. REVELATION 19:13 defines **THE WORD OF GOD** noting that it is one of the many names of Jesus. REVELATION 19:13 *And he was clothed with a vesture dipped in blood: and his name is called **The Word of God**.* By His God given **Authority**, Jesus is before all things, and by Him all things consist as we read in COLOSSIANS 1:17.

COLOSSIANS 1:15-17 speaks of Jesus ...*Who is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of every creature: 16 For by him were all things created, that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers: all things were created by him, and for him: 17 And he is before all things, and by him all things consist.* These words also magnify “**The Author and Finisher**” of faith, who is Jesus the **Authority** on faith, and the **Authority** of faith.

“**The Author and Finisher**” of faith is just one of the many titles, and descriptions of our **Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ** found in scripture. We just mentioned that Jesus is our “**Lord and Saviour**” the title attributed to Him in 2 PETER 1:11, 2:20, 3:2, and 3:18. In DEUTERONOMY 10:17 we find this statement: *For the LORD your God is God of gods, and Lord of lords, a great God, a mighty, and a terrible, {One to reverence, honor, and respect, and to be held in awe of} which regardeth not persons, nor taketh reward.* These too are titles of Jesus found mentioned in the following verses: 1 TIMOTHY 6:15 *Which in his times he shall shew, who is the blessed and only Potentate, the King of kings, and Lord of lords.* REVELATION 17:14 *These shall make war with the Lamb, and the Lamb shall overcome them: for he is Lord of lords, and King of kings: and they that are with him are called, and chosen, and faithful.* REVELATION 19:16 *And he hath on his vesture and on his thigh a name written, KING OF KINGS, AND LORD OF LORDS.* The Psalmist, no doubt David, knew these titles of Jesus, and thus wrote of Him in PSALMS 136. PSALMS 136:3 *O give thanks to the Lord of lords: for his mercy endureth for ever.* Again in PSALMS 95:3 we read: *For the LORD is a great God, and a great King above all gods.* We noted earlier that Jesus is called a “**Prince and a Saviour**” in ACTS 5:31, which reads: *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.* Jesus Himself tells us of some of His other names and titles in the book of REVELATION. He says this in REVELATION 1:8 *I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the ending, saith the Lord, which is, and which was, and which is to come, the Almighty.* Four names and titles of Jesus are found in this verse: “**I Am,**” “**Alpha and Omega,**” “**The Beginning and The Ending,**” and “**The Almighty!**” Repeating His title of “**Alpha and Omega**” in REVELATION 1:11, Jesus also announces that He also has an additional title, “**The First and The Last,**” and here is how he states it in REVELATION 1:11 *...I am Alpha and Omega, the first and the last.* Jesus repeats Himself again in REVELATION 21:6 as he has the Apostle John write: *And he said unto me, It is done. I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end. I will give unto him that is athirst of the fountain of the water of life freely.* Those who have a red letter edition of the Bible find written in red the following words of Jesus in REVELATION 22:12 & 13 where He once again repeats four of His names and titles. REVELATION 22:12 *And, behold, I come quickly; and my reward is with me, to give every man according as his work shall be. 13 I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end, the first and the last.* The four names and titles found in verse 13 are “**I Am,**” “**Alpha and Omega,**” “**The Beginning and The End,**” and “**The First and The Last.**” One more big title of Jesus is made known by Him in REVELATION 22:16 *I Jesus have sent mine angel to testify unto you these things in the churches. I am the root and the offspring of David, and the bright and morning star.*

There are multiple sermons in each of the above names and titles of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. Study on your own the title of “**I Am**” and find the very same Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ appearing unto Moses in EXODUS 3:14 and telling him: “**I AM THAT I AM.**” Jesus said in JOHN 8:12 *...I am the light of the world: he that followeth me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life.* A few verses later in JOHN 8:23 Jesus states: *...I am from above: ye are of this world; I am not of this world.* In JOHN 8:58 *Jesus said unto them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Before Abraham was, I am.* In JOHN 9:5 Jesus proclaims: *As long as I am in the world, I am the light of the world.* Another time in JOHN 12:46 Jesus states: *I am come a light into the world, that whosoever believeth on me should not abide in darkness.* That very same Light appeared unto Saul of Tarsus on the road to Damascus and told him: “**I am Jesus whom thou persecutest...**” ACTS 9:5, 22:8, and 26:15. And this just scratches the surface of the “**I Am’s**” referencing Jesus in scripture.

Brother Hill also preached several sermons on Jesus being the “**Alpha and Omega,**” “**The Beginning and The End,**” and “**The First and The Last.**” **Alpha** is the first letter of the Greek alphabet, and **Omega** the last. Words are written with letters of the alphabet thus every word in **The Word of God** is written with letters from A to Z, from **Alpha** to **Omega** in other words. The same concept holds true for the numbers, for Jesus is in every number from “**The First and The Last.**” And Jesus is in everything from “**The First and The Last.**” In HEBREWS 13:8 the Apostle Paul says it like this: *Jesus Christ the same yesterday, and to day, and for ever.* This also defines Jesus as being “**The Beginning and The End,**” and everything in between!

So we have found Jesus to be “**The Beginning and The End,**” “**The First and The Last,**” the “**Alpha and Omega,**” the “**I AM THAT I AM,**” “**The Almighty,**” The Originator who spoke the world into existence, who was in the beginning, and is the beginning, the **Creator** of all things, the **One** by whom all things consist, “**The Son of God,**” the “**Heir of all things,**” the “**firstbegotten,**” the **image of the invisible God,** the **Redeemer,** the **forgiver of sin,** and the **head of the body,** the church, “**The Apostle and High Priest,**” “**The Truth,**” “**The Life,**” “**The Word of God,**” the “**Captain of our salvation,**” the “**Author of Eternal Salvation,**” “**the Prince of life,**” “**The Prince of Peace,**” the “**Prince of faith,**” a “**Prince and a Saviour,**” “**The King of Glory,**” “**The King of Kings, and Lord of Lords,**” “**The Holy One of Israel,**” “**The Lamb of God,**” “**The Blessed and only Potentate,**” a “**Healer,**” a “**Provider,**” a “**Shepherd,**” “**The Prophet of the Highest,**” a “**Deliverer,**” “**a buckler, a shield, a high tower, a Rock, a fortress, a very present help in time of need, a refuge in times of trouble,**” a “**Sanctifier,**” a lifter up, a “**Strengtheners,**” a “**Counsellor,**” “**The Mighty God,**” “**The Son of man,**” the “**Justifier,**” the “**Hope of Israel,**” the “**Righteous Lord,**” and here in HEBREWS 12:2 Jesus is called by this unique title “**The Author and Finisher**” of faith. The above titles and names of Jesus is an immense amount of **Authority** to take in all at once, so let’s now focus on the “**Finisher**” part of “**The Author and Finisher**” of faith.

The word “**Finisher**” is only found this one time in our King James Version of scripture. To begin to grasp the depth of this word “**Finisher**” we need to go back to the cross and recall Jesus final words before He died, which are recorded in JOHN 19:30. JOHN 19:30 *When Jesus therefore had received the vinegar, he said, It is finished: and he bowed his head, and gave up the ghost.* Brother Hill ingrained in our thinking the word “**teleo**” for Jesus here cried out “**teleo**” -- *It is finished: and he bowed his head, and gave up the ghost.* When Jesus cried “**teleo**” on the cross His work on the cross was **finished**, brought to an end as He, who knew no sin was made sin for us that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him. 2 CORINTHIANS 5:21 says it this way: *For he (God the Father) hath made him (Jesus) to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him.* Back to the word “**Finisher,**” which is only found one time in scripture, and that being in HEBREWS 12:2. The Greek word translated “**Finisher**” is teleiotes {tel-i-o-tace’}, number 5051 in The Strong’s Greek Concordance meaning: (1) a completer; (2) a consummator, or finisher; (3) a perfecter; and (4) one who has in his own person raised faith to its perfection, and so set before us the highest example of faith. In other words Jesus concerning faith is beyond comparison as He is pre-eminent in this regard, being first the beginning of faith (it’s **Author**), and the ending of faith (it’s **Finisher**) or completer. W. E. Vine who wrote Vine’s Expository Dictionary of New Testament Words does not give a definition of “**Finisher,**” which gives us some idea of how hard this word is to define. Teleiotes {tel-i-o-tace’}, number 5051 in The Strong’s Greek Concordance, is a derivative of the Greek word teleioo {tel-i-o’-o}, number 5048 in The Strong’s Greek Concordance, which deals with perfection. (This is a different word than the word “**teleo**” that Jesus said on the cross. Teleo is number 5055 in The Strong’s Greek Concordance.) We find the Greek word teleioo {tel-i-o’-o}, number 5048 in The Strong’s Greek Concordance, used several times by Paul in HEBREWS. We find teleioo in association with the “**Captain of our salvation**” in HEBREWS 2:10 *For it became him, for whom are all things, and by whom are all things, in bringing many sons unto glory, to make the captain of their salvation perfect (teleioo) through sufferings.* We again find teleioo mentioned as part of the description of the “**Author of Eternal Salvation**” in HEBREWS 5:9 *And being made perfect, (teleioo) he became the*

*author of eternal salvation unto all them that obey him.* We also find teleioo in those Old Testament worthies of faith, who are awaiting our arrival for “teleioo” perfection in HEBREWS 11:40 *God having provided some better thing for us, that they without us should not be made perfect* (teleioo).

This is an over whelming amount of information to digest all at once, but perhaps by looking at these different meanings we can better appreciate what Paul was getting at when he wrote in HEBREWS 12:2 *Looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith...* . Jesus is the Originator of faith, The Author, and Authority of faith, and He is also the Completer, Consummator, Finisher or Perfecter of our faith. Jesus is “the Guide and end of our faith” is how one translator puts it. Another writes: “with our eyes on Jesus, the Cause and Completer of our faith.” Coneybare translates this portion of HEBREWS 12:2 like this: “looking onward unto Jesus, the forerunner and finisher of our faith.” Another translator calls Him “the pioneer and the perfection of faith.” One more translation says: “Looking unto Jesus, on whom faith depends from start to finish.”

So we come to probably the most important over whelming subject of HEBREWS 12:1 & 2, and that being “faith.” And we will, Lord willing, spend more time considering some of the different aspects of “faith” as we finish our examination of this part of HEBREWS 12:2 *Looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith...* . We just mentioned that Jesus is the Originator of faith, The Author, and Authority of faith, and He is also the Completer, Consummator, Finisher or Perfecter of our faith. Our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ is also the Author and Finisher of everything. He is the *...Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the ending, saith the Lord, which is, and which was, and which is to come, the Almighty...* as is noted in REVELATION 1:8. He is the First and the Last as is noted in REVELATION 1:11; 1:17; 2:8, and REVELATION 22:13. He is the bottom to the top is how our Apostle Paul described Jesus in PHILIPPIANS 2:6-11, which reads: *Who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God: 7 But made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men: 8 And being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross. 9 Wherefore God also hath highly exalted him, and given him a name which is above every name: 10 That at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth; 11 And that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.* Jesus is way beyond any height, or depth, or length or width we could ever imagine. He is the epitome of love, which is another concept Paul expressed to us in ROMANS 8:35-39. ROMANS 8:35 *Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? 36 As it is written, For thy sake we are killed all the day long; we are accounted as sheep for the slaughter. 37 Nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him that loved us. 38 For I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, 39 Nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.* Paul added some more words to this same thought in EPHESIANS 3:16-21 asking in a written prayer of his *...That he would grant you, according to the riches of his glory, to be strengthened with might by his Spirit in the inner man; 17 That Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith; that ye, being rooted and grounded in love, 18 May be able to comprehend with all saints what is the breadth, and length, and depth, and height; 19 And to know the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge, that ye might be filled with all the fulness of God. 20 Now unto him that is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that worketh in us, 21 Unto him be glory in the church by Christ Jesus throughout all ages, world without end. Amen.*

Note here in these words of EPHESIANS 3 how Paul acknowledged our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ to be the doer of exceedingly and abundantly beyond any thing we could ask or think, or imagine *...according to the power that worketh in us.* What is that power that works in us? Look it up for yourself for the power that works in us is the dunamis power of the Holy Ghost. The Greek word dunamis {doo'-nam-is}, number 1411 in The Strong's Greek Concordance, is found in ACTS

1:8 translated “power.” Dunamis {doo'-nam-is} is also found translated as mighty work, strength, miracle, might, virtue, mighty, and some other miscellaneous words, all of which reference the of the Holy Ghost, which is to be manifested in the life of the Spirit filled believer. And we talked about this dunamis power at some length earlier in this study noting also how dunamis power is required to qualify as a sugkleronomos “joint-heir with Christ.” In other words it takes the dunamis power of the Holy Ghost to help us become a full overcomer, and a New Testament worthy of faith. And it takes the dunamis power of the Holy Ghost to keep us ...*Looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith...* . The full overcomers from this church age, which will become The Lamb’s Wife, will know Jesus as the Author and Finisher of faith; the Author and Finisher of their faith, and are found in REVELATION 4:9-11 giving ...*glory and honour and thanks to him that sat on the throne, who liveth for ever and ever, 10 The four and twenty elders fall down before him that sat on the throne, and worship him that liveth for ever and ever, and cast their crowns before the throne, saying, 11 Thou art worthy, O Lord, to receive glory and honour and power: for thou hast created all things, and for thy pleasure they are and were created.* Note they are giving ...*glory and honour and thanks to him that sat on the throne, who liveth for ever and ever...* the Author and Finisher of their faith!

Recall here at Living Waters Tabernacle during the last few months have been given a Bible study on Wednesday nights by our Pastor Jesse O’Dorisio. And several times he brought out in different portions of REVELATION how it was in reality the four living creatures, i.e. the Bride of Christ, that was given the authority to accomplish certain tasks during the events spoken of in REVELATION. The four beasts found mentioned in thirteen different verses in REVELATION, which we also call the four living creatures, are the very same group the Prophet Ezekiel also saw in his vision of EZEKIEL 1 that compares to John’s vision of them in REVELATION 4. They manifested qualities of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ in both Ezekiel’s and John’s descriptions of them, which you can also further study out on your own. In other words they are types like Jesus. The Bride of Christ will be composed of the company of full overcomers from this church age. On this subject Sister Bodie noted: “Christ must have a bride like unto Himself, a companion, fit for Him, not an infant, nor a child, but a mature woman full-grown in every respect, able to enter into the fullest sympathy and understanding with all His desires and plans. The whole church has been betrothed; but they will not all qualify as the chaste virgin, who shall be presented. ....The young woman who is engaged must be proven and tried; she must measure up to the standard -- CHRIST, who is set before her, and thus grow up into His likeness. She must have His nature fully developed and manifested in her. And this is only possible as she holds her head (CHRIST), she the conscious weaker vessel, absolutely dependent upon Him, ...strengthened, energized and harmonized by His abundant life of which she is a partaker.” (End of quote from Sister Bodie.) Was Jesus Christ full of the Holy Spirit? So too will be The Lamb’s wife! It is only by the leading, and guiding of the Holy Ghost that The Bride of Christ will become fully mature, and just like Christ Himself! Recall twice in REVELATION how the Apostle John fell down to worship at the feet of an angel, thinking it was Jesus, but in reality it was one of these types like Jesus, whom John thought was Jesus. This is found in REVELATION 19:9 & 10, and REVELATION 22:6-9. In both instances the angel told John that he was a fellow servant, and to “worship God.” What did our Apostle Paul write unto the sugkleronomos joint-heirs with Christ in ROMANS 8:18? Recall that the sugkleronomos joint-heirs with Christ are indeed the Bride of Christ, and Paul wrote in ROMANS 8:18 *For I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us.* The Apostle John witnessed this Christ-like glory in a Bridal Saint there in REVELATION 19:9 & 10, and REVELATION 22:6-9. The point we need to note here, as we begin to look at some facts found in EZEKIEL, is that both the Prophet Ezekiel, and the Apostle John saw visions of the same thing, and that being types like Jesus, whom we also know as the Bride of Christ.

Let’s note one outstanding quality found in these full overcomers that Ezekiel spotted, and wrote down. EZEKIEL 1:12 *And they went every one straight forward: whither the spirit was to go, they went; and they turned not when they went.* EZEKIEL 1:20 *Whithersoever the spirit was to go, they went, thither was their spirit to go; and the wheels were lifted up over against them: for the*

*spirit of the living creature was in the wheels.* 21 *When those went, these went; and when those stood, these stood; and when those were lifted up from the earth, the wheels were lifted up over against them: for the spirit of the living creature was in the wheels.* There are a couple of inter-connected points that need highlighted here. First, these living creatures followed the leading of the Holy Spirit. Second, they had **wheels**, and ...*the spirit of the living creature was in the wheels*... a statement twice repeated in verses 20 & 21. Let's look at a verse in DANIEL 7 to see what **wheels** symbolize. DANIEL 7:9 *I beheld till the thrones were cast down, and the Ancient of days did sit, whose garment was white as snow, and the hair of his head like the pure wool: his throne was like the fiery flame, and his wheels as burning fire.* Here we find **the wheels** associated with the throne of the Majesty on High, the seat of all Authority and Power. Thus **the wheels** are symbols of power, and in EZEKIEL 1 it is the dunamis power of the Holy Ghost that is being manifested here, for the Holy Ghost is the power from on high, whom we have been given as a Comforter. Realize here a fact that Jesus told his disciples in JOHN 14:16 concerning the Holy Ghost, whom Jesus also called the Comforter. Here is what Jesus told them in JOHN 14:16 *And I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you for ever.* How long is "for ever?" "For ever" doesn't end the moment we go home to be with the Lord. "For ever" just continues on "for ever," thus the power of the Holy Ghost remains in the life of a Spirit filled believer "for ever." And since the full overcomers from the church age will all be Holy Ghost filled sugkleronomos joint-heirs with Christ, they will continue on through out eternity following the leading of the Holy Ghost. These powerful "wheels" that Ezekiel saw are spiritual wheels, powerful spiritual wheels ...the spirit of the living creature was in the wheels,... and these powerful Holy Ghost filled "wheels" are also indeed **wheels of faith**, which is a third point we must consider.

Let's think about this for a moment. Where does faith come from? ROMANS 10:17 again gives us the answer: *So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.* And we have reviewed this verse approximately a dozen times in this study so far, and will examine it further again shortly, but for now let's consider this next thought concerning the **wheels of faith**, and the book of ROMANS. In the time-line written by Conybeare and Howson we find the book of ROMANS being the fifth epistle that Paul wrote preceded by 1 & 2 THESSALONIANS, and 1 & 2 CORINTHIANS. Yet in the order we find Paul's epistles in scripture the book of ROMANS is first. Almost 100 years ago Grace and Glory publications put out the first edition of the ROMANS study, and wrote in their introduction that ROMANS is the first in order, as well as the greatest in scope of all of Paul's epistles. "It stands related to the others as the hub to the spokes of a wheel. All the essentialities of the other letters are embodied in this letter to the Church at Rome." Ezekiel saw some powerful **wheels** in his vision. The Bride of Christ achieves sugkleronomos joint-heir status by knowing Paul's gospel. A **wheel** is an aid is it not? The Bride of Christ has an aid, just like Rebekah had an aid in the 24th chapter of GENESIS. GENESIS 24:59 *And they sent away Rebekah {who here pictures a type of the Bride of Christ} their sister, and her nurse, {an aid} and Abraham's servant, and his men.* This nurse of Rebekah figures the Apostle Paul and his message, or his gospel. In the words of our thoughts from EZEKIEL, Paul's gospel is the wheels, which receive their power from the Holy Ghost. A real good place to start using your **wheels** is in Paul's gospel. It is the Holy Ghost who opens unto us the deeper truths found in Paul's gospel. Paul wrote in ROMANS 2:16 about a *...day when God shall judge the secrets of men by Jesus Christ according to my gospel.* The full overcomers will know Paul's gospel, and in fact it has been noted above of ROMANS, that it is the hub of the wheel for the rest of Pauls' gospel. In order for one to be a full overcomer, they need to know how to use their **wheels**. They need to know Paul's gospel! The full overcomers **wheels** are full, not flat, full of the Holy Ghost.

We have mentioned that these **wheels** are Spiritual **wheels**, and are also indeed **wheels of faith**. **Wheels** are for moving faster than one can by foot. In EZEKIEL 1:14 we read that these **wheels** aid the full overcomers move about as a flash of lightning: *And the living creatures ran and returned as the appearance of a flash of lightning.* Why do we say that these **wheels** were also **wheels of faith**? Because of an unusual feature mentioned in EZEKIEL 10:12 concerning these

wheels. EZEKIEL 10:12 *And their whole body, and their backs, and their hands, and their wings, and the wheels, were full of eyes round about, even the wheels that they four had.* Let me read two more versions of this verse: *Their entire bodies, including their backs, their hands and their wings, were completely full of eyes, as were their four wheels.* And another translation: *Their bodies, their backs, their hands, their wings, and the wheels, -- the wheels of all four -- were covered in eyes all over.* In REVELATION 4:6 & 8 we also read of these four living creatures being full of eyes: REVELATION 4:6 *...and in the midst of the throne, and round about the throne, were four beasts full of eyes before and behind.* REVELATION 4:8 *And the four beasts had each of them six wings about him; and they were full of eyes within...* . The term “wheels of faith,” and “eyes of faith” are pretty much interchangeable. We found early on in this study that the term “eyes of faith” is not found in scripture, yet the teaching of having “eyes of faith” is found all throughout scripture. For example when the Apostle Paul prays in EPHESIANS 1:18 *The eyes of your understanding being enlightened,...* he is asking the Lord that our spiritual “eyes of faith” be opened to behold the things of the Lord in the same Light God sees things. Stated another way, we are to “behold” the things of God with our spiritual “eyes of faith,” enlightened by the Holy Ghost, and without our spiritual eyes being enlightened we can not “behold” the deeper things of God. We know from our studies that the full overcomer has eyes, Spiritual eyes, that is Spiritual eyes of faith, and these Spiritual eyes of faith are clearly focused on the Bridegroom, Jesus Christ. Like it says in HEBREWS 12:2 the full overcomer is found to be *...Looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith...* . Likewise then, these wheels that we are discussing in EZEKIEL are also Spiritual wheels of faith. Have you been using your Spiritual wheels? That is, do you let the Spirit do the moving in your life, or are you on foot striking out on your own path? The Apostle Paul, who encouraged us to be followers of him as he was of Christ, (1 CORINTHIANS 11:1), followed himself the leading of the Holy Spirit moving on wheels of faith. So do all of the Full Overcomers! The Bride of Christ has wheels, fancy wheels. Do you think that the Holy Spirit is only here on earth? Wrong! Again we reference JOHN 14:16, which we read earlier: *And I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you for ever.* Once again we repeat that the power of the Holy Ghost remains in the life of a Spirit filled believer “for ever.” The Holy Ghost is sent to get and prepare a Bride for heavenly Isaac (Jesus), but He further is there as a guide, more or less behind the scenes after the wedding, is He not? Think about it.

These “wheels” mentioned in EZEKIEL also are typical of the will of God. Do you think the Holy Spirit is going to do a work contrary to the will of God? Of course not, and again we are reminded of what is stated in ROMANS 8:27 *And he that searcheth the hearts (Jesus) knoweth what is the mind of the Spirit, (the Holy Spirit) because he (the Holy Ghost) maketh intercession for the saints according to the will of God (God the Father).* In the last part of EZEKIEL 1:16 we read this statement concerning the four living creatures *...and their appearance and their work was as it were a wheel in the middle of a wheel.* Again Ezekiel makes a similar description of them in EZEKIEL 10:10 writing: *And as for their appearances, they four had one likeness, as if a wheel had been in the midst of a wheel. The wheel within did all the work, the Holy Spirit being the one in the midst of the wheel, out of sight, yet guiding and performing the work of the Lord, for after all that is His job!* So we find emphasized with sufficient testimony here that the mighty wonder working power of the Holy Ghost accomplishes a work of faith in the heart of the Spirit filled believer, who live by faith, that will be manifested further, and magnificently displayed in tasks accomplished in tandem with the Author and Finisher of faith throughout eternity.

Above we talked about “eyes of faith,” and “wheels of faith,” and how both of these terms are representative of the intricate behind the scenes inner guiding work of the Holy Spirit in the life of a Spirit filled believer. The Holy Ghost is our aid, our guide into all truth, our guide to God’s best, the one who opens our “eyes of faith,” to move on “wheels of faith” as we run the race that is set before us. We saw a little of how this was in the life of the Apostle Paul. Recall on the road to Damascus when old Saul of Tarsus was blinded by the glory of the light of the Lord Jesus, and not being able to see with his natural eyes, Jesus then told him something that would take him some

spiritual revealing to see. We read what Jesus told him in ACTS 26:16-18, which we have also previously noted to be perhaps the most important ninety-nine words that Saul of Tarsus ever heard. ACTS 26:16 *But rise, and stand upon thy feet: for I have appeared unto thee for this purpose, to make thee a minister and a witness both of these things which thou hast seen, and of those things in the which I will appear unto thee; 17 Delivering thee from the people, and from the Gentiles, unto whom now I send thee, 18 To open their eyes, and to turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins, and inheritance among them which are sanctified by faith that is in me.* Note there is a lot of discussion here about seeing things, and the opening of eyes, yet these words were spoken to a man now physically blinded. Saul of Tarsus wasn't able to see again with his natural eyes until Ananias of Damascus prayed for him three days later, and if you take the time to study what happened there in ACTS 9:17 & 18 you will notice that as Ananias of Damascus prayed for "Brother Saul" "there fell from his eyes as it had been scales" as he received his back his sight, while at the very same time being filled with the Holy Ghost, the one who would enlighten his spiritual sight, and get his spiritual wheels working, thus moving old Saul of Tarsus in the proper direction, and on a totally different course than he had previously been on. In order to be a minister unto the Gentiles as he was told he would be, Saul of Tarsus had to learn from the Lord the gospel message he was anointed to preach so that he by the divine guiding of the Holy Ghost could open blinded eyes to receive forgiveness of sins, and inheritance among them that are sanctified by faith that is in Jesus. So the Lord led him aside for about three years and taught Saul of Tarsus the gospel he was to preach as our Apostle Paul! Paul wrote about this in GALATIANS, an epistle he wrote 15 to 20 years after being saved on the road to Damascus. Paul also wrote in GALATIANS 6:11 *Ye see how large a letter I have written unto you with mine own hand.* The reason Paul had to write with very large letters was because he could see very good with his natural eyes, but some 15 to 20 years after being saved his spiritual eyes were seeing better than 20/20. The fact that Paul's natural eyes were failing is also evident in ACTS 23:1-5 as he appeared before the Jewish Sanhedrin in his own defense, and couldn't clearly see whom it was he was addressing. ACTS 23:1 *And Paul, earnestly beholding the council, said, Men and brethren, I have lived in all good conscience before God until this day. 2 And the high priest Ananias commanded them that stood by him to smite him on the mouth. 3 Then said Paul unto him, God shall smite thee, thou whited wall: for sittest thou to judge me after the law, and commandest me to be smitten contrary to the law? 4 And they that stood by said, Revilest thou God's high priest?* So we see that as Paul got older his natural eyesight failed him. However by the power of the Holy Ghost Paul saw the things future, and of eternity very clear. In ACTS 27 Paul was a prisoner on a ship headed for Rome, and with his spiritual eyes opened by the Holy Ghost he saw disaster ahead. Though he couldn't clearly see a man twenty feet in front of him Paul addressed those in charge saying in ACTS 27:10 *...Sirs, I perceive that this voyage will be with hurt and much damage, not only of the lading and ship, but also of our lives.* A short time later after ignoring Paul's warning the ship Paul was on was caught in a furious storm, which lasted two weeks. ACTS 27:20 expresses the doom felt by all on the ship: *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.* By this time they all knew in their hearts that they should have listened to Paul. He was indeed God's man on the scene, and his gospel message should be heeded. They were ready after two weeks of undo stress to receive his message, and the Lord knew this. So we read on in the next few verses of ACTS 27 what happened next: ACTS 27:21 *But after long abstinence Paul stood forth in the midst of them, and said, Sirs, ye should have hearkened unto me, and not have loosed from Crete, and to have gained this harm and loss. 22 And now I exhort you to be of good cheer: for there shall be no loss of any man's life among you, but of the ship. 23 For there stood by me this night the angel of God, whose I am, and whom I serve, 24 Saying, Fear not, Paul; thou must be brought before Caesar: and, lo, God hath given thee all them that sail with thee. 25 Wherefore, sirs, be of good cheer: for I believe God, that it shall be even as it was told me.* Under this circumstance with a ship full of men who felt that all hope of them being saved was lost, we wouldn't think that they could be of good cheer would we. But after

now listening to Paul's Holy Ghost inspired words, and following his instructions we read in ACTS 27:36 *Then were they all of good cheer...* . Paul's "eyes of faith" had saw the storm before there was a storm, and his "eyes of faith" saw all 276 souls on board his ship coming safe to shore. The last of ACTS 27:44 tells us: *...And so it came to pass, that they escaped all safe to land.* Hopefully this helps us to better appreciate what "eyes of faith," and "wheels of faith" represents, which is the inner workings of the Holy Ghost in a Spirit filled life, who yield to His leading.

Now armed with this information about our wheels of faith, and our eyes of faith, let's return to our text of study, HEBREWS 12:1 & 2, and read it like this: *Wherefore seeing* (with our Spiritual eyes of faith) *we also are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset us, and let us run* (on wheels of faith) *with patience the race that is set before us, 2 Looking* (with our Spiritual eyes of faith) *unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith; who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God.* Thus we find "faith" is an action word.

This statement requires a little explanation. Action words we learned in school are verbs, however the word "faith" in Webster's Dictionary is listed as a noun. If you dig a little deeper into nouns you will find that there are such things as "action nouns." By definition a "noun" is a person place, or thing, and in addition a "noun" can reference a quality, or an action. So "faith" is an "action noun," meaning a noun denoting action such as "to believe," or "to trust." As believers we associate the word "faith" with "belief" or "trust" in God. All full overcomers past, present, and future will have one thing in common, and that is they all put their faith and trust wholly in the Lord. So once again we note that all full overcomers are very familiar with the fact that "faith" is an action word.

We have been going over this fact since we started this study. Early on we noted a statement of Job in JOB 13:15, and Job lived before there was a Bible written, or an Old Testament to be found, yet he believed the word of the Lord. In JOB 13:15 Job proclaims: *Though he slay me, yet will I trust in him:...* . This is a most noble and remarkable statement of faith, for the Old Testament word "trust" equates to the New Testament words "faith," or "believe." Interestingly the phrase "trust in him" is found fourteen times in scripture, fourteen being the number associated with DELIVERANCE or SALVATION. PROVERBS 30:5 states: *Every word of God is pure: he is a shield unto them that put their trust in him.* This statement also proves that Job knew the word of God even though it hadn't been penned yet, and he knew the word of God by the hearing of the ear. Again we find this thought in ROMANS 10:17 *So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.* Also in JOB 13:18 Job adds this statement: *I know that I shall be justified.* The last part of PSALMS 2:12 reads: *Blessed are all they that put their trust in him.* In the Scofield Bible we find the following notation by C. I. Scofield in his notes concerning the word "trust" in his commentary on PSALMS 2:12. "Trust is the characteristic Old Testament word for the New Testament "faith," "believe." It occurs 152 times in the Old Testament..." (end of quote). There are seven different Hebrew words used in the Old Testament that translate to our English "trust," thus showing SPIRITUAL PERFECTION that is only obtained by putting one's "faith," and "trust" wholly in the Lord. Another Old Testament word that translates also as "trust" is the word "trusteth," which is found seventeen times in the Old Testament. Seventeen is the number pointing to VICTORY IN CHRIST JESUS. We have in our songbook a song entitled FAITH IS THE VICTORY, and the chorus says: "Faith is the victory! Faith is the victory! O glorious victory, that overcomes the world." The inspirational verse behind this song is 1 JOHN 5:4, which reads: *For whatsoever is born of God overcometh the world: and this is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith.* The point of mentioning this is to again note that the word "trusteth," which is found seventeen times in the Old Testament, also references "faith." One place we find "trusteth" is in PSALMS 34:8, which reads: *O taste and see that the LORD is good: blessed is the man that trusteth in him.* In other words, blessed is the man who puts his "faith" in the Lord. So again we find that "faith" is an action word. In PSALMS 84:12 we read a similar statement: *O LORD of hosts, blessed*

*is the man that trusteth in thee.* Here is another real good scripture, JEREMIAH 17:7 *Blessed is the man that trusteth in the LORD, and whose hope the LORD is.*

In JEREMIAH 17:7 we find a double portion of “faith,” and let me explain how this is. First, as we just discussed, the word “trust,” or “trusteth” as found in the Old Testament equates to the New Testament words “faith,” or “believe.” JEREMIAH 17:7 *Blessed is the man that trusteth* (puts his “faith”) *in the LORD, and whose hope the LORD is.* The second word that references “faith” in this verse is the word “hope,” which also points us back to “trust,” for “hope” means to “trust,” or to put “faith” or “trust” in someone, or something; to confide in someone; to find sure and firm hope. The full overcomer finds their sure and firm “hope” in our lovely Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, who is our “hope,” who is our life, who is the Author and Finisher of our faith! Paul writes in 1 TIMOTHY 1:1 *Paul, an apostle of Jesus Christ by the commandment of God our Saviour, and Lord Jesus Christ, which is our hope;... .* To Titus Paul wrote: TITUS 2:11 *For the grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men, 12 Teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world; 13 Looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ; 14 Who gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works.* There are many other scriptures that show how the Lord is our sure and firm “hope,” and here are a few written by that Old Testament worthy of faith, David. PSALMS 31:24 *Be of good courage, and he shall strengthen your heart, all ye that hope in the LORD.* PSALMS 38:15 *For in thee, O LORD, do I hope: thou wilt hear, O Lord my God.* PSALMS 39:7 *And now, Lord, what wait I for? my hope is in thee.* PSALMS 146:5 *Happy is he that hath the God of Jacob for his help, whose hope is in the LORD his God:... .* This is but a few of the hundreds of scriptures that use the word “hope,” a word that also augments “faith.”

What does a man of faith do? Pray! Men of faith pray to the living God; pray in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father by Him; pray in faith believing, expecting to receive exceeding abundantly above all that they could ask or think, and ask Him to accomplish the impossible tasks placed before them! A man of faith trusts in the Lord who is his sure and firm hope. A man of faith looks unto Jesus the Author and Finisher of faith, for such a man of faith knows that it is the Lord Jesus Himself who personally designed the race course of faith that he is to run upon, trusting the Holy Ghost for the expert guiding on his track of life. Again we repeat Paul’s Holy Ghost inspired words of encouragement of HEBREWS 12:1 *...let us run with patience the race that is set before us.* We run this race by faith just like all of the Old Testament worthies did, by faith. Also we learned this in 2 THESSALONIANS 3:5 concerning patience, that it is the Holy Ghost who directs our hearts into the patient waiting for Christ if we only yield to His directing. 2 THESSALONIANS 3:5 *And the Lord direct your hearts into the love of God, and into the patient waiting for Christ.* Note also in this verse that we find the trinity, God the Father, God the Son, who is Jesus the Author and Finisher of our faith, and the Holy Ghost our guide and director unto God’s best. God the Father, Jesus Christ the Son, and the Holy Ghost are all in agreement as is noted in 1 JOHN 5:7 *For there are three that bear record in heaven, the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost: and these three are one.* A man of faith believes all of this, for this is the word of God.

We have mentioned a couple of times during this study that the umbrella that hangs over the eighty-words of HEBREWS 12:1 & 2 is faith. Actually the umbrella of faith covers the whole word of God if you really think about it. But the point of emphasis in HEBREWS 12:1 & 2 truly focuses upon the importance of full overcoming faith. To achieve full overcoming sugkleronomos joint-heirs with Christ faith we must be focused, and always *...Looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith,...* and always looking for His soon appearing!

So what is faith? We have mentioned much concerning faith in our early lessons in this study, as faith is the main subject matter being discussed here in HEBREWS 12:1 & 2. Have you ever heard the statement “faith is not sight?” Is this terminology a scripture? The answer is no, not in these words, but this concept is expressed in scripture. 2 CORINTHIANS 5:7 states: *(For we walk by faith, not by sight:).* Basically 2 CORINTHIANS 5:7 tells us that “faith is not sight.” Recall

when we started this study that we referenced some things that were said back in JOSHUA 1. Let's go back to JOSHUA 1:1 *Now after the death of Moses the servant of the LORD it came to pass, that the LORD spake unto Joshua the son of Nun, Moses' minister, saying, 2 Moses my servant is dead; now therefore arise, go over this Jordan, thou, and all this people, unto the land which I do give to them, even to the children of Israel. 3 Every place that the sole of your foot shall tread upon, that have I given unto you, as I said unto Moses. 4 From the wilderness and this Lebanon even unto the great river, the river Euphrates, all the land of the Hittites, and unto the great sea toward the going down of the sun, shall be your coast. 5 There shall not any man be able to stand before thee all the days of thy life: as I was with Moses, so I will be with thee: I will not fail thee, nor forsake thee. 6 Be strong and of a good courage: for unto this people shalt thou divide for an inheritance the land, which I sware unto their fathers to give them. 7 Only be thou strong and very courageous, that thou mayest observe to do according to all the law, which Moses my servant commanded thee: turn not from it to the right hand or to the left, that thou mayest prosper whithersoever thou goest. 8 This book of the law shall not depart out of thy mouth; but thou shalt meditate therein day and night, that thou mayest observe to do according to all that is written therein: for then thou shalt make thy way prosperous, and then thou shalt have good success. 9 Have not I commanded thee? Be strong and of a good courage; be not afraid, neither be thou dismayed: for the LORD thy God is with thee whithersoever thou goest.* We spent a lot of time discussing JOSHUA 1:9, and noted that there are many things in life that we can become "dismayed" about. The Hebrew word translated "dismayed" in JOSHUA 1:9 is chathath, number 02865 in The Strong's Hebrew Concordance, and has the following meanings: to be dismayed, to be shattered, to be broken, to be scared, to be terrified, to be afraid, confounded, amazed, discouraged, beaten down, and be broken in pieces. Have you ever been dismayed, or confounded, or discouraged, or beaten down, and broken in pieces? The Lord instructed Joshua to be strong in the Lord, to be of a good courage, which can only come from the Lord, and not to be afraid, to not be dismayed, or scared, to not be discouraged, or beaten down, and broken in pieces. We then noted how HEBREWS 11:1 defines faith: *Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen.* In the spirit of JOSHUA 1:9, and the whole of HEBREWS 11 we came to the important conclusion that **faith is being not dismayed** as to what one man with faith in God can do. So what is faith? **Faith is being not dismayed** at what God can do. Paul expressed it like this in PHILIPPIANS 4:13 *I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me.*

Let's review for a moment what faith is not. Faith is not unbelief. Unbelief can simply be defined as a lack of belief, or a lack of faith. We discussed this earlier in this study how that unbelief is the opposite of faith. ROMANS 14:23 tells us: *...for whatsoever is not of faith is sin.* And I encouraged each of us to memorize this little bit of scripture: *...for whatsoever is not of faith is sin.* These **eight words** point the way for the full overcomer. Our text of study is HEBREWS 12:1 & 2, which follows the whole 11<sup>th</sup> chapter of HEBREWS 11 that deals with the Old Testament worthies of faith, which chronicles the record of some, who in Old Testament times conquered unbelief. HEBREWS 12:1 & 2 addresses the New Testament worthies of faith. To qualify as a New Testament worthy of faith one must "**lay aside**" *...the sin which doth so easily beset us...* . In other words to qualify as a New Testament worthy of faith one must be void of unbelief. Let that sink in for a moment. Unbelief will not be part of the wardrobe of a full overcomer. A full overcomer has overcome unbelief. Name one Old Testament worthy of faith who didn't overcome unbelief. You can't find one otherwise they wouldn't be known as worthies of faith.

Once again let's repeat something we discussed before, and that is there are four scriptures, which in essence state the same thing: *The just shall live by faith...* (HABAKKUK 2:4; ROMANS 1:17; GALATIANS 3:11; and HEBREWS 10:38). Again HEBREWS 11:1 defines faith, stating: *Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen.* ROMANS 10:17 tells us where faith comes from; *So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.* REVELATION 19:13 again tells us that Jesus Christ Himself is "**The Word of God,**" *So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.* So we see that faith cometh by hearing the

**word of God, and the word of God** expounds unto us Jesus, who also is **the Author and Finisher of faith**, and as we noted previously in this study, as **the Author and Finisher of faith** Jesus is the **Authority** on faith, and the **Authority** of faith. We also mentioned that Jesus is presently seated upon the throne of **Authority** at the right hand of the Majesty on high as is noted in HEBREWS 1:3, and some other scriptures. We find the word “**authority**” thirty-seven times in **the word of God**. We also have learned that the number thirty-seven is the number that is associated with **THE WORD OF GOD**. It is further interesting to note that the phrase “**his word**” is found exactly thirty-seven times in scripture, and often this phrase references the word of the Lord, or **THE WORD OF GOD**. And we also find the phrase “**by faith**” exactly thirty-seven times in scripture. Let’s connect the dots: *The just shall live by faith...* and since *...faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God...* and since **THE WORD OF GOD** is another name of Jesus, who also is **the Author and Finisher of faith**, the **Authority** on faith, and the **Authority** of faith, don’t you see then how we too can be a full overcomer, like David of Old Testament times, who wrote in PSALMS 56:4 *In God I will praise his word, in God I have put my trust;... ? Truly ...Blessed is the man that trusteth in the LORD, and whose hope the LORD is...* as we noted in JEREMIAH 17:7 earlier. So we find that *...The just shall live by faith...* and GALATIANS 2:20 adds further substance to this statement: *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.* As believers do we not have living within each of us Jesus Christ **the Author and Finisher of faith**, the **Authority** of faith? The answer is obviously yes, so with our “eyes of faith” we need to be *...Looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith...* who was **crucified**, and *...died for our sins according to the scriptures...* as Paul wrote in 1 CORINTHIANS 15:3. Look it up for yourself, the word “**crucified**” is also found thirty-seven times in scripture, and in each of the thirty-seven verse where “**crucified**” is found, the subject being referenced is Jesus, who is **THE WORD OF GOD!** *The just shall live by faith...* and *...faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.*

Let’s look at HEBREWS 11:3 for a moment: *Through faith we understand that the worlds were framed by the word of God, so that things which are seen were not made of things which do appear.* In the light of what we have been studying we can read HEBREWS 11:3 like this: “Through faith we understand that the worlds we framed by **the Author and Finisher** of faith, so that things which are seen were not made of things which do appear.” Again we see by His God given **Authority**, Jesus **the Author and Finisher** of faith, is before all things, and by Him all things consist as we read in COLOSSIANS 1. COLOSSIANS 1:15-17 speaks of Jesus *...Who is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of every creature: 16 For by him were all things created, that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers: all things were created by him, and for him: 17 And he is before all things, and by him all things consist.* HEBREWS 11:3 again: *Through faith we understand that the worlds were framed by the word of God, so that things which are seen were not made of things which do appear.* Brother Hill used to tell us that He spoke heaven and earth into existence. Jesus is faith, Jesus is the **Authority** of faith, and the **Authority** on faith, **the Author and Finisher** of faith, who was in the beginning with God, and He spoke heaven and earth into existence. JOHN 1:1-3 expresses this very same fact. JOHN 1:1 *In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. 2 The same was in the beginning with God. 3 All things were made by him; and without him was not any thing made that was made.*

Brother Paul Smith wrote a tract on Faith, which can be found in the church web site under the heading “More Study Books and Pamphlets.” In this tract Brother Smith answers such questions as “what is faith,” and “what does faith do,” and “where is your faith,” and “why did you not exercise faith,” and “how do we increase our faith,” and “what is the culmination of our faith?” If you get a chance look up this tract and study it. Permit me a few moments to read a few quotes from this tract. Brother Smith noted: “Faith connects us with God, and brings into reality the promises of God. Faith is life. By faith we begin, and by faith we finish. “*The just shall live by faith*” - ROMANS 1:17. There is power in believing God that perhaps we have not yet discovered to the degree which

would be pleasing to God.” Brother Smith used as his reference here the words of Jesus found in MARK 11:22 and 23, which reads: *And Jesus answering saith unto them, Have faith in God. 23 For verily I say unto you, That whosoever shall say unto this mountain, Be thou removed, and be thou cast into the sea; and shall not doubt in his heart, but shall believe that those things which he saith shall come to pass; he shall have whatsoever he saith.* Brother Smith then noted: “In the above quoted Scriptures, and also in the succeeding verses, we will note the authority that Jesus gives to faith. According to Mark's record we read that, if we would not doubt but believe, we could say to a mountain, “Move!” and it would. Matthew's record reads, in answer to the apostles' query as to why they could not cure the lunatic, “*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*” - MATTHEW 17:20. Luke's record reads, “*And the apostles said unto the Lord, Increase our faith. And the Lord said, if ye had faith as a grain of mustard seed, ye might say unto this sycamine tree, Be thou plucked up by the root, and be thou planted in the sea; and it should obey you*” - LUKE 17:5 & 6.”

“By these verses, we see that faith is authority. Faith does not beg nor plead, but commands. Faith does not “pray,” but instead “says.” Note Jesus' exact words, “Ye shall SAY,” not pray. Thus, faith is not a supplicant; but it is a sovereign, even as God is Sovereign. Faith demands obedience and receives it. Faith takes the throne, and everything else becomes its subject. Every need, every situation, becomes subject to faith's command. To have the faith of God means to be like God in the matter of authority. Jesus did not tell the disciples to say to the mountain, “Please, move mountain, would you?” They were to command, “Move!” Brother Smith then quickly adds: “Of course, we would point out that Jesus is not teaching us to promiscuously command unreasonable subjection - that is not real faith. He is teaching the principle of faith, and uses the mountain and the tree to illustrate His point. He had only the day before cursed the fig tree. The disciples marveled that it had dried so quickly from the roots upward. Faith has authority, and nothing can withstand its command. Prayer is the place of communion with God where we learn His will and receive strength to exercise faith. Faith is really the result of prayer.”

Brother Smith then asks: “What does faith do? Faith is always active. It Claims not only blessing upon the one who has faith, but it gives that one power to bless. We may seek a blessing from our Father, but faith goes further and demands blessing for others. We may hear of a needy saint, and immediately faith springs to action – “Bless him!” He is blessed, though hundreds of miles may separate the two. Faith knows no distance. Faith knows no impossibility. “*All things are possible to him that believeth*” - MARK 9:23.”

“Lest someone might misunderstand and think we were advocating a complete sovereignty within ourselves and independence of God, we say: FAITH BOWS TO THE WILL OF GOD. Faith is the execution of God's will. We could never exercise faith apart from what God desires. If there is a definite need, we have the blessed privilege and the authority to demand the answer. An example of this is found in LUKE 8:22-25. Jesus and His disciples had boarded a ship and were crossing a lake. Jesus fell asleep; and when a storm arose, and they were in jeopardy of drowning, they wakened Jesus by fearfully exclaiming, “We perish! We perish!” Jesus arose and rebuked the winds and waves and there was a calm. Now note His words to them, “Where is YOUR FAITH?” Jesus did not still the waves by His power as God. This fact is illustrated in His sleeping, showing He was human as His disciples were. He rebuked the winds and waves by the Faith of God. He had to exercise the sovereignty of faith, not His sovereignty as God. Then He asks them, “Where is your faith?” In other words, “Why did you not exercise faith?” The disciples could have commanded the winds and waves to cease, even as Jesus did. This occasion was a wonderful opportunity for the disciples to use their God-given faith. They did not know the power that lay within their hearts. Jesus had to fall asleep, the winds had to rise, to bring forth the faith. God used these things to illustrate the authority of faith. Then, if a torrent rises against us today and it seems as though Jesus is sleeping, that is the opportunity for us to exercise our faith - command the winds to cease. Let faith

ascend the throne, and put all ills in subjection. They might have perished had not faith stepped on the scene in the Person of Jesus.” {End of quoting from Brother Smiths’ tract for the time being.}

Jesus the Author and Finisher of faith taught His disciples well on this subject of faith, and after his death and resurrection, and after they received the promised gift of the Holy Ghost on the day of Pentecost, we read in ACTS 3 how Peter now full of the Holy Ghost exercised his faith. ACTS 3:1 *Now Peter and John went up together into the temple at the hour of prayer, being the ninth hour. 2 And a certain man lame from his mother’s womb was carried, whom they laid daily at the gate of the temple which is called Beautiful, to ask alms of them that entered into the temple; 3 Who seeing Peter and John about to go into the temple asked an alms. 4 And Peter, fastening his eyes upon him with John, said, Look on us. 5 And he gave heed unto them, expecting to receive something of them. 6 Then Peter said, Silver and gold have I none; but such as I have give I thee: **In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth rise up and walk.** {Remember what we just read from Brother Smith’s tract? “Faith demands obedience and receives it. Faith takes the throne, and everything else becomes its subject. Every need, every situation, becomes subject to faith’s command. To have the faith of God means to be like God in the matter of authority.” This is the faith Peter exercised here in ACTS 3:6} -- **In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth rise up and walk.** 7 *And he took him by the right hand, and lifted him up: and immediately his feet and ankle bones received strength. 8 And he leaping up stood, and walked, and entered with them into the temple, walking, and leaping, and praising God.* This miracle prompted a sermon, which is recorded in the remaining verses of ACTS 3, and caused the disciples to be called before the Jewish Sanhedrin in ACTS 4:1-22. In his Holy Ghost inspired sermon Peter said this starting in ACTS 3:13 *The God of Abraham, and of Isaac, and of Jacob, the God of our fathers, hath glorified his Son Jesus; whom ye delivered up, and denied him in the presence of Pilate, when he was determined to let him go. 14 But ye denied the Holy One and the Just, and desired a murderer to be granted unto you; 15 And killed the Prince of life, whom God hath raised from the dead; whereof we are witnesses. 16 **And his name through faith in his name hath made this man strong, whom ye see and know: yea, the faith which is by him hath given him this perfect soundness in the presence of you all.****

Let’s think of it like this in the light of what we have been studying in HEBREWS 12:2, Peter was saying “In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, the Author and Finisher of faith, through faith in His name hath made this man strong.” The phrase “**through faith,**” which is found here in ACTS 3:16 for the first time in scripture, is repeated a total of fifteen times in scripture. Fifteen is the number of REST showing us that we can rest assured that the Author and Finisher of our faith will honor our requests made in faith believing in the Authority of Jesus name under the will of God. In ACTS 4 we read of the Sanhedrin making inquiry of the Apostles as to this miracle, and starting in verse 7 we read: *And when they had set them in the midst, they asked, By what power, or by what name, have ye done this? 8 Then Peter, filled with the Holy Ghost, said unto them, Ye rulers of the people, and elders of Israel, 9 If we this day be examined of the good deed done to the impotent man, by what means he is made whole; 10 Be it known unto you all, and to all the people of Israel, that by **the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, whom ye crucified, whom God raised from the dead, even by him doth this man stand here before you whole. 11 This is the stone which was set at nought of you builders, which is become the head of the corner. 12 Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved.** Again recall what Brother Smith wrote: “Faith takes the throne, and everything else becomes its subject. Every need, every situation, becomes subject to faith’s command. To have the faith of God means to be like God in the matter of authority.” ACTS 3 & 4 proves that Jesus disciples learned from the Author and Finisher of faith His lessons on faith real well. ACTS 5:12-16 further illustrates this point. ACTS 5:12 *And by the hands of the apostles were many signs and wonders wrought among the people; (and they were all with one accord in Solomon’s porch. 13 And of the rest durst no man join himself to them: but the people magnified them. 14 And believers were the more added to the Lord, multitudes both of men and women.) 15 Insomuch that they brought forth the sick into the streets, and laid them on beds and couches, that at the least the shadow of Peter passing by might**

*overshadow some of them. 16 There came also a multitude out of the cities round about unto Jerusalem, bringing sick folks, and them which were vexed with unclean spirits: and they were healed every one.* How were all of these healed? Peter already answered this question earlier: *In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth... and ...through faith in his name hath... caused all of these to be ...healed every one.*

These incidents also prove ROMANS 10:17 to be true: *So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.* Brother Smith commented on this verse in his tract on "Faith," and wrote: "So faith does not come simply by reading the Bible or hearing someone else read it. We must read the Word, of course; but the words we have read must be spoken to our hearts by God. In the time of need, the Holy Spirit will speak to us a word of Scripture, which we have heard; and, by that Word, faith steps forward and commands the answer. So faith comes, not by seeing or simply reading, but by hearing the force of the Word by the Holy Ghost. With the Word we hear, we can command a mountain to be moved, a tree to be transplanted, the winds and waves to cease, the sick to be healed; or whatever the need calls for and the Word allows. ...How do we increase our faith? The answer is simple. *So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God... ROMANS 10:17.*" {End of Quoting Brother Smith.}

Here is another important point concerning faith, and that is there is not a time limit on faith. Nor is there a boundary, or measure, or limit of any kind on faith. In other words the faith of the worthies of faith, lived and lives way beyond their human life time, giving us their lives of faith as examples to follow, as Paul noted in HEBREWS 13:7. HEBREWS 13:7 *Remember them which have the rule over you, who have spoken unto you the word of God: whose faith follow, considering the end of their conversation.* Coneybear's translation of this verse reads: "Remember them that were your leaders, who spoke to you the word of God; look upon the end of their life, and follow the example of their faith." Then Paul writes this stand-alone statement in HEBREWS 13:8 *Jesus Christ the same yesterday, and to day, and for ever.* What all of this means to us is that we can follow the examples of lives of faith who have gone on before us, for as HEBREWS 12:2 states, Jesus is the Author and Finisher of our faith, and He is the same yesterday, to day, and forever. There is no time limit on faith because there is no boundary, or measure, or limit of any kind on Jesus the Author and Finisher of our faith, who is the same yesterday, to day, and forever. So we see then that Jesus defines faith, and that He is *...the same yesterday, and to day, and for ever...* (HEBREWS 13:8), thus we should be *...Looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith;...* (HEBREWS 12:2), who left us in scripture so many examples of faith to follow. A note Brother Hill made in his Bible reads: "Jesus would have us know that the same faith He exercised can be had by all who believe." Faith is a firm conviction that God can do anything. Again we repeat **faith is not being dismayed** as to what one man with faith in God can do.

Let's return one last time to Brother Smith's tract again as we conclude for now our thoughts on faith. Brother Smith asks: "What is the culmination of our faith? Read Hebrews 12:2 – "*Looking unto Jesus the Author and Finisher of our faith...*" Jesus was the Originator of faith, and He is also the Completer or Perfecter of our faith. Our faith is constantly being strengthened and perfected through exercise. The stubborn mountains try the strength of our faith; the unfruitful tree proves the flexibility and resourcefulness of our faith; the winds and waves show the power and patience of faith. In 1 THESSALONIANS 3:10, and 13 Paul wanted to visit these Saints that he might perfect that which was lacking in their faith, so that they might be fully ready for the coming of the Lord. By faith Enoch was translated. His faith demanded his perfection. Perfect faith will demand our translation also. Thus, we look unto Jesus constantly, noting that He too endured and finished His course with joy. We learn by His example of faith. The word "Finisher," in HEBREWS 12:2, means "the Perfecter (of our faith) who brings one through to the goal so as to win and receive the Prize." So let us exercise "the faith of God" more and more. I want to. Faith comes through hearing the Voice of God, and we learn to converse with Him through prayer. Let us read, in closing, MARK 11:24 – "Therefore I say unto you. What things so ever ye desire, when ye pray, believe that ye

receive them, and ye shall have them. Amen!" {End for quoting from Brother Smith's tract on "Faith".}

Moving on, note next in our text of HEBREWS 12:2 that there is a semicolon after the word "faith." HEBREWS 12:2 *Looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith; who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God.* A semicolon is most commonly used to link in a single sentence two independent clauses that are closely related in thought. In HEBREWS 12:2 the focus after the semicolon is upon Jesus. Prior to the semicolon the emphasis of the eighty word sentence of HEBREWS 12:1 & 2 was placed on "we," and "us" the New Testament potential worthies of faith. To achieve full overcomer status we are encouraged by the Apostle Paul to *...lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset us, and let us run with patience the race that is set before us, 2 Looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith,...* and we have examined in great depth what all of this means, and requires in this study on HEBREWS 12:1 & 2, which we have looked at so far. These last twenty-eight words after the semicolon is another glimpse into the incompressible majesty of Jesus Christ, explaining in part who He is, what He has done, and where He currently resides. These last twenty-eight words are like another snap shot picture (if you will) of Christ among the vast album of word photos called the word of God. Here in the last twenty-eight words of HEBREWS 12:2 we find recorded some of Jesus' thinking as He faced the cross. Lest you think this line of reasoning is far-fetched recall what our Apostle Paul wrote in PHILIPPIANS 2. PHILIPPIANS 2:5 *Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus: 6 Who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God: 7 But made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men: 8 And being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross. 9 Wherefore God also hath highly exalted him, and given him a name which is above every name: 10 That at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth; 11 And that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.* This portion of scripture answers, in part, the question of how we could know what Jesus was thinking as he faced the cross. Obviously this kind of information was what the Lord Jesus Christ Himself showed unto the Apostle Paul as part of the many things Jesus told Paul He would reveal unto him during the unfold of the gospel message Paul was to preach. We read this in ACTS 26:16 as Jesus told Paul *...I have appeared unto thee for this purpose, to make thee a minister and a witness both of these things which thou hast seen, and of those things in the which I will appear unto thee.* Later Paul wrote in GALATIANS 1:11 & 12 this statement: *But I certify you, brethren, that the gospel which was preached of me is not after man. 12 For I neither received it of man, neither was I taught it, but by the revelation of Jesus Christ.* There is only one way we can ever know exactly what someone was thinking, and that is if they tell us what they were thinking. It was the Lord who taught Paul, and revealed unto him some of Jesus thoughts as He faced the cross. It was the Lord who expressed to Paul the joy that was set before Him as He endured the cross, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross. So as we begin our review of these last twenty-eight words of HEBREWS 12:2 let's enjoy, and appreciate the picture(s) of Jesus painted here.

The number twenty-eight is probably a good place to start our deeper examination of this last portion of HEBREWS 12:2. Twenty-eight is the number that points to **ETERNAL LIFE**. One cannot place a value on **eternal life**. The richest man who ever lived cannot, nor could not ever purchase **eternal life**. **Eternal life** is a gift of God. ROMANS 6:23 tells us this: *For the wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.* 1 JOHN 5:11 further informs us: *And this is the record, that God hath given to us eternal life, and this life is in his Son.* So we find it no marvel that these last twenty-eight words of HEBREWS 12:2 picture Jesus by whom we have **eternal life**, *...who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God.* Back in JOHN 3:7 Jesus told that well educated Pharisee named Nicodemus: *Ye must be born again.* As you study the story out for

yourself you will see that Nicodemus couldn't figure this out, and then Jesus the Master Teacher explained to Nicodemus some things about Himself calling Himself the Son of Man, and said unto Nicodemus in JOHN 3:15 & 16 *That whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have eternal life. 16 For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.* In JOHN chapter 10 we read Jesus' words on His discourse of the Good shepherd. In JOHN 10:11 Jesus states: *I am the good shepherd: the good shepherd giveth his life for the sheep.* (We know Jesus gave His life on the cross of Calvary.) Then in JOHN 10:27 – 30 Jesus continues: *My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me: 28 And I give unto them eternal life; and they shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of my hand. 29 My Father, which gave them me, is greater than all; and no man is able to pluck them out of my Father's hand. 30 I and my Father are one.* We have just looked at four passages of scripture where we are told where **eternal life** comes from. Let's look at one more verse found in 1 JOHN 2:25 *And this is the promise that he hath promised us, even eternal life.* In total there are twenty-six scriptures that mention **eternal life**. Twenty-six is the number associated with the GOSPEL, and GOOD NEWS, which the GOSPEL proclaims. What better GOOD NEWS can we read than what we just read above: *And this is the record, that God hath given to us eternal life, and this life is in his Son...* 1 JOHN 5:11? 1 JOHN 5:20 goes on to state: *And we know that the Son of God is come, and hath given us an understanding, that we may know him that is true, and we are in him that is true, even in his Son Jesus Christ. This is the true God, and eternal life.*

So we see that these last twenty-eight words of HEBREWS 12:2 point us to Christ, the Author and Finisher of faith, and the One who gives us **eternal life**: *...who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God.*

Before we proceed any further let's discuss "**the cross**," which is found mentioned here in HEBREWS 12:2 for the last time in scripture. The word "**cross**" is found mentioned twenty-eight times in scripture! Again twenty-eight is the number that points to **ETERNAL LIFE**. Let that fact soak into your heart for a minute. They crucified Jesus upon **the cross**. Jesus blood was shed upon **the cross**. HEBREWS 9:22 tells us that without the shedding of blood there is no remission for sins. We read in LEVITICUS 17:11 *For the life of the flesh is in the blood: and I have given it to you upon the altar to make an atonement for your souls: for it is the blood that maketh an atonement for the soul.* The Apostle Paul explained it like this in ROMANS 5:11 *And not only so, but we also joy in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom we have now received the atonement.* Atonement is the satisfaction given for sin, which was brought about on **the cross** when Jesus shed His atoning blood for us. Atonement means to disannul, or to cancel. Jesus shed His blood on **the cross** thus cancelling sin for all who believe on Him. When the Philippian jailor asked Paul and Silas what he must do to be saved, they answered: *Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved, and thy house...* ACTS 16:31. In other words they pointed the Philippian jailor to the finished work Jesus accomplished on **the cross**. The Apostle Peter explained it like this in 1 PETER 1:18 *Forasmuch as ye know that ye were not redeemed with corruptible things, as silver and gold, from your vain conversation received by tradition from your fathers; 19 But with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot: 20 Who verily was foreordained before the foundation of the world, but was manifest in these last times for you, 21 Who by him do believe in God, that raised him up from the dead, and gave him glory; that your faith and hope might be in God.* The precious blood of Christ was shed for us on **the cross**, where He died for remission of our sins. The Apostle Paul further expressed it like this in both EPHESIANS 1:7, and COLOSSIANS 1:14 as he spoke about Jesus Christ, and the work He accomplished on **the cross**. EPHESIANS 1:7 *In whom we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace.* COLOSSIANS 1:14 *In whom we have redemption through his blood, even the forgiveness of sins.* Remember the song that the full overcomers sing in REVELATION 5? REVELATION 5:9 *And they sung a new song, saying, Thou art worthy to take the book, and to open the seals thereof: for thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God by thy blood out of every kindred, and tongue, and*

people, and nation; 10 And hast made us unto our God kings and priests: and we shall reign on the earth. They were referencing the work Jesus Christ accomplished on **the cross**. Jesus The Lamb of God died for our sins upon **the cross**. Remember what John the Baptist said in JOHN 1:29? *Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world.* This taking away the sin of the world is what happened upon **the cross** of Calvary! Recall also what Abraham prophesied in GENESIS 22:8 ...*My son, God will provide himself a lamb...* . Jesus Christ is the Lamb of God slain upon **the cross**. God did provide for Himself the perfect sacrifice, which taketh away the sin of the world. Paul's gospel proclaims in 1 CORINTHIANS 15:3 & 4 -- *For I delivered unto you first of all that which I also received, how that Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures; 4 And that he was buried, and that he rose again the third day according to the scriptures...* . This, in two verses, is the foundation of Paul's gospel message, which starts at **the cross**. Jesus died upon **the cross**, and rose again the third day, and in this process gave us **eternal life**! Paul also wrote in ROMANS 10:9 & 10 -- *That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved. 10 For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation.* Paul wrote in 1 CORINTHIANS 1:17 *For Christ sent me not to baptize, but to preach the gospel: not with wisdom of words, lest **the cross** of Christ should be made of none effect. 18 For the preaching of **the cross** is to them that perish foolishness; but unto us which are saved it is the power of God.* Jesus was crucified, and died on **the cross** so that we could have **eternal life**. Stated another way, the work Jesus performed upon **the cross** gave all who believe on Him **eternal life**.

If we could rank the most important day in the history of man, the day Jesus died upon **the cross** would have to rank first. The day He rose from the dead three days after His death on **the cross** would have to rank a very close second being equally as important. The third greatest day in any man's personal history is the day he or she believed that Jesus Christ died on **the cross** for their sins, and accept Him as their personal Saviour believing that God hath raised Him from the dead as we also noted in ROMANS 10:9 above. Victory over sin was won at **the cross**. Hundreds of songs and hymns have been written concerning **the cross**, songs like: At **the Cross**; Near **the Cross**; The Old Rugged **Cross**; Lead me to Calvary; At Calvary; Hallelujah for **the Cross**; The Banner of **the Cross**; **The Cross** is not Greater; Burdens are lifted at Calvary; Beneath **the Cross** of Jesus; and the list goes on. Also the songs of the blood reference **the cross**, songs like: There is Power in the Blood; Nothing but the Blood; Precious Blood; Saved by the Blood; and the list goes on from there too. All of this further emphasizes the fact that of that most important day when Jesus went to **the cross**, and ...*gave himself for our sins, that he might deliver us from this present evil world, according to the will of God and our Father...* GALATIANS 1:4

**The cross** is the centerpiece of redemption, and is referenced in type in many Old Testament scriptures. For example in GENESIS 3:21 we find this statement made after Adam and Eve had sinned: *Unto Adam also and to his wife did the LORD God make coats of skins, and clothed them.* Here we find the first shedding of blood in scripture for the remission of sins. Again HEBREWS 9:22 tells us that without the shedding of blood there is no remission for sins. It was the precious shed blood of Jesus on **the cross** of Calvary that was being foreshadowed here. A few verses earlier in GENESIS 3 we find the first prophesy concerning a Redeemer, who is of course Jesus. GENESIS 3:14 *And the LORD God said unto the serpent, Because thou hast done this, thou art cursed above all cattle, and above every beast of the field; upon thy belly shalt thou go, and dust shalt thou eat all the days of thy life: 15 And I will put enmity (a strong feeling of hostility and animosity) between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed; it shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel.* The serpent figures that deceiver Satan, and the woman of course is Eve, the mother of all living according to GENESIS 3:20. By "her seed" was a Redeemer to be conceived, not by man's seed. This was Christ unique manner of entrance into the world that was also being prophetically foretold. We read this later also in ISAIAH 7:14 *Therefore the Lord himself shall give you a sign; Behold, a virgin shall conceive, and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel.* In MATTHEW 1 we read the fulfillment of this prophesy. MATTHEW 1:18 *Now the birth of Jesus*

*Christ was on this wise: When as his mother Mary was espoused to Joseph, before they came together, she was found with child of the Holy Ghost. 19 Then Joseph her husband, being a just man, and not willing to make her a publick example, was minded to put her away privily. 20 But while he thought on these things, behold, the angel of the Lord appeared unto him in a dream, saying, Joseph, thou son of David, fear not to take unto thee Mary thy wife: for that which is conceived in her is of the Holy Ghost. 21 And she shall bring forth a son, and thou shalt call his name JESUS: for he shall save his people from their sins. 22 Now all this was done, that it might be fulfilled which was spoken of the Lord by the prophet, saying, 23 Behold, a virgin shall be with child, and shall bring forth a son, and they shall call his name Emmanuel, which being interpreted is, God with us.* The Apostle Paul also acknowledged that Jesus came from the seed of a woman in GALATIANS 4:4 *But when the fulness of the time was come, God sent forth his Son, made of a woman...* . We are told in GENESIS 3:15 above that the woman's Seed (who is Christ our Redeemer) shall bruise the serpent's head, while the serpent will bruise the Redeemer's heel. This happened upon **the cross** where Satan showed himself as prince of this world, able because of his power over men, to put Christ on a **cross**. But the death of Christ was really Satan's eternal defeat. Jesus said this in JOHN 12:31 *Now is the judgment of this world: now shall the prince of this world be cast out. 32 And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto me. 33 This he said, signifying what death he should die.* We know Jesus died upon **the cross** a short while later. Christ's wounding was only temporary like a heel bruise; deadly only to His physical body, but He arose from the dead three days later. The Seed of the woman provisionally bruised the devil's head at Calvary a fatal bruising, but the actual fulfillment will not come to pass until he has been cast into the lake of fire, which will occur at the end of Christ's millennial reign. We read about this in REVELATION 20:10 *And the devil that deceived them was cast into the lake of fire and brimstone, where the beast and the false prophet are, and shall be tormented day and night for ever and ever.*

In 1 CORINTHIANS 5:7 we find a statement about Christ our Passover, which in turn is a reference to the story found in EXODUS 12 concerning the Passover, and another Old Testament reference concerning **the cross**. 1 CORINTHIANS 5:7 in part says: *...For even Christ our passover is sacrificed for us.* We know that this speaks of Christ's work done on **the cross**, for that is where Jesus was sacrificed for our sins. EXODUS chapter 12 introduces the institution of the Passover, and teaches redemption by blood, and recall what we noted earlier that **the cross** is the centerpiece of redemption. EXODUS 12 is worthy of a detailed study, which we will not do here, but you can do that on our own time. We will look at a few verses from EXODUS 12 dealing with the Passover. EXODUS 12:1 *And the LORD spake unto Moses and Aaron in the land of Egypt, saying, 2 This month shall be unto you the beginning of months: it shall be the first month of the year to you. 3 Speak ye unto all the congregation of Israel, saying, In the tenth day of this month they shall take to them every man a lamb, according to the house of their fathers, a lamb for an house: 4 And if the household be too little for the lamb, let him and his neighbour next unto his house take it according to the number of the souls; every man according to his eating shall make your count for the lamb. 5 Your lamb shall be without blemish, a male of the first year: ye shall take it out from the sheep, or from the goats: 6 And ye shall keep it up until the fourteenth day of the same month: and the whole assembly of the congregation of Israel shall kill it in the evening. 7 And they shall take of the blood, and strike it on the two side posts and on the upper door post of the houses, wherein they shall eat it. ...13 And the blood shall be to you for a token upon the houses where ye are: and when I see the blood, I will pass over you, and the plague shall not be upon you to destroy you, when I smite the land of Egypt.* Thus we find where the word "Passover" originated. The killing of the lamb without blemish pointed to the death of Christ for mankind upon **the cross**. The Lord said, "When I see the blood, I will pass over you." Taking the blood and striking it on the two side posts, and upper doorpost was Israel's expression of faith. In doing this we also see a picture of **the cross**. The song writer who wrote "When I See the Blood" expressed it this way: "Christ our Redeemer died on **the cross**, Died for the sinner, paid all his due; Sprinkle your soul with the blood of the Lamb, and I will pass, will pass over you."

We mentioned earlier that **the cross** is referenced in type in many Old Testament texts, and probably one portion of Old Testament scripture that readily comes to mind is ISAIAH 53. ISAIAH 53 is one of the many word pictures we have of Christ, and as such it foretells His work upon **the cross**. ISAIAH 53:1 *Who hath believed our report? and to whom is the arm of the LORD revealed?* 2 *For he shall grow up before him as a tender plant, and as a root out of a dry ground: he hath no form nor comeliness; and when we shall see him, there is no beauty that we should desire him.* 3 *He is despised and rejected of men; a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief: and we hid as it were our faces from him; he was despised, and we esteemed him not.* 4 *Surely he hath borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows: yet we did esteem him stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted.* (All of this took place upon **the cross**.) 5 *But he was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace was upon him; and with his stripes we are healed.* (This too took place upon **the cross**.) 6 *All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way; and the LORD hath laid on him the iniquity of us all.* (God the Father laid on Him the iniquity of us all on **the cross**.) 7 *He was oppressed, and he was afflicted, yet he opened not his mouth: he is brought as a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before her shearers is dumb, so he openeth not his mouth.* 8 *He was taken from prison and from judgment: and who shall declare his generation? for he was cut off out of the land of the living: for the transgression of my people was he stricken.* (Verses 7 & 8 also reference Jesus going to **the cross**.) 9 *And he made his grave with the wicked, and with the rich in his death; because he had done no violence, neither was any deceit in his mouth.* 10 *Yet it pleased the LORD to bruise him; (at **the cross**) he hath put him to grief: (at **the cross**) when thou shalt make his soul an offering for sin, he shall see his seed, he shall prolong his days, and the pleasure of the LORD shall prosper in his hand.* 11 *He shall see of the travail of his soul, and shall be satisfied: by his knowledge shall my righteous servant justify many; for he shall bear their iniquities.* 12 *Therefore will I divide him a portion with the great, and he shall divide the spoil with the strong; because he hath poured out his soul unto death: and he was numbered with the transgressors; and he bare the sin of many, and made intercession for the transgressors.* Jesus bare the sin of many at **the cross**, poured out His soul unto death at **the cross**, and was numbered with the transgressors at **the cross**. Thus we see that much of ISAIAH 53 foretells Christ's work that would be finished upon **the cross**.

Recall also this story from NUMBERS 21. NUMBERS 21:4 *And they journeyed from mount Hor by the way of the Red sea, to compass the land of Edom: and the soul of the people was much discouraged because of the way.* 5 *And the people spake against God, and against Moses, Wherefore have ye brought us up out of Egypt to die in the wilderness? for there is no bread, neither is there any water; and our soul loatheth this light bread.* 6 *And the LORD sent fiery serpents among the people, and they bit the people; and much people of Israel died.* 7 *Therefore the people came to Moses, and said, We have sinned, for we have spoken against the LORD, and against thee; pray unto the LORD, that he take away the serpents from us. And Moses prayed for the people.* 8 *And the LORD said unto Moses, Make thee a fiery serpent, and set it upon a pole: and it shall come to pass, that every one that is bitten, when he looketh upon it, shall live.* 9 *And Moses made a serpent of brass, and put it upon a pole, and it came to pass, that if a serpent had bitten any man, when he beheld the serpent of brass, he lived.* What does this story have to do with **the cross**? Jesus referenced this event in His talk with Nicodemus in JOHN 3, and told Nicodemus this starting in verse 14 -- *And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of man be lifted up:* 15 *That whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have eternal life.* Here Jesus was likening His own hanging on **the cross** to Moses' lifting up the serpent in NUMBERS 21:9. Those who looked upon the fiery serpent received by faith a remedy for their snakebite, and did not die. The sinner who looks by faith to Christ, who died upon **the cross** being made sin for us, receives salvation from sin ...*That whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have eternal life.* Recall that we identified a number that points to ETERNAL LIFE, and that was the number twenty-eight. We noted also that the word "cross" is found twenty-eight times in scripture.

In HEBREWS 9:5 we find this statement: *And over it the cherubims of glory shadowing the mercyseat; of which we cannot now speak particularly.* Brother Copley noted that the Apostle Paul couldn't speak of the deeper truths concerning the cherubims of glory here because the Hebrew Christians he was addressing in his HEBREWS epistle "were still babes in Christ, being more, or less occupied with the types and shadows, it was not time for him to speak to them in detail concerning the cherubims." "The cherubims figure the highest grade, or rank of believers in the church." {End of quoting Brother Copley.} To understand the cherubims place we must first note their connection with the mercy seat, as the mercy seat pointed to **the cross**. We read about the mercy seat in twenty-two Old Testament scriptures, and here in HEBREWS 9:5. The first portion I want to read concerning the mercy seat is found in LEVITICUS 16. LEVITICUS 16:11 *And Aaron shall bring the bullock of the sin offering, which is for himself, and shall make an atonement for himself, and for his house, and shall kill the bullock of the sin offering which is for himself: 12 And he shall take a censer full of burning coals of fire from off the altar before the LORD, and his hands full of sweet incense beaten small, and bring it within the vail: 13 And he shall put the incense upon the fire before the LORD, that the cloud of the incense may cover the mercy seat that is upon the testimony, that he die not: 14 And he shall take of the blood of the bullock, and sprinkle it with his finger upon the mercy seat eastward; and before the mercy seat shall he sprinkle of the blood with his finger seven times. 15 Then shall he kill the goat of the sin offering, that is for the people, and bring his blood within the vail, and do with that blood as he did with the blood of the bullock, and sprinkle it upon the mercy seat, and before the mercy seat: 16 And he shall make an atonement for the holy place, because of the uncleanness of the children of Israel, and because of their transgressions in all their sins: and so shall he do for the tabernacle of the congregation, that remaineth among them in the midst of their uncleanness. 17 And there shall be no man in the tabernacle of the congregation when he goeth in to make an atonement in the holy place, until he come out, and have made an atonement for himself, and for his household, and for all the congregation of Israel.* Keep your place here in LEVITICUS 16, and go to EXODUS 26:34 *And thou shalt put the mercy seat upon the ark of the testimony in the most holy place.* Here we find the location of the mercy seat to be in the most holy place in the tabernacle in the wilderness, which we also know as the Holy of Holies. The Apostle Paul back in HEBREWS 9 further explains this Holy of Holies where we began this discussion. Here is what he wrote starting in HEBREWS 9:2 *For there was a tabernacle made; the first, wherein was the candlestick, and the table, and the shewbread; which is called the sanctuary. 3 And after the second veil, the tabernacle which is called the Holiest of all; (the most holy place referenced in EXODUS 26:34, which is the Holy of Holies) 4 Which had the golden censer, and the ark of the covenant overlaid round about with gold, wherein was the golden pot that had manna, and Aaron's rod that budded, and the tables of the covenant; 5 And over it the cherubims of glory shadowing the mercyseat; of which we cannot now speak particularly. 6 Now when these things were thus ordained, the priests went always into the first tabernacle, accomplishing the service of God. 7 But into the second went the high priest alone once every year, not without blood, which he offered for himself, and for the errors of the people.* So comparing what we read in LEVITICUS 16 with what we read here in HEBREWS 9 we find the high priest going in once a year sprinkling blood upon the mercy seat, and before the mercy seat for a sin offering, which he offered for himself, and for the transgressions and sins of the people. Move ahead to HEBREWS 10:3 & 4 where Paul continues: *But in those sacrifices there is a remembrance again made of sins every year. 4 For it is not possible that the blood of bulls and of goats should take away sins.* So the Apostle Paul continues here in HEBREWS 10 to expound upon the fact that Jesus Christ was made the final and perfect sacrifice for sins. Thus we read starting in HEBREWS 10:10 *By the which will we are sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all. 11 And every priest standeth daily ministering and offering oftentimes the same sacrifices, which can never take away sins: 12 But this man, after he had offered one sacrifice for sins for ever, sat down on the right hand of God.* So we find that the mercy seat pictures the work that Christ finished upon **the cross** where His precious blood was shed, the "one sacrifice for sins for ever."

The mercy seat is pointed forward to **the cross**, and as we saw above in EXODUS 26:34 the mercy seat was located in the most holy place, the Holy of Holies, behind the veil. EXODUS 26:33 *And thou shalt hang up the vail under the taches, that thou mayest bring in thither within the vail the ark of the testimony: and the vail shall divide unto you between the holy place and the most holy.* 34 *And thou shalt put the mercy seat upon the ark of the testimony in the most holy place.* That veil that divided the rest of the tabernacle from the Holy of Holies with no dimensions of how high it was given in it's description found in EXODUS 26:31-35. Some think it was thirty feet high, which is twenty cubits in accordance with the measure found of the curtains of linen for the tabernacle in EXODUS 26:1-6. Twenty recall is the number pointing to REDEMPTION, and Christ our Redeemer obtained eternal REDEMPTION for us upon **the cross**. HEBREWS 9:12 states it like this: *Neither by the blood of goats and calves, but by his own blood he entered in once into the holy place, having obtained eternal redemption for us.* Let's for a moment go to MATTHEW 27 and read again about this veil. MATTHEW 27 is a long chapter wherein is found Jesus death upon **the cross**. MATTHEW 27:50 & 51 says this: *Jesus, when he had cried again with a loud voice, yielded up the ghost.* 51 *And, behold, the veil of the temple was rent in twain from the top to the bottom.* . Now think about this: *the veil of the temple was rent in twain from the top to the bottom.* Only God could do this for this pictures to us how by Jesus death on **the cross** the way was now opened for us to boldly come unto the Holiest place of all, the throne of grace of the Majesty on high. Let's return to HEBREWS 10 and start reading about this in verse 19: *Having therefore, brethren, boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus,* 20 *By a new and living way, which he hath consecrated for us, through the veil, that is to say, his flesh;* 21 *And having an high priest over the house of God;* 22 *Let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience, and our bodies washed with pure water.* Previously in HEBREWS 4:14-16 Paul had written about the privilege that is ours because of Jesus death upon **the cross**, and the veil of the temple being rent in two from top to bottom, saying: *Seeing then that we have a great high priest, that is passed into the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold fast our profession.* 15 *For we have not an high priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin.* 16 *Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need.* We can boldly come unto the throne of grace, and find mercy, and grace to help in time of need because of Jesus shed His precious blood for us upon **the cross**.

Armed with this background information we are now equipped to finish the discussion Paul started in HEBREWS 9:5 concerning the mercy seat. HEBREWS 9:5 *And over it the cherubims of glory shadowing the mercyseat; of which we cannot now speak particularly.* We learned above that the mercy seat pointed to **the cross**, and we showed how this was. The cherubims of which Paul couldn't then speak particularly are a picture of the Bride of Christ. Sister Bodie wrote an excellent tract entitled "Cherubim and Seraphim" where this is explained in greater detail than we will go into here. Let's go back to EXODUS 25 and read a few verses that connect the cherubims with the mercy seat. EXODUS 25:17 *And thou shalt make a mercy seat of pure gold: two cubits and a half shall be the length thereof, and a cubit and a half the breadth thereof.* 18 *And thou shalt make two cherubims of gold, of beaten work shalt thou make them, in the two ends of the mercy seat.* 19 *And make one cherub on the one end, and the other cherub on the other end: even of the mercy seat shall ye make the cherubims on the two ends thereof.* 20 *And the cherubims shall stretch forth their wings on high, covering the mercy seat with their wings, and their faces shall look one to another; toward the mercy seat shall the faces of the cherubims be.* 21 *And thou shalt put the mercy seat above upon the ark; and in the ark thou shalt put the testimony that I shall give thee.* 22 *And there I will meet with thee, and I will commune with thee from above the mercy seat, from between the two cherubims which are upon the ark of the testimony, of all things which I will give thee in commandment unto the children of Israel.*

Let's note some things here concerning the cherubims. There were two cherub's, one on each end of the mercy seat. Two is the number of SUFFICIENT WITNESS, or SUFFICIENT

TESTIMONY. We read a little of their testimony in these verses, and one thing they had in common was that their faces looked upon the mercy seat. Jesus was the center of their constant attention. It shows in type that they were constantly looking at **the cross** where Christ shed His blood. And they are continually thankful for the finished work Christ accomplished upon **the cross**. Their faces continually looking upon the mercy seat shows that they were reverent worshippers, forever giving glory, and honor, and thanks to Him who shed His blood on **the cross**, and is now set down at the right hand of the Majesty on high! {See REVELATION 4:9.} Think about this for a moment, we are told in PHILIPPIANS 4:6 *Be careful for nothing; but in every thing by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God.* When we boldly come to the throne of grace in prayer bringing our petitions unto God in Jesus name, we are to do so with thanksgiving. A huge part of our thanksgiving should be with the thought of what Jesus did for us upon **the cross** when He died for our sins. Jesus paid the debt of our sin upon **the cross**, a fact for which all believers are truly thankful. Thank you Jesus, thank you Jesus, thank you Jesus is part of the praise of the full overcomer, whom these cherubims represent. Thank you Jesus for dying upon **the cross**, and thank you Lord for the things you bring my way in every day life so that I too can have God's best. When we *...in every thing by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God...* part of what we are being thankful for too is the answer we by faith are expecting to receive of our petitions made unto God in Jesus name. All of this thanksgiving is only made possible because of the finished work Jesus did upon **the cross**.

The cherubims are representative of those who are always *...Looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith...* HEBREWS 12:2. Note also that they had wings stretched forth on high. This shows that they were heavenly beings focused on things above, and ready to take flight in the twinkling of an eye. Paul wrote in PHILIPPIANS 3:20 *For our conversation is in heaven; from whence also we look for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ.* That word "conversation" means citizenship. In other words these cherubims are citizens of heaven, focused on things on high. These cherubims are joined to the mercy seat, which is Christ. In other words, they are also one with the mercy seat, joint-heirs with Him as it were. They are part of the mercy seat, which was made of pure gold, thus they are attached to the throne of God. Pure gold is an emblem of purity, a metal least tarnished, and speaks to us of deity (the divine nature of God), divine life, and Godly perfection. The beaten gold is representative of the suffering of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, of whom Paul said this before King Agrippa in ACTS 26:23 -- *That Christ should suffer, and that he should be the first that should rise from the dead, and should shew light unto the people, and to the Gentiles.* In HEBREWS 2:9 Paul writes again: *But we see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels for the suffering of death, crowned with glory and honour; that he by the grace of God should taste death for every man.* The joint-heirs with Christ, His bride, those that will rule and reign with Him, have learned that the only way they can be joint heirs with Him is to also suffer with Him. ROMANS 8:17 *And if children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ; if so be that we suffer with him, that we may be also glorified together. 18 For I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us. 2* TIMOTHY 3:12 *Yea, and all that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution. 2* TIMOTHY 2:12 *If we suffer, (with Him), we shall also reign with him...* . Let's examine this a little closer.

During the building of the tabernacle in the wilderness in the book of EXODUS we read in several places of workman given guidance by the Holy Spirit in all manner of workmanship. We learned that the one of the main workman on the tabernacle was Bezaleel, whose name means "in God's shade," or "in the shadow (i.e. protection) of God." Bezaleel's qualifications for making the different parts of the tabernacle are listed in EXODUS 31. EXODUS 31:1 *And the LORD spake unto Moses, saying, 2 See, I have called by name Bezaleel the son of Uri, the son of Hur, of the tribe of Judah: 3 And I have filled him with the spirit of God, in wisdom, and in understanding, and in knowledge, and in all manner of workmanship, 4 To devise cunning works, to work in gold, and in silver, and in brass, 5 And in cutting of stones, to set them, and in carving of timber, to work in all*

*manner of workmanship.* Note what Moses says of Bezaleel in EXODUS 35. EXODUS 35:30 *And Moses said unto the children of Israel, See, the LORD hath called by name Bezaleel the son of Uri, the son of Hur, of the tribe of Judah; 31 And he hath filled him with the spirit of God, in wisdom, in understanding, and in knowledge, and in all manner of workmanship; 32 And to devise curious works, to work in gold, and in silver, and in brass, 33 And in the cutting of stones, to set them, and in carving of wood, to make any manner of cunning work. 34 And he hath put in his heart that he may teach,...* . In our day who is our teacher, our guide into all the truth, the same one that filled Bezaleel with the spirit of God, in wisdom, in understanding, and in knowledge, and in all manner of workmanship? The answer of course is Holy Spirit. Recall again what Jesus taught concerning the Holy Spirit: *But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you:...* ACTS 1:8. The Holy Ghost *...shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you....* JOHN 14:26. JOHN 16:13 *Howbeit when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth: for he shall not speak of himself; but whatsoever he shall hear, that shall he speak: and he will shew you things to come. 14 He shall glorify me: for he shall receive of mine, and shall shew it unto you. 15 All things that the Father hath are mine: therefore said I, that he shall take of mine, and shall shew it unto you.* Bezaleel too is representative of the Holy Spirit. Out of a single solid piece of pure gold Bezaleel fashioned the mercy seat with a cherub on each end. This was in accordance with the instructions given of God in EXODUS 25:18 *And thou shalt make two cherubims of gold, of beaten work shalt thou make them, in the two ends of the mercy seat.* We read this again in EXODUS 37:6 *And he made the mercy seat of pure gold: two cubits and a half was the length thereof, and one cubit and a half the breadth thereof. 7 And he made two cherubims of gold, beaten out of one piece made he them, on the two ends of the mercy seat; 8 One cherub on the end on this side, and another cherub on the other end on that side: out of the mercy seat made he the cherubims on the two ends thereof. 9 And the cherubims spread out their wings on high, and covered with their wings over the mercy seat, with their faces one to another; even to the mercy seatward were the faces of the cherubims.* Note that the cherubims were made out of one piece of gold. They were made one with Christ is the picture here. It is Christ who hath made us the free heavenly beings that we are in Christ Jesus according to GALATIANS 5:1. Note again what is said in EPHESIANS 2:4-10. EPHESIANS 2:4 *But God, who is rich in mercy, for his great love wherewith he loved us, 5 Even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ, (by grace ye are saved;) 6 And hath raised us up together, and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus: 7 That in the ages to come he might shew the exceeding riches of his grace in his kindness toward us through Christ Jesus. 8 For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: 9 Not of works, lest any man should boast. 10 For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them.* We are not told how long it took Bezaleel to make that beaten work out of one piece of gold that would become the cherubims. No doubt it took countless hours, no doubt months of time of careful beating to fashion these cherubims out of one piece of gold! Truly when finished these two cherubims of gold were a priceless masterpiece to behold. How long has the Holy Ghost been working in you, perfecting in you His workmanship, His golden divine life diety? The joint-heirs with Christ, His bride, those that will rule and reign with Him, will be His golden masterpiece! Those every day test and trials are the tender careful beating workmanship of the Holy Ghost making us *...to be conformed to the image of his Son...* as is noted in ROMANS 8:29! The cherubims were a beaten piece of priceless gold fashioned into a beautiful masterpiece. Again we repeat what we noted above, that the joint-heirs with Christ, His Bride, will have learned by the careful instructions of the Holy Ghost as presented in Paul's gospel that the only way they can be joint heirs with Him is to also suffer with Him. ROMANS 8:17 *And if children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ; if so be that we suffer with him, that we may be also glorified together. 18 For I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us. 2 TIMOTHY 3:12 Yea, and all that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution. 2 TIMOTHY 2:12 If we suffer, (with Him), we shall also reign with him...* .

PHILIPPIANS 1:29 *For unto you it is given in the behalf of Christ, not only to believe on him, but also to suffer for his sake.*

We started our discussion about **the cross** in this portion of our study on HEBREWS 12:1 & 2 referencing the last twenty-eight words of HEBREWS 12:2, which says this concerning Jesus: *...who for the joy that was set before him endured **the cross**, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God.* God's plan of salvation was in place for mankind before the foundation of the world, meaning **the cross** upon which Jesus died for our sins was in God's plans from the eternities past. The Apostle Paul expressed it like this in EPHESIANS 1:3-7 -- *Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ: 4 According as he hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before him in love: 5 Having predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to himself, according to the good pleasure of his will, 6 To the praise of the glory of his grace, wherein he hath made us accepted in the beloved. 7 In whom we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace.* We noted previously that if it were possible to rank the most important day in the history of man, the day Jesus died upon **the cross** would have to rank first. The day He rose from the dead three days after His death on **the cross** would have to rank a very close second being equally as important. The third greatest day in any man's personal history is the day he or she believed that Jesus Christ died on **the cross** for their sins, and accept Him as their personal Saviour believing that God hath raised Him from the dead as we also noted in ROMANS 10:9 *That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved.* The moment an individual is born again they *...have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace.* This is all possible because Jesus died on **the cross** for our sins. So we find that **the cross** upon which Jesus died is, and was the centerpiece of redemption foreshadowed in many Old Testament scriptures, some of which we looked at earlier. Many Old Testament scriptures fore-told of the time when a Saviour would be born, and 1 JOHN 4:14 tells us: *And we have seen and do testify that the Father sent the Son to be the Saviour of the world.* Jesus came into the world, and died upon **the cross** as our Saviour. So we find that many of the Old Testament scriptures pointed to **the cross**, looking forward to the time when the Lord Jesus Christ our Saviour would come to earth, and die upon **the cross** for our sins. Some of the portions of scripture we looked at earlier from the Old Testament pointed to **the cross**, and there are many more Old Testament scriptures that we could have also referenced, but we are going to move forward in our lessons concerning **the cross** focusing now for a while on the time when Jesus was made flesh and dwelt among us, and looking primarily on some of what the gospel records said concerning **the cross**. The gospel records are MATTHEW, MARK LUKE and JOHN where our focus will be on Jesus' own teaching while here on earth about **the cross**. And before we continue any further recall that the word "**cross**" is found mentioned twenty-eight times in scripture, and twenty-eight is the number that points to **ETERNAL LIFE**. Jesus was crucified, and died on **the cross** so that we could have **eternal life**, thus the work Jesus performed upon **the cross** gave all who believe on Him **eternal life**. Jesus opened up heaven for you and me upon **the cross**! This is why the day Jesus died upon **the cross** would have to rank first in importance of all the days in the history of man.

To digress for a moment we find in scripture three points of reference concerning **the cross**. The Old Testament when referencing **the cross** looked forward to the time of Christ. The gospel records focus upon the life of Christ, and all give an account of Jesus' time here on earth, before, during, and after **the cross**. Then we have the New Testament record beyond the four gospels of MATTHEW, MARK LUKE and JOHN, which tell of things, and events going forward way beyond **the cross**. Paul's one hundred chapters of New Testament scripture tell of the joy that was set before Christ our Redeemer because of **the cross**, and the high calling that is ours because of **the cross**. Thus we find the last twenty-eight words of HEBREWS 12:2, which says this concerning Jesus: *...who for the joy that was set before him endured **the cross**, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God...* to be a forward looking statement that includes you,

and me. With this kind of perspective we should better appreciate that most important defining point in time in the history of man that centers upon **the cross** of Christ.

The first mention by Jesus of **the cross** in the gospel records is found in MATTHEW 10 where Jesus is instructing His disciples on the commitment necessary to be His disciple, and to expect great things to be suffered along life's way for His name's sake. In this process Jesus also foretells the kind of death He will face, yet in a sense it was hidden from them until Jesus was glorified. We find how these things were hidden from His disciples in a statement John wrote in JOHN 12:16, which reads: *These things understood not his disciples at the first: but when Jesus was glorified, then remembered they that these things were written of him, and that they had done these things unto him.* Here is what Jesus said concerning **the cross** to His disciples in MATTHEW 10:38, which things also His disciples understood not at the first. MATTHEW 10:38 *And he that taketh not his cross, and followeth after me, is not worthy of me.* It was the custom in the days of Jesus for criminals to be crucified in Jerusalem. The Jews had become familiar with crucifixion by means of **the cross** since the days of Antiochus Epiphanes, who was born two hundred years before Christ. The picture Jesus was painting to His disciples here in MATTHEW 10:38 was that of being willing to follow Jesus all the way to a criminals' death if necessary. Thus Jesus adds these words in MATTHEW 10:39 *He that findeth his life shall lose it: and he that loseth his life for my sake shall find it.* In these verses of MATTHEW 10 Jesus began to expose the kind of death He would die, and later in MATTHEW 16 Jesus once again went over these very same points. MATTHEW 16:21 *From that time forth began Jesus to shew unto his disciples, how that he must go unto Jerusalem, and suffer many things of the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed, and be raised again the third day. ...24 Then said Jesus unto his disciples, If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me. 25 For whosoever will save his life shall lose it: and whosoever will lose his life for my sake shall find it.* Similar accounts of this same story can be found in MARK 8:31-38, and LUKE 9:18-23. Let's read Luke's account. LUKE 9:18 *And it came to pass, as he was alone praying, his disciples were with him: and he asked them, saying, Whom say the people that I am? 19 They answering said, John the Baptist; but some say, Elias; and others say, that one of the old prophets is risen again. 20 He said unto them, But whom say ye that I am? Peter answering said, The Christ of God. 21 And he straitly charged them, and commanded them to tell no man that thing; 22 Saying, The Son of man must suffer many things, and be rejected of the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be slain, and be raised the third day. 23 And he said to them all, If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow me.*

Let's go back a few chapters to MATTHEW 12:40 where Jesus tells of where He would go after His death upon **the cross**. MATTHEW 12:40 *For as Jonas was three days and three nights in the whale's belly; so shall the Son of man be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth.*

Jesus again makes known unto His disciples the kind of death He would die in MATTHEW 20:17-19. MATTHEW 20:17 *And Jesus going up to Jerusalem took the twelve disciples apart in the way, and said unto them, 18 Behold, we go up to Jerusalem; and the Son of man shall be betrayed unto the chief priests and unto the scribes, and they shall condemn him to death, 19 And shall deliver him to the Gentiles to mock, and to scourge, and to crucify him: and the third day he shall rise again.* Though we find no mention of **the cross** in this portion, Jesus mentions here being crucified, and as we noted above the Jews had become familiar with crucifixion by means of **the cross** since the days of Antiochus Epiphanes, who was born two hundred years before Jesus. Now think about this statement in the context of what we are studying in HEBREWS 12:2 where we read this about Jesus: *...who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God.* Does it sound like the joy that was set before Him was being condemned to death, and being mocked of the Gentiles, and being scourged, and being crucified? Obviously the answer to this question no, this was not the joy that was set before Him. **The cross** was not the joy that was set before Him. The joy that was set before Him looks beyond **the cross**, so let us also note that in order for Jesus to get to this time of joy mentioned in HEBREWS 12:2, He had to endure **the cross**, and despise the shame that He would also endure

while on **the cross**. Jesus knew what He was going to face on **the cross**, yet after His death by crucifixion Jesus also knew He would three days later rise again, and some forty days later would sit down at the right hand of the throne of God. Later in this study (Lord willing) we will examine in greater detail “the joy that was set before Him.” Back here in MATTHEW 20:28 we find Jesus further telling His disciples why He was going to **the cross**: *Even as the Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many.* MARK 10:45 basically tells the same thing almost word for word, how that Jesus gave His life a ransom for many, and He did so upon **the cross**. Later in 2 TIMOTHY 2:5 & 6 Paul writes: *For there is one God, and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus; 6 Who gave himself a ransom for all, to be testified in due time.* 1 CORINTHIANS 15:15 in part says this: *...we have testified of God that he raised up Christ... .* Here Paul is telling how God raised up Christ after He died upon **the cross**.

Let’s go to JOHN 2 for our next glimpse of how Jesus told, and hinted to His disciples some things concerning His death and resurrection. There is no mention of **the cross** in this portion of scripture we are going to read, but after His death upon **the cross** His disciples recalled this event. JOHN 2:18 *Then answered the Jews and said unto him, What sign shewest thou unto us, seeing that thou doest these things? 19 Jesus answered and said unto them, Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up. 20 Then said the Jews, Forty and six years was this temple in building, and wilt thou rear it up in three days? 21 But he spake of the temple of his body. 22 When therefore he was risen from the dead, his disciples remembered that he had said this unto them; and they believed the scripture, and the word which Jesus had said.*

In JOHN 3:1-21 Jesus has His discussion with Nicodemus, that now famous Pharisee and ruler of the Jews. Jesus told Nicodemus how to get saved in this portion of scripture. In JOHN 3:3 Jesus said: *...Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God.* Again in verse 7 Jesus tells Nicodemus: *Marvel not that I said unto thee, Ye must be born again.* Now note the following words Jesus spoke to Nicodemus starting in JOHN 3:11 *Verily, verily, I say unto thee, We speak that we do know, and testify that we have seen; and ye receive not our witness. 12 If I have told you earthly things, and ye believe not, how shall ye believe, if I tell you of heavenly things? 13 And no man hath ascended up to heaven, but he that came down from heaven, even the Son of man which is in heaven. 14 And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of man be lifted up: 15 That whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have eternal life. 16 For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.* Here Jesus made a reference to **the cross** in verse 14, so let’s see how this was. We talked about this earlier in this study how that here Jesus was likening His own hanging on **the cross** to Moses’ lifting up the serpent in NUMBERS 21:9. **The cross** is the place where Jesus was “lifted up” suspended between heaven and earth, no man’s land, where He was made *...to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him...* as is noted in 2 CORINTHIANS 5:21. Those in Moses day who looked upon the fiery serpent received by faith a remedy for their snakebite, and did not die. The sinner who looks by faith to Christ, who was “lifted up” suspended between heaven and earth, and died upon **the cross** being made sin for us, receives salvation from sin *...That whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have eternal life.* Continuing with this thought of Jesus being “lifted up” on **the cross**, go to JOHN 8 for a moment. In JOHN 8:12-59 Jesus give His discourse on He being the Light of the world, and the Light of life. In JOHN 8:28 we read: *Then said Jesus unto them, When ye have lifted up the Son of man, then shall ye know that I am he, and that I do nothing of myself; but as my Father hath taught me, I speak these things.* In JOHN 12 a few short days before His death upon **the cross** Jesus continued this teaching, saying in JOHN 12:31 *Now is the judgment of this world: now shall the prince of this world be cast out. 32 And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto me. 33 This he said, signifying what death he should die.* We know Jesus died upon **the cross** a short while later. JOHN 12:34 *The people answered him, We have heard out of the law that Christ abideth for ever: and how sayest thou, The Son of man must be lifted up? who is this Son of man? 35 Then Jesus said unto them, Yet a little while is the light with you. Walk while ye have*

*the light, lest darkness come upon you: for he that walketh in darkness knoweth not whither he goeth. 36 While ye have light, believe in the light, that ye may be the children of light. These things spake Jesus, and departed, and did hide himself from them.*

In examining these verses we have come to the time that Jesus willingly went to **the cross**, and men have since coined a term that defines this time as “the passion week.” In his Bible Brother Hill made the following observation. “The passion week time was 7 to 8 days of Jesus life of 33 plus years, and yet it occupies 8 of 28 chapters of MATTHEW, almost 1/3 of MATTHEW. It occupies 3 chapters of MARK, or almost a fifth of the 16 chapters of MARK. The same time frame is covered in five and a half chapters of Luke’s 24 chapters, or almost a fifth of LUKE. JOHN uses 9 chapters of his 21 to cover the same 7 to 8 days, or stated another way, nearly one half of JOHN is devoted to the last week of Christ while here on earth. So of the 89 chapters of the gospels, twenty-five and a half chapters are concerning the last week, or a third of the record we have of Jesus 33 and 1/2 years here on earth. Thus the emphasis in scripture is not His earthly life, His birth, His sinless character, His teachings and miracles, though all are so important. The emphasis in the four gospel records is on His shed blood!” {End of quoting Brother Hill for now.} Obviously there is a lot of information provided in these twenty-five and a half chapters of the gospel records focused upon the passion week, and a lot of facts given concerning **the cross**, and quite a bit of this record deals with statements Jesus Himself made concerning His going to **the cross**, however the importance of what He said wasn’t truly realized, or fully appreciated until after His resurrection from the dead.

We will look further into what Jesus said about **the cross** during this passion week in this next portion of our study, but before we get too involved with that I want to read from some more notes Brother Hill made in his Bible concerning the time-line of the passion week so we all have a clear understanding of the events of the passion week. Brother Hill noted that the events of MATTHEW 21:1-17 occurred on Palm Sunday. Then in MATTHEW 21:18 we read: *Now in the morning...* which Brother Hill noted would be on Monday A.M. Brother Hill then wrote in his Bible: “all from here to chapter 25 is on Monday.” Then turning to MATTHEW 26:1 & 2 we read: *And it came to pass, when Jesus had finished all these sayings, he said unto his disciples, 2 Ye know that after two days is the feast of the passover, and the Son of man is betrayed to be crucified.* Here Brother Hill wrote in his Bible: “Jesus said “after two days” on Monday. ...Thus after 2 days could only mean Tuesday and Wednesday, bringing the crucifixion on Thursday.” (Here a little bit of understanding must be given. The Jews reckon a day from sunset to sunset, where as we on the Roman calendar reckon a day from midnight to midnight.) Now knowing this, Brother Hill continued in his notes: “...Thursday, which began at sunset on Wednesday, this fulfills EXODUS 12:6 where the Passover” (is explained). “At nine the next morning he was placed on **the cross**.” (End of quoting from Brother Hill’s notes.) Please study these scriptures on your own until it is clear in your mind that Jesus was crucified on Thursday, and that Passover that year was on a Thursday, which began on Wednesday evening, and continued until Thursday evening as the Jews reckon a day. 1 CORINTHIANS 5:7 in part tells us: *...For even Christ our passover is sacrificed for us:...* . Jesus was crucified on Passover, for He is our Passover. Those who believed Jesus was crucified on good Friday are falling for fake news.

To further prove that Jesus was crucified, and died on **the cross** on Thursday, let’s turn to MARK 15 where John Mark gives his Holy Spirit inspired account of the crucifixion, which you can also study further on your own. Let’s read from the moment Jesus died upon **the cross** in MARK 15:37 *And Jesus cried with a loud voice, and gave up the ghost. 38 And the veil of the temple was rent in twain from the top to the bottom. 39 And when the centurion, which stood over against him, saw that he so cried out, and gave up the ghost, he said, Truly this man was the Son of God.* Move on down to MARK 15:42 *And now when the even was come, because it was the preparation, that is, the day before the sabbath,...* . Note here that when evening was come, it was the day before the Sabbath. Again the day before the Sabbath would be reckoned by the Jews as the time between sunset Thursday night until sunset Friday night, at which time the Sabbath day would start. In

simple English the day before the Sabbath would be Friday, which to the Jews started at sunset Thursday. The Sabbath day in simple English is Saturday, which on the Jewish calendar starts at sunset Friday night, and ends at Sunset Saturday night. Drive by a Jewish synagogue some Saturday, and you will note that they are holding Sabbath day services. When do we hold church services? The day we meet that is set apart for the service of God according to New Testament doctrine is the first day of the week, which is Sunday, a separate day for worship from the rest of the week. {Study JOHN 20:19; ACTS 20:7; and 1 CORINTHIANS 16:2.} JOHN 20:1 tells us this: *The first day of the week cometh Mary Magdalene early, when it was yet dark, unto the sepulchre, and seeth the stone taken away from the sepulchre.* Now understanding all of this let's read again MARK 15:42 *And now when the even was come, because it was the preparation, that is, the day before the sabbath,... .* So once again we see that Jesus was crucified and died upon **the cross** on Thursday. JOHN 19:31 here further notes: ... *(for that sabbath day was an high day),...* a high day meaning the sabbath day nearest Passover. Reading on we find here in MARK 15:43 *Joseph of Arimathaea, an honourable counsellor, which also waited for the kingdom of God, came, and went in boldly unto Pilate, and craved the body of Jesus. 44 And Pilate marvelled if he were already dead: and calling unto him the centurion, he asked him whether he had been any while dead. 45 And when he knew it of the centurion, he gave the body to Joseph. 46 And he bought fine linen, and took him down, and wrapped him in the linen, and laid him in a sepulchre which was hewn out of a rock, and rolled a stone unto the door of the sepulchre. 47 And Mary Magdalene and Mary the mother of Joses beheld where he was laid.*

So we see that Jesus was buried before sunset Thursday. The Jews accounted a day as being any part of that day, thus Jesus would be in the grave three days, Thursday, Friday, and Saturday. And Jesus would be in the grave three nights, Thursday night, Friday night, and Saturday night. This goes right along with what Jesus Himself told his disciples early on in His ministry in MATTHEW 12:40 where Jesus tells of where He would go after His death upon **the cross**. MATTHEW 12:40 *For as Jonas was three days and three nights in the whale's belly; so shall the Son of man be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth.*

Now back to some of Jesus statements that He made concerning **the cross** during the passion week: statements He made prior to being crucified upon **the cross**. The events of JOHN 12 through JOHN 19 all occur during the passion week. We looked at what Jesus said in JOHN 12:31-36 concerning being "lifted up" on **the cross**. Let's review what happened just prior to this as told starting in JOHN 12:23. JOHN 12:23 *And Jesus answered them, saying, The hour is come, that the Son of man should be glorified. 24 Verily, verily, I say unto you, Except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abideth alone: but if it die, it bringeth forth much fruit. 25 He that loveth his life shall lose it; and he that hateth his life in this world shall keep it unto life eternal. 26 If any man serve me, let him follow me; and where I am, there shall also my servant be: if any man serve me, him will my Father honour. 27 Now is my soul troubled; and what shall I say? Father, save me from this hour: but **for this cause** came I unto this hour.* Jesus here was talking about His dying on **the cross** a few hours after this. Note again what Jesus said in verse 27 ...*what shall I say? Father, save me from this hour: but **for this cause** came I unto this hour.*

The phrase "**for this cause**" is found twenty-six times in scripture. Twenty-six we learned in our study on the meaning of Bible numbers has to do with THE GOSPEL, or GOOD NEWS, such as the GOOD NEWS found in THE GOSPEL. The GOOD NEWS Jesus was proclaiming in JOHN 12:27 was that the hour when He would die upon **the cross** for our sins was now here; ...*but **for this cause** came I unto this hour.* 1 CORINTHIANS 15:3 & 4 are two verses which pretty well sum up the GOOD NEWS of Paul's GOSPEL message, and state: *For I delivered unto you first of all that which I also received, how that Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures; 4 And that he was buried, and that he rose again the third day according to the scriptures.* It was "**for this cause**" that Jesus was born into the world, to take away the sin of the world. Paul also proclaimed in ACTS 13:38 *Be it known unto you therefore, men and brethren, that through this man is preached unto you*

*the forgiveness of sins: 39 And by him all that believe are justified from all things, from which ye could not be justified by the law of Moses. In other words “for this cause” Jesus died upon the cross.*

Jesus again used this phrase “for this cause” as He appeared before Pilate. JOHN 18:33 *Then Pilate entered into the judgment hall again, and called Jesus, and said unto him, Art thou the King of the Jews? 34 Jesus answered him, Sayest thou this thing of thyself, or did others tell it thee of me? 35 Pilate answered, Am I a Jew? Thine own nation and the chief priests have delivered thee unto me: what hast thou done? 36 Jesus answered, My kingdom is not of this world: if my kingdom were of this world, then would my servants fight, that I should not be delivered to the Jews: but now is my kingdom not from hence. 37 Pilate therefore said unto him, Art thou a king then? Jesus answered, Thou sayest that I am a king. To this end was I born, and for this cause came I into the world, that I should bear witness unto the truth. Every one that is of the truth heareth my voice. 38 Pilate saith unto him, What is truth? And when he had said this, he went out again unto the Jews, and saith unto them, I find in him no fault at all.* A few hours earlier Jesus had told His disciples in JOHN 14:6 *Jesus saith unto him, I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me.* A little while later Jesus again told His disciples in JOHN 16:7 *Nevertheless I tell you the truth: It is expedient for you that I go away: for if I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you; but if I depart, I will send him unto you.* Again we note Jesus words of JOHN 18:37 ... *To this end was I born, and for this cause came I into the world, that I should bear witness unto the truth.* Paul later wrote this statement of truth in 1 TIMOTHY 1:15 *This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners; of whom I am chief.* Again we see that “for this cause” Jesus died upon the cross.

We just pointed out that two of the twenty-six times in scripture where we find the phrase “for this cause” were statements made by Jesus during the passion week as He faced the cross. That leaves twenty-four other “for this cause” statements found elsewhere in the word of God. Five “for this cause” statements are made by the Lord Himself; four are found in the New Testament, and the very first one is found in EXODUS 9 where the Lord makes known for the first time the importance in scripture of the “for this cause” statements. Before we get to the “for this cause” statement in EXODUS 9, recall that when Moses was eighty years old the angel of the Lord appeared unto Moses in a burning bush and essentially told him that he was now to go and deliver the children of Israel from the bondage of Egypt. Moses then questions God for a couple of chapters early on in EXODUS telling God how he (Moses) couldn’t do this thing. God assured Moses that he could deliver the children of Israel from the bondage of Egypt one way, by faith in God. In EXODUS 4:10-12 we read one of Moses’ arguments as to why he could lead the children of Israel out of Egypt. EXODUS 4:10 *And Moses said unto the LORD, O my Lord, I am not eloquent, neither heretofore, nor since thou hast spoken unto thy servant: but I am slow of speech, and of a slow tongue. 11 And the LORD said unto him, Who hath made man’s mouth? or who maketh the dumb, or deaf, or the seeing, or the blind? have not I the LORD? 12 Now therefore go, and I will be with thy mouth, and teach thee what thou shalt say.* Note that one of the things emphasized to Moses by the Lord was that He created the deaf, and the blind, as well as those who could see and hear clearly. God created them this way for a cause, and God had created Moses for a cause, and God didn’t in the least care how eloquent Moses was for He was still going to use him to deliver Israel! Don’t get so wrapped up in your shortcomings that you begin to think God can’t use you for anything. Saul of Tarsus killed Christians, and yet the Lord saved this self-righteous religious man, and far apart from his self-efforts, made him the Apostle Paul! This chiefest of sinners was made the Apostle unto the Gentiles, and one of the encouragements the Holy Ghost inspired Paul to write unto us, who may feel that God can’t use us for anything, is found in PHILIPPIANS 4:13 *I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me.* This is a statement of faith by which we can all become full overcomers. “For this cause” we were given the Apostle Paul, to encourage us how to be full overcomers.

In his first meeting with Pharaoh in EXODUS 5:2 we read what Pharaoh told Moses after their first meeting: *And Pharaoh said, Who is the LORD, that I should obey his voice to let Israel go? I know not the LORD, neither will I let Israel go.* In EXODUS 9 we are going to read how the Lord told Moses to tell Pharaoh for what cause he (Pharaoh) was created. EXODUS 9:13 *And the LORD said unto Moses, Rise up early in the morning, and stand before Pharaoh, and say unto him, Thus saith the LORD God of the Hebrews, Let my people go, that they may serve me. 14 For I will at this time send all my plagues upon thine heart, and upon thy servants, and upon thy people; that thou mayest know that there is none like me in all the earth. 15 For now I will stretch out my hand, that I may smite thee and thy people with pestilence; and thou shalt be cut off from the earth. 16 And in very deed for this cause have I raised thee up, for to shew in thee my power; and that my name may be declared throughout all the earth.* The message Pharaoh was to receive was that “**for this cause**” God had raised him to the throne of Egypt to see the power of God, and that “**for this cause**” the name of the Lord God might be declared throughout all the earth, and that “**for this cause**” all the world may magnify the name of the Lord. And yes when it was all over Pharaoh did indeed know who the Lord was, and had witnessed the power of the Lord, and “**for this cause**” he did let the children of Israel go. So we should also see that to us the words “**for this cause**” are often used to highlight, or emphasize a very important point of scripture.

We mentioned earlier that there are twenty-six “**for this cause**” statements found in scripture, and so far we have looked at three of the five, which were made by the Lord Himself. Of the twenty-six “**for this cause**” statements found in scripture seventeen of them are made by the Apostle Paul to whom also was revealed the mystery of the Bride of Christ. Bridal teaching begins in GENESIS 2. In GENESIS 2:21-24 we read: *And the LORD God caused a deep sleep to fall upon Adam, and he slept: and he took one of his ribs, and closed up the flesh instead thereof; 22 And the rib, which the LORD God had taken from man, made he a woman, and brought her unto the man. 23 And Adam said, This is now bone of my bones, and flesh of my flesh: she shall be called Woman, because she was taken out of Man. 24 Therefore shall a man leave his father and his mother, and shall cleave unto his wife: and they shall be one flesh.* Within these verses we find the institution of marriage between a man and a woman. Within these verses we find the Genesis of bridal teaching, meaning hidden facts concerning the Bride of Christ, which are revealed in Paul’s gospel, and can only really be seen and fully appreciated with the guidance of the Holy Ghost. Stated another way, Jesus Christ will have a Bride, and “**for this cause**” the Holy Ghost was sent, and “**for this cause**” the Apostle Paul was given this revelation. In GENESIS 2:24 we read about a father, and a mother before any man had a father or a mother, but the teaching here went way beyond Adam and Eve in the garden. The phrase “his father and his mother” is found eight times in scripture, and one of the meanings of the number eight is BRIDE, as in the BRIDE of Christ. So again within these verses of GENESIS 2:21-24 we also are introduced to the teaching concerning about a Bride for Christ, which doctrine can only be completely understood by the power of the Holy Spirit.

The first man Adam had a wife, which was made from a small portion from the whole body of Adam, which was one of his ribs, the rib closest to his heart. Especially notice here that the woman wasn’t made from the whole man Adam, but rather only a small rib portion from the closest to Adam’s heart was taken as he slept, and made a joint-heir wife for Adam! Doctor Vicky Moots (a Grace and Glory college graduate, and a medical Doctor) notes that medically speaking, this rib from Adam from which Eve was made was Adam’s fifth rib, (a picture of GRACE), the rib closest to Adam’s heart. Note this also, that Eve was in Adam from the day Adam was formed, but she wasn’t made into the Woman, Adam’s bride, until the Lord God caused a deep sleep to fall upon Adam, and while the body of Adam was asleep, God took the one rib closest to Adams heart, and made Eve, a bride for Adam!

The Bible teaches in 1 CORINTHIANS 15:45-49 about a second man Adam, which is the Lord Jesus Christ from heaven. We are told this about the Lord Jesus Christ from heaven in COLOSSIANS 1:18 *And he is the head of the body, the church: who is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead; that in all things he might have the preeminence.* So we see that the second man

Adam, which is the Lord Jesus Christ from heaven, is the head of the body, and His body here is called “the church.” EPHESIANS 5:23 in part states that ...*Christ is the head of the church: and he is the saviour of the body.* Here is what we need to see, that the second man Adam, who is the Lord Jesus Christ from heaven will also have a Bride taken out of the sleeping body of Christ. The Apostle Paul writes in 1 THESSALONIANS 5 warning us of the church, the body of Christ, against sleep, meaning spiritual sleep. Paul is addressing “brethren,” born again believers in other words, as he writes in 1 THESSALONIANS 5:5 *Ye are all the children of light, and the children of the day: we are not of the night, nor of darkness. 6 Therefore let us not sleep, as do others; but let us watch and be sober.* Sinners are dead in trespasses and sins according to EPHESIANS 2:1, and thus are not asleep for they are dead. So we find that there are those found in the body of Christ who are asleep, and we are warned by the Apostle Paul in 1 THESSALONIANS 5:6 *Therefore let us not sleep, as do others; but let us watch and be sober.* So we see that the second man Adam, who is the Lord Jesus Christ from heaven will have a Bride made from a small rib portion company of awake and sober Saints taken out of the sleeping body of Christ.

In EPHESIANS 5:21-33 we are instructed about the institution of marriage, and in EPHESIANS 5:31-33 we are told some things concerning the mystery of the Bride of Christ, which includes a quote from GENESIS 2:24. EPHESIANS 5:31 *For this cause shall a man leave his father and mother, and shall be joined unto his wife, and they two shall be one flesh. 32 This is a great mystery: but I speak concerning Christ and the church. 33 Nevertheless let every one of you in particular so love his wife even as himself; and the wife see that she reverence her husband.* The great mystery here that most of the church, the body of Christ, and members in particular don’t understand, is that only a small rib portion of Saints from the whole body of Christ, those closest to His heart, will be made into that bridal company forever known as The Lamb’s wife. The whole church is not going to be the Bride of Christ. Jesus Christ will not marry a baby, but a fully mature full overcoming Saint from this church age. Take a close look at GENESIS 2:23 *And Adam said, This is now bone of my bones, and flesh of my flesh: she shall be called Woman, because she was taken out of Man....* and see the word “Woman,” and the word “Man” here are capitalized. This is not a mistake. The Holy Ghost wanted it recorded in scripture this way so that we could better see a little more into the depths of the marriage relationship that The Man Christ Jesus will have with His Woman, the Bride of Christ! This is the only time in the Old Testament where the word “Woman” is capitalized. Why? Because Adam and Eve are on display here a sinless couple. Their sinless condition didn’t last long however, for only a few verses later did sin enter into the world. In GENESIS 2:23 as a sinless couple Adam and Eve, the Man and his Woman, picture Christ and His Bride; The Man married to His Woman. She was joint-heir with him. Eve was an equal heir with Adam in other words. ROMANS 8:17 explains degrees of heir-ship. ROMANS 8:17 *And if children, then heirs {heirs here is the Greek word kleronomos (2818)} of God, and joint-heirs {joint-heirs is sugkleronomos (4789 in The Strong’s Greek Concordance)} with Christ; if so be that we suffer with him, that we may be also glorified together.* We see here that there are heirs, and that there are joint-heirs with Christ. A joint-heir is a fellow heir, a heir together, a heir with, or a joint participant with some other heir or heirs. In this case we are discussing joint-heirship with Jesus Christ our Lord and Saviour. HEBREWS 1:1 & 2 tells us that God has appointed Jesus Christ heir of all things. HEBREWS 1:1 *God, who at sundry times and in divers manners spake in time past unto the fathers by the prophets, 2 Hath in these last days spoken unto us by his Son, whom he hath appointed heir {kleronomos (2818)} of all things, by whom also he made the worlds.* As spoken of here “*heir of all things*” doesn’t leave out anything that is God’s. In other words a ...*joint-heir with Christ...* will be someone who shares with Christ Jesus His heirship of all things appointed to Him by God, which doesn’t leave out anything that is God’s either. This someone who shares with Christ Jesus His heirship of all things appointed to Him by God, called here in ROMANS 8:17 a ...*joint-heir with Christ...* will actually be an elite group of sugkleronomos Saints collectively known as the Bride of Christ, the full overcomers who are made one with Christ.

## NAMES OF THE HOLY GHOST IN SCRIPTURE

by Ty Robinson

(1) **The Holy Ghost** -- There are 89 scriptures which mention **the Holy Ghost** in the Bible. JOHN 14:26 *But the Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost,...* . JOHN 20:22 *And when he had said this, he breathed on them, and saith unto them, Receive ye the Holy Ghost:...* . ACTS 1:8 *But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you:...* . ACTS 19:2 *...Have ye received the Holy Ghost since ye believed?*

(2) **The Spirit** -- JOHN 1:32 *And John bare record, saying, I saw the Spirit descending from heaven like a dove, and it abode upon him.* ACTS 2:4 *And they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance.* Plus many other scriptures that reference the Holy Ghost as **The Spirit**.

(3) **Holy Spirit** -- LUKE 11:13 *If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children: how much more shall your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to them that ask him?*

(4) **Comforter** -- JOHN 14:16 *And I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you for ever;...* . JOHN 14:26 *But the Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost,...* . JOHN 15:26 *But when the Comforter is come, whom I will send unto you from the Father, even the Spirit of truth, which proceedeth from the Father, he shall testify of me:...* . JOHN 16:7 *Nevertheless I tell you the truth; It is expedient for you that I go away: for if I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you; but if I depart, I will send him unto you.*

(5) **The Spirit of Truth** -- JOHN 14:17 *Even the Spirit of truth; whom the world cannot receive, because it seeth him not, neither knoweth him: but ye know him; for he dwelleth with you, and shall be in you.* JOHN 15:26 *But when the Comforter is come, whom I will send unto you from the Father, even the Spirit of truth, which proceedeth from the Father, he shall testify of me:...* . JOHN 16:13 *Howbeit when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth: for he shall not speak of himself; but whatsoever he shall hear, that shall he speak: and he will shew you things to come.*

(6) **The Spirit of the LORD** -- (Found in thirty scriptures): JUDGES 15:14 {Samson} *...and the Spirit of the LORD came mightily upon him,...* . 1 SAMUEL 10:6 *And the Spirit of the LORD will come upon thee, and thou shalt prophesy with them, and shalt be turned into another man.* 2 SAMUEL 23:2 *The Spirit of the LORD spake by me, and his word was in my tongue.* ISAIAH 11:2 *And the spirit of the LORD shall rest upon him, the spirit of wisdom and understanding, the spirit of counsel and might, the spirit of knowledge and of the fear of the LORD...* . ISAIAH 59:19 *...When the enemy shall come in like a flood, the Spirit of the LORD shall lift up a standard against him.* ACTS 8:39 *And when they were come up out of the water, the Spirit of the Lord caught away Philip, that the eunuch saw him no more: and he went on his way rejoicing.* 2 CORINTHIANS 3:18 *But we all, with open face beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord.*

(7) **My Spirit** -- EZEKIEL 36:27 *And I will put my spirit within you,...* . JOEL 2:28 *And it shall come to pass afterward, that I will pour out my spirit upon all flesh; and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, your old men shall dream dreams, your young men shall see visions:...* . This is also quoted in ACTS 2:17.

(8) **The promise of my Father** {and similar phrases} -- LUKE 24:49 *And, behold, I send the promise of my Father upon you: but tarry ye in the city of Jerusalem, until ye be endued with power from on high.* ACTS 1:4 *...but wait for the promise of the Father, which, saith he, ye have heard of me.* ACTS 2:33 *Therefore being by the right hand of God exalted, and having received of the Father the promise of the Holy Ghost, he hath shed forth this, which ye now see and hear.*

(9) **God of peace** -- ROMANS 15:33 *Now the God of peace be with you all. Amen.* ROMANS 16:20 *And the God of peace shall bruise Satan under your feet shortly.* PHILIPPIANS 4:9 *Those things, which ye have both learned, and received, and heard, and seen in me, do: and the God of peace shall be with you.* 1 THESSALONIANS 5:23 *And the very God of peace sanctify you wholly; and I pray God your whole spirit and soul and body be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.* HEBREWS 13:20 *Now the God of peace, that brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus,...* .

Having noted some of the depth of scripture found in the “**for this cause**” statements in the Bible, let’s go back to the portion of scripture we are studying, which is found in the last twenty-eight (ETERNAL LIFE) words of HEBREWS 12:2, which says this concerning Jesus: *...who for the joy that was set before him endured **the cross**, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God.* We have been talking about that most important defining point in time in the history of man that centers upon **the cross** of Christ, and having been looking at **the cross** from three perspectives. The Old Testament when referencing **the cross** looked forward to the time of Christ. The gospel records focus upon the life of Christ, and all give an account of Jesus time here on earth, before, during, and after **the cross**. Most recently we have looked at some of the events surrounding the so-called passion week of Jesus, which involved the last seven or eight days of His life. The third perspective we have concerning **the cross** takes us further in the New Testament beyond the four gospels of MATTHEW, MARK LUKE and JOHN, and tells of things, and events going forward way beyond the time of **the cross**. The last eleven references in scripture mentioning **the cross** are all found in Paul’s gospel record where he looks back to **the cross** of Christ, expounding in his gospel record the wonderful provision that is ours because of **the cross**.

The last time Paul mentions **the cross** is right here in HEBREWS 12:2 where he highlights some of the most important elements that Jesus the Author and Finisher of our faith finished there upon **the cross**. The Old Testament worthies of faith lived before the time Christ died upon **the cross**, yet believed in the living God, and future Saviour. The New Testament worthies of faith live, and have lived after the time Christ died upon **the cross**, where according to 2 TIMOTHY 1:10 Christ abolished death. The New Testament worthies of faith, who live, and have lived since Christ died upon **the cross** have been provided some “better thing” than those Old Testament worthies of faith had. HEBREWS 11:40 *God having provided some better {more excellent} thing for us, that they without us should not be made perfect {complete or fully fulfilled}.* What “better thing” do we of this church age have offered us because of Jesus’ death upon **the cross** that the Old Testament worthies of faith didn’t have offered them? There are at least three parts to the answer to this question. The first “better {more excellent} thing” provided us potential New Testament worthies of faith is the Holy Ghost, who was sent by Jesus Christ on the day of Pentecost fifty days after His death and resurrection. Jesus told His disciples before He went to **the cross** the following concerning the Holy Ghost, who is called the Comforter in JOHN 16:7 *Nevertheless I tell you the truth; It is expedient for you that I go away: for if I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you; but if I depart, I will send him unto you.* Jesus went on to say this starting in JOHN 16:12 *I have yet many things to say unto you, but ye cannot bear them now. 13 Howbeit when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth: for he shall not speak of himself; but whatsoever he shall hear, that shall he speak: and he will shew you things to come. 14 He shall glorify me: for he shall receive of mine, and shall shew it unto you. 15 All things that the Father hath are mine: therefore said I, that he shall take of mine, and shall shew it unto you.* These should be familiar scriptures to you, but if not please notice that the Holy Ghost is our guide into all the truth, and our revealer of things to come. These are two “better thing” elements God provided for us New Testament Saints that the Old Testament Saints didn’t have because the Holy Ghost was yet sent until after Jesus Christ died upon **the cross**. Again please note that the Old Testament worthies of faith were not given the gift of the Holy Ghost like the New Testament full overcomers have been given. 2 PETER 1:21 explains: *For the prophecy came not in old time by the will of man: but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost.* Thus we see there were some from Old Testament times upon whom the Holy Ghost moved upon to give prophecy. Jesus told His disciples in JOHN 14:17 the following concerning the Holy Ghost *...Even the Spirit of truth; whom the world cannot receive, because it seeth him not, neither knoweth him: but ye know him; for he dwelleth with you, and shall be in you.* We just noted that the Holy Ghost dwelt with the Old Testament worthies of faith too, but the Holy Ghost wasn’t give to dwell in believers until the day of Pentecost, and then He the Holy Ghost was given only to the believers who would receive Him as a distinct separate gift

sent from God, whose sign and evidence was speaking in other tongues as noted in ACTS 2:4, ACTS 10:46, and ACTS 19:6.

The second “better {more excellent} thing” offered us potential New Testament worthies of faith because of Jesus’ death upon the cross that the Old Testament worthies of faith didn’t have offered them is Paul’s one hundred chapters of gospel, which was given him to fill up the word of God. COLOSSIANS 1:24-29 explains this saying: *Who now rejoice in my sufferings for you, and fill up that which is behind of the afflictions of Christ in my flesh for his body’s sake, which is the church: 25 Whereof I am made a minister, according to the dispensation of God which is given to me for you, to fulfil the word of God; 26 Even the mystery which hath been hid from ages and from generations, but now is made manifest to his saints: 27 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: 28 Whom we preach, warning every man, and teaching every man in all wisdom; that we may present every man perfect in Christ Jesus: 29 Whereunto I also labour, striving according to his working, which worketh in me mightily.* Even Paul didn’t have the whole written New Testament that we enjoy, which fully expounds the “better thing” offered unto us potential New Testament worthies of faith, but Paul was the one given us to expound these New Testament doctrines. We spent much time covering the important words Jesus spoke unto Paul on the road to Damascus on the very day he was saved. These words are found in ACTS 26:16-18, where Jesus introduces Paul, who was then known as Saul of Tarsus, to the doctrine of the “better things” he would teach. ACTS 26:16 *But rise, and stand upon thy feet: for I have appeared unto thee for this purpose, to make thee a minister and a witness both of these things which thou hast seen, and of those things in the which I will appear unto thee; 17 Delivering thee from the people, and from the Gentiles, unto whom now I send thee, 18 To open their eyes, and to turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins, and inheritance among them which are sanctified by faith that is in me.* So profound were these ninety-nine words that it took Paul more than twenty years to reveal their contents. In this one sentence Saul of Tarsus became Paul the Apostle of the Gentiles. Paul himself wrote in 1 CORINTHIANS 15:9 *For I am the least of the apostles, that am not meet to be called an apostle, because I persecuted the church of God.* In one sentence Jesus changed Saul of Tarsus, the young Jewish leader, to a teacher, a minister, and a preacher unto that lowly group collectively known as the Gentiles. Paul later wrote of that place Jesus gave him in this one sentence on the road to Damascus, stating in EPHESIANS 3:8 *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;... .* This one sentence from The Just One carried Saul of Tarsus forward on a profound earthly journey that lifted him to the loftiest of heights, the limits of which he still hasn’t seen the end of! This one sentence of powerful heavenly words changed the course of millions down through the centuries. This one sentence of Jesus put in motion a New Testament worthy of faith, who then lead and inspired thousands of others to follow Jesus as he followed Christ! This one powerful sentence spoken by the King of Kings was acted upon by the faith of Paul for more than twenty years before he could reveal the secrets of Jesus words, and when he did reveal the content of the Lord’s instructions, it was before another king! Imagine carrying within you one sentence of words so profound, that you couldn’t even speak of it for more than twenty years! How awesome is just one sentence spoken by our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ? I myself have thought long and hard about what Jesus told Paul on the road to Damascus, and I still can’t fully wrap my arms around all that He can say in just one sentence! No wonder then that Paul wrote in EPHESIANS 2:7 *That in the ages to come he might shew the exceeding riches of his grace in his kindness toward us through Christ Jesus.* Think about this too for a moment, how long did it take Jesus to change the course of the chiefest of sinners, and make him the chiefest Apostle? Just one sentence. Just one sentence exposed Saul of Tarsus to the “better thing” God provided for us New Testament worthies of faith. As you know Saul of Tarsus spent the rest of his life, as the Apostle Paul, trying to exhaust all that Jesus told him he would do in this one sentence, and it took him over thirty years of daily pursuing to get to the place where he could say: *...I have fought a good fight, I*

*have finished my course, I have kept the faith: Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give me at that day: and not to me only, but unto all them also that love his appearing... 2 TIMOTHY 4:7 & 8.*

The following points explain why we should follow the gospel of the Apostle Paul: (1) The gospel of the Apostle Paul was given to fill up (complete, to fill to the top, to fill to the full) the word of God: COLOSSIANS 1:25 *Whereof I am made a minister, according to the dispensation of God which is given to me for you, to fulfil {fill up} the word of God.* (2) The gospel of the Apostle Paul was given by the revelation of Jesus Christ: GALATIANS 1:11 *But I certify you, brethren, that the gospel which was preached of me is not after man. 12 For I neither received it of man, neither was I taught it, but by the revelation of Jesus Christ.* (3) The gospel of the Apostle Paul was given to be preached: GALATIANS 1:8 *But though we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel unto you than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed. 9 As we said before, so say I now again, If any man preach any other gospel unto you than that ye have received, let him be accursed. 1 CORINTHIANS 1:23 But we preach Christ crucified, unto the Jews a stumblingblock, and unto the Greeks foolishness. 2 CORINTHIANS 4:5 For we preach not ourselves, but Christ Jesus the Lord; and ourselves your servants for Jesus' sake. EPHESIANS 3:8 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. To those philosophers in Athens Paul ...preached unto them Jesus, and the resurrection... ACTS 17:18, which message could only be preached after Jesus death upon **the cross**. ACTS 17:13 (and many other scriptures) further informs us that Paul preached the word of God. (4) The gospel of the Apostle Paul was given to be used to lay the foundation in our lives: 1 CORINTHIANS 3:10 *According to the grace of God which is given unto me, as a wise masterbuilder, I have laid the foundation, and another buildeth thereon. But let every man take heed how he buildeth thereupon. 11 For other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ.* (5) The gospel of the Apostle Paul was given to build saints up: EPHESIANS 2:20 *And are built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner stone; 21 In whom all the building fitly framed together groweth unto an holy temple in the Lord: 22 In whom ye also are builded together for an habitation of God through the Spirit. ACTS 20:32 And now, brethren, I commend you to God, and to the word of his grace, which is able to build you up, and to give you an inheritance among all them which are sanctified. COLOSSIANS 2:6 As ye have therefore received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk ye in him: 7 Rooted and built up in him, and stablished in the faith, as ye have been taught, abounding therein with thanksgiving.* (6) The gospel of the Apostle Paul was to be used to set the church in order: 1 CORINTHIANS 11:34 *And if any man hunger, let him eat at home; that ye come not together unto condemnation. And the rest will I set in order when I come. Paul wrote in 1 CORINTHIANS 14:40 Let all things be done decently and in order. TITUS 1:5 For this cause left I thee in Crete, that thou shouldest set in order the things that are wanting, and ordain elders in every city, as I had appointed thee.* (7) The gospel of the Apostle Paul was given to establish us. ROMANS 1:11 *For I long to see you, that I may impart unto you some spiritual gift, to the end ye may be established. ROMANS 16:25 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.* (8) The gospel of the Apostle Paul was given to bring us to our inheritance: ACTS 20:32 *And now, brethren, I commend you to God, and to the word of his grace, which is able to build you up, and to give you an inheritance among all them which are sanctified. ROMANS 8:16 The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God: 17 And if children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ; if so be that we suffer with him, that we may be also glorified together. EPHESIANS 1:10 That in the dispensation of the fulness of times he might gather together in one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven, and which are on earth; even in him: 11 In whom also we have obtained an inheritance, being predestinated according to the purpose of him who worketh all things after the counsel of his own will: 12 That we should be to the praise of his glory, who first trusted in Christ. 13 In whom ye also trusted, after that ye heard the word of truth, the gospel of your**

salvation: in whom also after that ye believed, ye were sealed with that holy Spirit of promise, 14 Which is the earnest of our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession, unto the praise of his glory. ...17 That the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give unto you the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of him: 18 The eyes of your understanding being enlightened; that ye may know what is the hope of his calling, and what the riches of the glory of his inheritance in the saints. (9) The gospel of the Apostle Paul mentions that God shall judge the secrets of men by Jesus Christ: ROMANS 2:16 In the day when God shall judge the secrets of men by Jesus Christ according to my gospel. (10) The gospel of the Apostle Paul is the gospel of grace and glory: EPHESIANS 3:8 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. 2 CORINTHIANS 4:4 In whom the god of this world hath blinded the minds of them which believe not, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them. 1 TIMOTHY 1:11 According to the glorious gospel of the blessed God, which was committed to my trust. (11) The gospel of the Apostle Paul was given to tell us about the race course: Hebrews 12:1 Wherefore seeing we also are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset us, and let us run with patience the race that is set before us. 1 CORINTHIANS 9:24 Know ye not that they which run in a race run all, but one receiveth the prize? So run, that ye may obtain. (12) The gospel of the Apostle Paul was given to tell us that Christ is the prize for winning the race: PHILIPPIANS 3:8 Yea doubtless, and I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord: for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and do count them but dung, that I may win Christ. ...14 I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus. (13) The gospel of the Apostle Paul was given to show us mysteries not made known in other ages, nor are found in other scriptural records, which are: (1) the mystery of Israel's blindness, ROMANS 11:25 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. (2) the hidden mystery, ROMANS 16:25 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. 1 CORINTHIANS 2:7 But we speak the wisdom of God in a mystery, even the hidden wisdom, which God ordained before the world unto our glory. COLOSSIANS 1:26 Even the mystery which hath been hid from ages and from generations, but now is made manifest to his saints: 27 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. EPHESIANS 1:9 Having made known unto us the mystery of his will, according to his good pleasure which he hath purposed in himself: 10 That in the dispensation of the fulness of times he might gather together in one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven, and which are on earth; even in him. (3) the mystery of translation, 1 CORINTHIANS 15:51 Behold, I shew you a mystery; We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed, 52 In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump: for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed. 1 THESSALONIANS 4:15 For this we say unto you by the word of the Lord, that we which are alive and remain unto the coming of the Lord shall not prevent {or, come before, or, anticipate, or, precede} them which are asleep. 16 For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first: 17 Then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord. (4) the great mystery of the bride, which unfortunately remains a great mystery in most churches today simply because they do not have the Holy Ghost to teach them the truth, and if they do they fail to see Paul's doctrine of ranks in the resurrection mentioned in 1 CORINTHIANS 15:23 But every man in his own order: Christ the firstfruits; afterward they that are Christ's at his coming. EPHESIANS 3:1 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; 6 That the Gentiles should be fellowheirs, and of the same body, and partakers of his promise in Christ by the gospel: 7 Whereof I was made a minister, according to the gift of the grace of God given unto me by the effectual working of his power. 8 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; 9 And to make all men see what is the fellowship of the mystery, which from the beginning of the world hath been hid in God, who created all things by Jesus Christ. EPHESIANS 5:23 For the husband is the head of the wife, even as Christ is the head of the church: and he is the saviour of the body. 24 Therefore as the church is subject unto Christ, so let the wives be to their own husbands in every thing. 25 Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it; 26 That he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word, 27 That he might present it to himself a glorious church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish. 28 So ought men to love their wives as their own bodies. He that loveth his wife loveth himself. 29 For no man ever yet hated his own flesh; but nourisheth and cherisheth it, even as the Lord the church: 30 For we are members of his body, of his flesh, and of his bones. 31 For this cause shall a man leave his father and mother, and shall be joined unto his wife, and they two shall be one flesh. 32 This is a great mystery: but I speak concerning Christ and the church. (5) the mystery of Godliness, COLOSSIANS 2:2 and 1 TIMOTHY 3:16 And without controversy great is the mystery of godliness: God was manifest in the flesh, justified in the Spirit, seen of angels, preached unto the Gentiles, believed on in the world, received up into glory. (6) the mystery of iniquity, 2 THESSALONIANS 2:7 For the mystery of iniquity doth already work: only he who now letteth will let, until he be taken out of the way. And (7) the mystery of the faith, 1 TIMOTHY 3:9 Holding the mystery of the faith in a pure conscience.

Thus we see that by following Paul, and Paul's gospel, even as he followed Jesus Christ that we end up having some better {more excellent} things offered us, the potential New Testament worthies of faith, because of Jesus' death upon **the cross**; things that the Old Testament worthies of faith didn't have offered them.

The third "better {more excellent} thing" offered us potential New Testament worthies of faith because of Jesus' death upon **the cross** that the Old Testament worthies of faith didn't have offered them is the opportunity to be The Lamb's wife. This is the mystery revealed unto Paul by the Holy Ghost in EPHESIANS 3:6, which we read again above. We have discussed this before in this study, and it is a point often repeated here at Living Waters Tabernacle, but let's examine this most important "better thing" point once more starting in EPHESIANS 3:1. EPHESIANS 3:1 **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;** 6 **That the Gentiles should be fellowheirs, and of the same body, and partakers of his promise in Christ by the gospel:** 7 **Whereof I was made a minister, according to the gift of the grace of God given unto me by the effectual working of his power.** The "better thing" Paul wrote about in HEBREWS 11:40 is the mystery found in EPHESIANS 3:6 ...**That the Gentiles should be fellowheirs, and of the same body, and partakers of his promise in Christ by the gospel.** This verse has a depth to it that incorporates the other mysteries revealed unto Paul, which very few Christians ever grasp, or ever see, mainly because the vast majority of Christian pastors and teachers don't know, and haven't been properly taught what it means to be **fellowheirs** with Christ. The Kingdom Apostle didn't know this, or teach this because this was Paul's gospel message to teach, which is "the mystery of Christ" referenced in EPHESIANS 3:4. The Greek word translated "**fellowheirs**" here in EPHESIANS 3:6 is sunkleronomos, sometimes written as sugkleronomos {soong-klay-ron-om'-os}, number 4789 in The Strong's Greek Concordance, and sugkleronomos elevates the word "**fellowheirs**" to it's highest

levels. Sugkleronomos also translates to “heirs with him” in HEBREWS 11:9; “heirs together” in 1 PETER 3:7; and “**joint-heirs with Christ**” in ROMANS 8:17. All believers won’t be “**joint-heirs with Christ**” even though this provision is made for all believers during this church age. But all believers are not filled with the Holy Ghost, thus they are missing the dunamis {doo'-nam-is} power that is required to qualify as a “**joint-heirs with Christ.**” The most profound, and complete meaning of the Greek word sugkleronomos is **joint-heir**, or co-inheritor as of a wife with her husband! The Bride of Christ is the ultimate “better thing” Paul spoke of in HEBREWS 11:40 *God having provided some better thing for us, that they without us should not be made perfect.* The point being emphasized here in HEBREWS 11:40 is that God has given us everything to the end that we may be joint {soong-klay-ron-om'-os} heirs with His Son Jesus, which is a far “better thing” than was offered the Old Testament worthies of faith! Furthermore the Bride of Christ is the ultimate joy that was set before Christ as He endured **the cross**, a point noted in HEBREWS 12:2, which point we are slowing getting to.

So in summary the “better {more excellent} thing” we of this church age have offered us because of Jesus’ death upon **the cross** that the Old Testament worthies of faith didn’t have offered them is really several better things, or more excellent things because of Jesus’ death upon **the cross**. We have been given a guide, and a teacher, and an exceedingly powerful aid in the Holy Ghost, our guide to having God’s best. We have been sent a more excellent gospel message than the Old Testament worthies of faith were given, which is Paul’s gospel. And we have been presented a more excellent opportunity than was offered the Old Testament worthies of faith, which is the opportunity to be the Bride of Christ! **For this cause** Jesus came into this world. **For this cause** Jesus died upon **the cross** to take away the sin of the world. **For this cause** Jesus endured **the cross**, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God, ever making intercession for us, and patiently waiting for that moment, when in the twinkling of an eye He will catch His Bride away!!!

In these last several lessons we have attempted to show three perspectives in scripture concerning **the cross**. We have noted that the day Jesus died upon **the cross** for our sins has to rank as the most important event that has taken place since the creation of man. The day He rose from the dead three days after His death on **the cross** would have to rank a very close second being equally as important. The third greatest day in any man’s personal history is the day he or she believed that Jesus Christ died on **the cross** for their sins, and accepts Him as their personal Saviour believing that God hath raised Him from the dead. We have pointed out in our first perspective how many Old Testament scriptures foretold of the time when a Saviour would come to be offered a sacrifice for sins. The whole chapter of ISAIAH 53 is one place that spells this out, and there are many types and shadows of **the cross** found all throughout the Old Testament. Thus we noted that the Old Testament looked forward to the time when Christ our Redeemer would come. We also noted that the four gospel records found in the New Testament spend nearly a third of their pages writing about the passion week, which is the last week of Jesus life as He was brought to that time when He would die upon **the cross**. The events of Christ’s life here on earth, and His death upon **the cross**, and His resurrection, which was also noted in the four gospel records, was our second perspective of **the cross**. The third perspective we find in scripture concerning **the cross** concerns what took place after Jesus died upon **the cross**, and arose from the dead. Stated another way, our third perspective looks back to the day Jesus died upon **the cross**, and considers all the benefits that are ours because of His death upon **the cross**. The majority of this information is recorded from ACTS to REVELATION, meaning all of Paul’s gospel record that deals with **the cross**, and Jesus resurrection looks back to that most important day when Jesus died upon **the cross**. The benefits available to us of this church age are because Christ died upon **the cross**, and arose from the dead, and sent us His Holy Ghost to be our Comforter and Guide to God’s best, and now Jesus is currently sitting on the right hand of the throne of the Majesty on High, ...*who also maketh intercession for us...* ROMANS 8:34. All these benefits are because of **the cross**. The last mention of **the cross** by name in scripture is in our text that we are currently studying, which is the last twenty-eight words of HEBREWS

12:2, which focus upon Jesus by whom we have eternal life, *...who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God.* In total Paul mentions **the cross** eleven times in his epistles.

Paul notes here that Jesus *...endured the cross, despising the shame...* . Our Apostle in his expounding his gospel message unto his most devoted listeners no doubt rehearsed these very same Holy Ghost inspired words for years. Certainly Paul had discussed with Peter, and perhaps other eye-witnesses to Jesus death as to what took place that day Jesus died upon **the cross**. Paul's close followers Luke, and John Mark wrote about it, so we know Paul was very familiar the events of that day, and had been told how Jesus *...endured the cross, despising the shame...* .

Before we proceed any further let's take a closer look at these words starting with the word "**endured**." "**Endured**" comes for the Greek word *hupomeno* {hoop-om-en'-o}, number 5278 in The Strong's Greek Concordance, here in HEBREWS 12:2 meaning: to endure, bear bravely and calmly: ill treatments. *Hupomeno* is used seventeen times in scripture, and recall that seventeen is the number pointing to VICTORY IN CHRIST JESUS. *Hupomeno* translates into our English King James version of the Bible as *endure*, and it's derivatives (*endureth* and **endured**), *take patiently*, *tarry behind*, *abide*, *patient*, and *suffer*. In 2 TIMOTHY 2:12 we find the verse where *hupomeno* {hoop-om-en'-o} translates to *suffer*: *If we suffer, we shall also reign with him.* Jesus is a testimony to us of what it takes to be a full overcomer, and as such He patiently **endured** the suffering of **the cross**. Vine's Expository Dictionary of New Testament Words defines *hupomeno* {hoop-om-en'-o} as "to bear up courageously (under suffering)." The Apostle Peter under the inspiration of the Holy Ghost also wrote about this in 1 PETER 2. 1 PETER 2:20 *For what glory is it, if, when ye be buffeted for your faults, ye shall take it patiently* [*hupomeno* {hoop-om-en'-o}]? *but if, when ye do well, and suffer for it, ye take it patiently* [*hupomeno* {hoop-om-en'-o}], *this is acceptable with God.* 21 *For even hereunto were ye called: because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that ye should follow his steps:* 22 *Who did no sin, neither was guile found in his mouth:* 23 *Who, when he was reviled, reviled not again; when he suffered, he threatened not; but committed himself to him that judgeth righteously:* 24 *Who his own self bare our sins in his own body on the tree, that we, being dead to sins, should live unto righteousness: by whose stripes ye were healed.* The Cliff notes version of this is found in our text of HEBREWS 12:2 where we read again how Jesus *...endured* [*hupomeno* {hoop-om-en'-o}] **the cross, despising the shame...** . Paul uses the Greek word *hupomeno* {hoop-om-en'-o} again in HEBREWS 12:3 where he writes: *For consider him that endured* [*hupomeno* {hoop-om-en'-o}] *such contradiction of sinners against himself, lest ye be wearied and faint in your minds.* Now consider this also, we mentioned how *hupomeno* {hoop-om-en'-o} is found seventeen times in scripture, and we have now looked at four of these, but here is something else I find very interesting. *Hupomeno* is found in sixteen verses. (Don't get confused for recall we found *hupomeno* twice in 2 PETER 2:20.) So *hupomeno* is found in sixteen verses, and sixteen is the number associated with LOVE. There is a chapter in our Bible we know as the LOVE chapter, which is 1 CORINTHIANS 13 where LOVE is defined. Let's read a few verses from 1 CORINTHIANS 13:4 *Charity suffereth long, and is kind; charity envieth not; charity vaunteth not itself, is not puffed up,* 5 *Doth not behave itself unseemly, seeketh not her own, is not easily provoked, thinketh no evil;* 6 *Rejoiceth not in iniquity, but rejoiceth in the truth;* 7 *Beareth all things, believeth all things, hopeth all things, endureth* [*hupomeno* {hoop-om-en'-o}] *all things.* It was this kind of LOVE that *...endured* [*hupomeno* {hoop-om-en'-o}] **the cross, despising the shame...** . It will be this kind of divine agape LOVE that will also be found in the Bride of Christ, for she will have grown up into Him in all things. {Study EPHESIANS 4:15.} May we be the full overcoming race course runner Paul speaks of in HEBREWS 12:2 who is *...Looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith; who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God.*

Paul here points out another aspect of what Jesus overcame as He *...endured the cross...* and that is *...despising the shame...* . We think of **despising** as to look down on something with contempt, and repugnant dislike, but the thought here in HEBREWS 12:2 is a little different. The

Greek word translated “**despising**” here is *kataphroneo* {kat-af-ron-eh'-o}, number 2706 in The Strong’s Greek Concordance, which here means: “to think little or nothing of.” One translator translated this portion of HEBREWS 12:2 into these words stating that Jesus “steadily **endured the cross**, thinking nothing of its shame.” We haven’t yet covered the highlight portion of HEBREWS 12:2, which is “the joy that was set before Him.” However let’s note here that our lovely Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ had a focus as He **endured the cross**, and His focus was on things above, not on the trial here below. Thus He thought little or nothing of the shame He was **enduring** as He hung upon the cross. From our human perspective we can view the cross where Jesus died as a despising and shameful place, and in fact the cross was such a place, for our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ was shamefully disrespected there, and delivered unto the Gentiles, and mocked, and spitefully entreated, and spitted on, and scourged, and put to death there upon **the cross**. {Study LUKE 18:32 & 33.} However we need to also view **the cross** from Christ’s perspective as He hung there, *...who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame...* and *...gave himself for our sins, that he might deliver us from this present evil world, according to the will of God and our Father...* HEBREWS 12:2, and GALATIANS 1:4. Armed with this kind of perspective we can now best appreciate how Jesus *...endured the cross, despising the shame...* .

What we are witnessing with these words of how Jesus *...endured the cross, despising the shame...* is His full overcoming love, which is the same kind of love that all the full overcomers found in the Bride of Christ will also possess. Recall that there are eight writers of New Testament scripture, all inspired to write what they did by the Holy Ghost, and they all wrote of the love of Jesus, expressing in many different ways His love. These words of Paul in HEBREWS 12:2 of how Jesus *...endured the cross, despising the shame...* is another way of showing Christ’s divine love in action. We asked this question earlier in this study: are we manifesting in our lives the very same love of God that was found in Christ? It will be that kind of love that will also be found in the Bride of Christ! Think about it as we consider the following. Paul wrote in ROMANS 5:6 *For when we were yet without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly*. Let’s pause her for a moment and recall that while Jesus was being crucified that they mocked Him, and smote Him, and blindfolded Him, and they struck him on the face, and spoke blasphemously against Him, yet He loved them that treated Him so badly for *...Christ died for the ungodly*. {Study LUKE 22:63-69.} Again Jesus *...endured* {*hupomeno* (hoop-om-en'-o) “to bear up courageously (under suffering)”} **the cross, despising** {*kataphroneo* (kat-af-ron-eh'-o)} “to think little or nothing of”} **the shame...** because He loved us. Again we read above in 1 PETER 2:21-23 that *...Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that ye should follow his steps: 22 Who did no sin, neither was guile found in his mouth: 23 Who, when he was reviled, reviled not again; when he suffered, he threatened not; but committed himself to him that judgeth righteously*. This was full overcoming love in action! Now let’s read again ROMANS 5:6 *For when we were yet without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly. 7 For scarcely for a righteous man will one die: yet peradventure for a good man some would even dare to die. 8 But God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us*. This too was full overcoming love in action! Notice the word “commendeth” here in ROMANS 5:8. “Commendeth” comes from the Greek words: *sunistao* *soon-is-tah'-o*, *sunistano* *soon-is-tan'-o*, or *sunistemi* *soon-is'-tay-mee*, all of which are number 4921 in The Strong’s Greek Concordance. This word is found sixteen times in New Testament scripture, and again sixteen is the number associated with LOVE. So ROMANS 5:8 really doubly expresses that God loved us, and “commendeth” *...his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us*. The word “commendeth” here means: to introduce favorably the exhibit, and the exhibit here is Jesus Christ, who is the definition of God’s love. What does JOHN 3:16 tell us? *For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life*. EPHESIANS 2:4-9 explains God’s love like this: *But God, who is rich in mercy, for his great love wherewith he loved us, 5 Even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ, (by grace ye are saved;) 6 And hath raised us up together, and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus: 7 That in the ages to come he might shew the exceeding riches of*

*his grace in his kindness toward us through Christ Jesus. 8 For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: 9 Not of works, lest any man should boast.* Again we are reminded of Paul's words found in 1 TIMOTHY 1:15 *This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptation, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners...* . And 1 JOHN 3:16 states: *Hereby perceive we the love of God, because he laid down his life for us: and we ought to lay down our lives for the brethren.* This is full overcoming love. Recall what Jesus told His disciples in JOHN 13:34 *A new commandment I give unto you, That ye love one another; as I have loved you, that ye also love one another. 35 By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another.* That ye **love one another** is repeated thirteen times in New Testament scripture. So to sum this thought up, the full overcomer will have manifest in their lives the very same love of God that was found in Christ, who loved us while we were yet sinners, and courageously displayed under suffering His love, giving little regard to the shame of the cross as He tasted death for every man according to HEBREWS 2:9. We cannot die for every man, nor is that our calling, but we are encouraged to **love one another**, and that does not mean just our family or friends. The New Testament full overcomer has living in them the Spirit of Christ, as well as Holy Ghost by whose power we can overcome those who despitefully use us, and be like Stephen, who being full of the Holy Ghost, and focused on things above said with his dying breath as he was being stoned to death: "Lord, lay not this sin to their charge" ACTS 7:60. Obviously Stephen **loved one another**, and obviously Stephen *...when he was reviled, reviled not again; when he suffered, he threatened not; but committed himself to him that judgeth righteously...* as is noted in 1 PETER 2:23. As race course runners we are encouraged **love one another**, and to be *...Looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith; who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God...* HEBREWS 12:2.

Again we note that our Apostle in his expounding his gospel message unto his most devoted listeners no doubt rehearsed these very same Holy Ghost inspired words for years of how that Jesus *...endured the cross, despising the shame...* and as we discussed above Jesus...*endured* {hupomeno (hoop-om-en'-o) "to bear up courageously (under suffering)"} *the cross, despising* {kataphroneo (kat-af-ron-eh'-o)} "to think little or nothing of"} *the shame...* because He loved us, and also instructed us to **love one another**. When we as racecourse runners are looking unto Jesus, we see Jesus in everything, and we can properly **love one another** seeing each other through the eyes of Christ, thus in so doing He can manifest His love in our lives.

By this point in our study of HEBREWS 12:1 & 2 we should all be very familiar with these eighty words: *Wherefore seeing we also are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset us, and let us run with patience the race that is set before us, Looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith; who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God.* These words are written to us, the potential New Testament worthies of faith from this yet present church age, who will qualify to be in the Bride of Christ. We *...are compassed about...* with the memory of those Old Testament worthies of faith referenced in HEBREWS 11 whose manner of life, and faith in God we are given as examples, and witnesses, and testimonies to follow; examples to us of what a full overcomer is. Where was their focus? HEBREWS 11:13 tells us that: *These all died in faith, not having received the promises, but having seen them afar off, and were persuaded of them, and embraced them, and confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth.* Simply put, the Old Testament worthies of faith had a heavenly focus, and seen in the distant future beyond their lifetime the day when the kingdom of the Lord Jesus Christ eternal, immortal, invisible, would be established forever, and He the only Potentate, the King of Kings, and Lord of Lords would reign forever! What the Old Testament full overcomers didn't see is the Lord Jesus Christ having a queen, and His queen, the Lamb's wife, will rule and reign with Him as a joint-heir with Christ, which fact is only taught in Paul's gospel. HEBREWS 11:39 *And these all, having obtained a good report through faith, received not the promise: 40 God having provided some better thing for us, that they without us should not be made perfect* {complete or fully fulfilled}. We talked

about three aspects of the “better thing,” or better things provided us by God that the Old Testament worthies of faith didn’t have offered them. The first “better {more excellent} thing” provided us potential New Testament worthies of faith is the Holy Ghost, who was sent by Jesus Christ on the day of Pentecost fifty days after His death and resurrection. The second “better {more excellent} thing” given us potential New Testament worthies of faith is Paul’s gospel, and what he wrote in HEBREWS 11 & 12 is part of Paul’s gospel message, which was given us as part of the word of God to build us up, and to give us an inheritance among all them which are sanctified by faith in God. The third “better {more excellent} thing” given us potential New Testament worthies of faith that the Old Testament worthies of faith didn’t have offered them is the opportunity to be The Lamb’s wife, who hath made herself ready as noted in REVELATION 19:7. The Bride of Christ is not going to be the whole church, but a rib portion of Saints taken out of the sleeping church, and we have discussed this at length in prior lessons previously in this study.

We have also previously noted that the umbrella that hangs over the eighty-words of HEBREWS 12:1 & 2 is faith, actually full overcoming faith, and the encouragement of faith we find in HEBREWS 12:1 & 2 is directed toward the New Testament worthies of faith from this church age, who will qualify to be in the Bride of Christ. We are encouraged in HEBREWS 12:1 to (1) *...let us lay aside every weight, and...* (2) *...the sin which doth so easily beset us...* and to (3) be a race course runner, running *...with patience the race that is set before us*. In HEBREWS 12:2 we find where the focus of a New Testament full overcomer must be: (4) *Looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith*. In order to be the successful racecourse winner, we must be focused upon winning the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus, who is Jesus. This is why Paul encourages us to be *...Looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith*. From the day Paul got saved on the road to Damascus he saw Jesus in everything, and in all aspects of his life. Our Apostle Paul then went on to be our example of a racecourse running winner, who expressed in 2 TIMOTHY 4:7 *I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith*. Stated another way Paul fought a good fight by faith, he finished his course by faith, and he kept the faith, and he did so because he saw Jesus first in everything, and put Jesus first in all aspects of his life. All racecourse winners will have this kind of focus too for they will be found to have been *... Looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of...* their faith. It is interesting to also note that we find the word “faith” thirty-two times in HEBREWS. Thirty-two is the number associated with a COVENANT. A COVENANT by definition is an agreement between two parties, most commonly used in scripture as an agreement between God and man, with or without conditions attached. A COVENANT is a contract, if you will. There is such a thing a COVENANT of marriage, and the Bride of Christ will be a New Testament worthy of faith, who will be found to be *...Looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of...* her faith.

Encouraging us to be full overcomers of faith, Paul also wrote in HEBREWS 2:9 about where our focus should be: *But we see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels for the suffering of death, crowned with glory and honour; that he by the grace of God should taste death for every man*. Here again we see another reference to Jesus enduring the cross, and despising the shame, *...who was made a little lower than the angels for the suffering of death, crowned with glory and honour; that he by the grace of God should taste death for every man*. These words also define the love of God, as do the words of the next verse: HEBREWS 2:10 *For it became him, for whom are all things, and by whom are all things, in bringing many sons unto glory, to make the captain of their salvation perfect through sufferings*. The Greek word translated “suffering” in verse 9, and “sufferings” here in verse 10 is *pathema* {*path'-ay-mah*}, number 3804 in The Strong’s Greek Concordance. We find *pathema* used sixteen times in New Testament scripture, and recall sixteen is the number associated with LOVE. We also find *pathema* in ROMANS 8:18 *For I reckon that the sufferings (pathema) of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us*. The reference here is to *sugkleronomos* (4789 in The Strong’s Greek Concordance) *...joint-heirs with Christ...* Bridal Saints found mentioned in the previous verse: ROMANS 8:17 *And if children, then heirs; heirs of God, and (sugkleronomos) joint-heirs with*

*Christ; if so be that we suffer with him, that we may be also glorified together. 18 For I reckon that the sufferings (pathema) of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us.* Behold, what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the (sugkleronomos) joint-heirs with Christ, (paraphrasing 1 JOHN 3:1 with ROMANS 8:17).

We have spent considerable time discussing some thoughts from HEBREWS 12:2, which again reads: *Looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith; who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God.* Our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ is the focus of HEBREWS 12:2, and we have also been discussing how that full overcoming faith is the overshadowing umbrella that hangs over the eighty-words of HEBREWS 12:1 & 2, and the encouragement of faith we find in HEBREWS 12:1 & 2 is directed toward the New Testament worthies of faith from this church age, who will qualify to be in the Bride of Christ. So what do we see when we are looking unto Jesus through our eyes of faith? Our Apostle Paul paints a wonderful picture of Christ for us to view that is quite different from the other gospel records. Paul himself met Jesus Christ on the road to Damascus as the glorified risen Saviour, and he spent his hundred chapters of New Testament scripture giving us who believe a heavenly perspective of what he saw, and what he was taught by the revelation of Jesus Christ. {Study GALATIANS 1:12 and ACTS 26:16.} We just read in ROMANS 8:18 about *...the glory which shall be revealed in us.* Here Paul's focus was from a heavenly scene. Paul wanted us to view things as citizens of heaven; view things from a heavenly perspective in other words. What we read here in HEBREWS 12:2 is written to those of heavenly perspective. The reason we can have such a lofty view is because Jesus died for our sins upon the cross. All our heavenly benefits are because Jesus left His throne in glory, and came humbly into this world, taking upon him the form of a servant, and loving us so much He went to the cross, and washed us from our sins in his own blood as He died there, and God raised him from the dead, and set Him at his own right hand in glory again. Praise the Lord *...That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved...* ROMANS 10:9. Note as you read, and study Paul's epistles that when he mentions the cross, he doesn't leave Jesus hanging there, nor does he dwell of the cruel crucifixion of Christ without quickly referencing the fact that Jesus is currently sitting down at the right hand of the Majesty on High *...who also maketh intercession for us...* ROMANS 8:34. Look at the picture Paul paints of Christ and the cross in PHILIPPIANS 2. PHILIPPIANS 2:5 *Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus: 6 Who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God: 7 But made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men: 8 And being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross. 9 Wherefore God also hath highly exalted him, and given him a name which is above every name: 10 That at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth; 11 And that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.* The portrait of Christ we find here in HEBREWS 12:2 shows an upward looking Saviour as He went to the cross with a joy that was set before Him a great part of His focus, and a seat at the right hand of God awaiting Him.

So what do we view when looking unto Jesus through our eyes of faith? We should see our lovely Lord as our soon coming Bridegroom, the ultimate full overcomer, who overcame all things by full overcoming faith because He is indeed the Author and Finisher of faith! Jesus Christ the Author and Finisher of faith overcame the world, Satan, death, and the grave, and is now alive for ever more sitting down with God the Father in His throne as is also noted in REVELATION 3:21. REVELATION 3:21 *To him that overcometh will I grant to sit with me in my throne, even as I also overcame, and am set down with my Father in his throne.* Jesus overcame it all by His finished work upon the cross: *...who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God...* HEBREWS 12:2. These words define full overcoming faith! When Paul penned these words he wanted us to see that as Jesus went

through His greatest trial of all, the cross, that His focus remained fixed upon things above, and beyond His brief lifetime here on earth! By faith the Author and Finisher of faith conquered it all. Paul's gospel teaches that by faith we too can rule and reign with Christ. Paul tells us in ROMANS 1:17 that *...The just shall live by faith.* ROMANS 10:17 further states: *So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.* Paul writes in 1 CORINTHIANS 2:5 *That your faith should not stand in the wisdom of men, but in the power of God.*

Thank God too for the mighty hand of Jesus, whose hand by faith we hold as He the Author and Finisher of faith leads us through life's journey. Perhaps you have all heard one of the many versions of the poem "Footprints in the Sand." This poem expresses a thought about walking with the Lord, and reads:

One night I dreamed a dream.  
As I was walking along the beach with my Lord.  
Across the dark sky flashed scenes from my life.  
For each scene, I noticed two sets of footprints in the sand,  
One belonging to me and one to my Lord.

After the last scene of my life flashed before me,  
I looked back at the footprints in the sand.  
I noticed that at many times along the path of my life,  
especially at the very lowest and saddest times,  
there was only one set of footprints.

This really troubled me, so I asked the Lord about it.  
"Lord, you said once I decided to follow you,  
You'd walk with me all the way.  
But I noticed that during the saddest and most troublesome times of my life,  
there was only one set of footprints.  
I don't understand why, when I needed You the most, You would leave me."

He whispered, "My precious child, I love you and will never leave you  
Never, ever, during your trials and testings.  
When you saw only one set of footprints,  
It was then that I carried you."

What endless power we find in the hands of Jesus, for in His hands is forgiveness of sins, power over disease, power over the grave, power over death, power over Satan, and power over all defeating obstacles, including Red Seas, and flooding Jordan's! We are told in GENESIS 5:22 and 24 that Enoch walked with God. In other words by faith Enoch held the mighty hand of the Lord. We have discussed this before, how that in HEBREWS 11:5 & 6 we find another example of full overcoming faith that was manifest in Enoch's life. HEBREWS 11:5 *By faith Enoch was translated that he should not see death; and was not found, because God had translated him: for before his translation he had this testimony, that he pleased God.* 6 *But without faith it is impossible to please him: (God) for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him.* This is the testimony of all full overcomers. How many times have you read or heard these verses? Do you believe these words? Enoch believed these words before they were ever written in Paul's gospel, and Enoch also knew the facts of what Paul wrote in 2 CORINTHIANS 5:7 *For we walk by faith, not by sight.* Paul wrote for a second time in GALATIANS 3:11 the same thing he wrote in ROMANS 1:17 that *...The just shall live by faith.* And he wrote this one more time in HEBREWS 10:38 *Now the just shall live by faith...* . When is **now**? **Now** isn't yesterday, and **now** isn't tomorrow if the Lord should tarry until then. **Now** is **now**, and *...Now the just shall live by*

*faith.* Paul adds this to his definition of faith in HEBREWS 11:1 *Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen.* Stated another way, faith is not sight. Faith believes God for the unseen miracle. And ROMANS 14:23 adds this point concerning faith, stating in part: *...for whatsoever is not of faith is sin.* These eight words point the way for the full overcomer. HEBREWS 12:1 & 2 is eighty words of STRENGTH from God addressing the New Testament worthies of faith: *Wherefore seeing we also are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset us, and let us run with patience the race that is set before us, 2 Looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith; who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God.*

We will now turn our attention to a fact that Paul mentions eight times in his epistles, which is that Jesus is currently sitting the **right hand** of God, the Majesty on high. Here are the eight scriptures: ROMANS 8:34 *Who is he that condemneth? It is Christ that died, yea rather, that is risen again, who is even at the **right hand** of God, who also maketh intercession for us.* EPHESIANS 1:20 *Which he wrought in Christ, when he raised him from the dead, and set him at his own **right hand** in the heavenly places.* COLOSSIANS 3:1 *If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the **right hand** of God.* The last five are found in HEBREWS. HEBREWS 1:3 *Who being the brightness of his glory, and the express image of his person, and upholding all things by the word of his power, when he had by himself purged our sins, sat down on the **right hand** of the Majesty on high.* HEBREWS 1:13 *But to which of the angels said he at any time, Sit on my **right hand**, until I make thine enemies thy footstool?* HEBREWS 8:1 *Now of the things which we have spoken this is the sum: We have such a high priest, who is set on the **right hand** of the throne of the Majesty in the heavens.* HEBREWS 10:12 *But this man, after he had offered one sacrifice for sins for ever, sat down on the **right hand** of God.* HEBREWS 12:2 *Looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith; who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the **right hand** of the throne of God.*

Paul was first impressed with this thought that Jesus is currently at the **right hand of God** by Stephen in ACTS 7, so let's review Stephen's testimony. Stephen's testimony starts in ACTS 6 where we read that in Jerusalem the disciples was multiplied, and the twelve Apostles were overwhelmed with their ministry duties, and need some relief in these matters. So the twelve Apostles in ACTS 6 had seven men of honest report, who also were full of the Holy Ghost, chosen to help out in this daily ministrations. It appears by their names that these seven men chosen to aid in this ministry were also Grecians. Stephen was the prominent one among them. Stephen is a Greek name. Here is how this is recorded in ACTS 6. ACTS 6:3 *Wherefore, brethren, look ye out among you seven men of honest report, full of the Holy Ghost and wisdom, whom we may appoint over this business. 4 But we will give ourselves continually to prayer, and to the ministry of the word. 5 And the saying pleased the whole multitude: and they chose Stephen, a man full of faith and of the Holy Ghost, and Philip, and Prochorus, and Nicanor, and Timon, and Parmenas, and Nicolas a proselyte of Antioch: 6 Whom they set before the apostles: and when they had prayed, they laid their hands on them. 7 And the word of God increased; and the number of the disciples multiplied in Jerusalem greatly; and a great company of the priests were obedient to the faith.* Of these seven men we only read about Stephen and Philip more than once. The story of Stephen is recorded mainly in ACTS 6 and 7. The story of Philip is recorded in ACTS 6, ACTS 8, and ACTS 21. Stephen is mentioned by name in seven scriptures, all in ACTS. Seven is the number of SPIRITUAL COMPLETION or SPIRITUAL PERFECTION, which status Stephen attained unto. Stephen's name means: "a crown," or "crowned." Stephen is an example to us of a full overcomer, yet not necessarily a New Testament full overcomer in the sense that he was not offered a place in the Bride of Christ. The bridal message hadn't been preached when Stephen died, for Paul's gospel wasn't revealed yet when Stephen died. Stephen was not an Old Testament Saint either, but rather was part of those Saints who lived during the transition time between the dispensation of the law, and the present grace age,

also called the church age in which we are still living. HEBREWS 11 tells us essentially that a full overcomer is one who puts their faith wholly in God, trusting Him for seemingly impossible things. Stephen too was this kind of man. We find in ACTS 6:5 that Stephen is noted to be *...a man full of faith and of the Holy Ghost*. ACTS 6:8 records this of Stephen: *And Stephen, full of faith and power, did great wonders and miracles among the people*. So note that Stephen was a man full of faith, and full of the Holy Ghost, qualities that will also be found in all New Testament full overcomers.

Stephen was brought before the Jewish Sanhedrin council because of his high profile of being *...full of faith and power...* and doing *...great wonders and miracles among the people*. ACTS 6:9-15 records how this came about. ACTS 6:9 *Then there arose certain of the synagogue, which is called the synagogue of the Libertines, and Cyrenians, and Alexandrians, and of them of Cilicia and of Asia, disputing with Stephen. 10 And they were not able to resist the wisdom and the spirit by which he spake. 11 Then they suborned men, which said, We have heard him speak blasphemous words against Moses, and against God. 12 And they stirred up the people, and the elders, and the scribes, and came upon him, and caught him, and brought him to the council, 13 And set up false witnesses, which said, This man ceaseth not to speak blasphemous words against this holy place, and the law: 14 For we have heard him say, that this Jesus of Nazareth shall destroy this place, and shall change the customs which Moses delivered us. 15 And all that sat in the council, looking stedfastly on him, saw his face as it had been the face of an angel.*

Let's don't pass over these important words of ACTS 6:15 lightly: *And all that sat in the council, looking stedfastly on him, saw his face as it had been the face of an angel*. Have you ever wondered what the Jewish Sanhedrin council saw in the face of Stephen to have these words recorded for us in scripture: *...all that sat in the council, looking stedfastly on him, saw his face as it had been the face of an angel....* ? Would you know the face of an angel if you saw one? This is quite a description, isn't it? Here's a couple of thoughts that may enlighten our understanding. This same Jewish Sanhedrin council had most of these same members in it when Jesus stood before them back in MATTHEW 26 from which we will read a portion in a moment. Do you suppose His face, being the Son of God, may have appeared different unto them? In other words Jesus demeanor didn't show fear, but rather expressed the peace, and the love of God in a most trying situation. No doubt the council members marveled within as they witnessed Jesus countenance before them. Here is what we are told in MATTHEW 26 of when Jesus was brought before the Sanhedrin council. MATTHEW 26:59 *Now the chief priests, and elders, and all the council, sought false witness against Jesus, to put him to death; 60 But found none: yea, though many false witnesses came, yet found they none. At the last came two false witnesses, 61 And said, This fellow said, I am able to destroy the temple of God, and to build it in three days. 62 And the high priest arose, and said unto him, Answerest thou nothing? what is it which these witness against thee? 63 But Jesus held his peace. And the high priest answered and said unto him, I adjure thee by the living God, that thou tell us whether thou be the Christ, the Son of God. 64 Jesus saith unto him, Thou hast said: nevertheless I say unto you, Hereafter shall ye see the Son of man sitting on **the right hand of power**, and coming in the clouds of heaven.* Now here in ACTS 6:15 Stephen stood before them, and in his face they saw the same thing they witnessed in the face of Jesus. They saw a man full of the Holy Ghost, whose spiritual eyes were fixed on things above. They saw a man whose demeanor didn't show fear, but rather expressed the peace of God, and the love of God in a most trying situation, just like they saw in Jesus. On author notes "that the angelic brightness on Stephen's face might be intended to alarm the judges, for it is possible for a countenance full of spiritual grace to be awful and terrible to those who are full of hate." What ever they saw in Stephen's face, the glow of the love of God, and the calmness of the peace of God, and a heart full of grace, and the Holy Ghost, shined unto them, and kind of haunted them like the face of an angel would.

Let's review some background information about this Sanhedrin council so we can properly view their mindset as Stephen stood before them. Recall that this very same Sanhedrin council before whom Jesus stood in MATTHEW 26, which we read above, had a track record of not believing Jesus, and not believing in Jesus resurrection. They even went to great lengths to try and

disprove the fact that Jesus is risen from the dead, and is currently sitting at the **right hand of the Majesty on High**. We read about this in MATTHEW 27 & 28 in the following verses. MATTHEW 27:62 *Now the next day, that followed the day of the preparation, the chief priests and Pharisees came together unto Pilate, 63 Saying, Sir, we remember that that deceiver said, while he was yet alive, After three days I will rise again. 64 Command therefore that the sepulchre be made sure until the third day, lest his disciples come by night, and steal him away, and say unto the people, He is risen from the dead: so the last error shall be worse than the first. 65 Pilate said unto them, Ye have a watch: go your way, make it as sure as ye can. 66 So they went, and made the sepulchre sure, sealing the stone, and setting a watch.* Their watch did not prevent Jesus from rising from the dead as you are well aware, for on the third day Jesus rose again. Let's read the account of this starting in MATTHEW 28:6 *He is not here: for he is risen, as he said. Come, see the place where the Lord lay. 7 And go quickly, and tell his disciples that he is risen from the dead; and, behold, he goeth before you into Galilee; there shall ye see him: lo, I have told you. 8 And they departed quickly from the sepulchre with fear and great joy; and did run to bring his disciples word. 9 And as they went to tell his disciples, behold, Jesus met them, saying, All hail. And they came and held him by the feet, and worshipped him. 10 Then said Jesus unto them, Be not afraid: go tell my brethren that they go into Galilee, and there shall they see me. 11 Now when they were going, behold, some of the watch came into the city, and shewed unto the chief priests all the things that were done. 12 And when they were assembled with the elders, and had taken counsel, they gave large money unto the soldiers, 13 Saying, Say ye, His disciples came by night, and stole him away while we slept. 14 And if this come to the governor's ears, we will persuade him, and secure you. 15 So they took the money, and did as they were taught: and this saying is commonly reported among the Jews until this day.*

Some fifty days later on the day of Pentecost those in the upper room we filled with the Holy Ghost, and Peter preached his first Holy Ghost inspired sermon. Here is part of what he said: ACTS 2:22 *Ye men of Israel, hear these words; Jesus of Nazareth, a man approved of God among you by miracles and wonders and signs, which God did by him in the midst of you, as ye yourselves also know: 23 Him, being delivered by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God, ye have taken, and by wicked hands have crucified and slain: 24 Whom God hath raised up, having loosed the pains of death: because it was not possible that he should be holden of it. ...32 This Jesus hath God raised up, whereof we all are witnesses. 33 Therefore being by the right hand of God exalted, and having received of the Father the promise of the Holy Ghost, he hath shed forth this, which ye now see and hear. 34 For David is not ascended into the heavens: but he saith himself, The LORD said unto my Lord, Sit thou on my right hand, 35 Until I make thy foes thy footstool. 36 Therefore let all the house of Israel know assuredly, that God hath made that same Jesus, whom ye have crucified, both Lord and Christ.*

We are currently studying the last part of HEBREWS 12:2. HEBREWS 12:2 *Looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith; who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God.* We mentioned earlier that Paul was first impressed with the thought that Jesus is currently at the **right hand of God** by Stephen in ACTS 7 as Stephen gave his Holy Ghost inspired sermon before the Sanhedrin council, which was the very same council Jesus was brought before in MATTHEW 26, which we also looked at above. We are going to review some facts about the Jewish Sanhedrin council before we continue examining our thoughts about Stephen.

The Jewish Sanhedrin is never called by this name in scripture. The Sanhedrin is thought to have originated in the third century before Christ, and was the recognized headship of the Jewish people in the days of Christ and the Apostles. The Jewish Sanhedrin council had power to judge Jewish matters, but were supposedly powerless to decide between life and death. JOHN 18:31 records their words spoken unto Pilate: *...It is not lawful for us to put any man to death.* Life and death judgments were the responsibility of the Roman governor. Scripture records several instances of where Christians were brought before this Jewish Sanhedrin council, and in most instances they

received unjust treatment. This Sanhedrin council consisted of Scribes, Pharisees, Sadducees, priests and elders, and numbered somewhere between 70 and 72 men. In the Sanhedrin council it was the usual custom to have one High Priest named as its president. During a Sanhedrin council vote, one of the Scribes would keep a register of the votes for acquittal, while another Scribe would register the votes of condemnation. They tried cases of idolatry and false prophets. Their authority only extended over the Jews. We find the Sanhedrin mentioned as council in twenty different New Testament scriptures. In scripture we find the Sanhedrin council against Jesus in MATTHEW 26:59; MARK 14:55 and 15:1; LUKE 22:66; and JOHN 11:47. We find the Sanhedrin council against Peter and John in ACTS 4:15; 5:21; 5:27; 5:34; and 5:41, which we will read about shortly. We find the Jewish Sanhedrin council against Stephen in ACTS 6:12 and 15, and Stephen's sermon of ACTS 7 was addressed specifically to those of the Sanhedrin council, whom Stephen respectfully addressed. Later in time we find the Sanhedrin council against the Apostle Paul in ACTS 22:30; 23:1-10; 23:15; 23:20; 23:28; and 24:20.

The Sadducees were part of the Sanhedrin council, and are thought to have originated about the same time as the Pharisees, which was the 3rd century B.C. The Sadducees doctrine was that the soul and body perish together. They did not believe in angels nor did they believe in the resurrection. ACTS 23:8 summarizes their doctrine this way: *For the Sadducees say that there is no resurrection, neither angel, nor spirit: but the Pharisees confess both.* This doctrine had few followers, but those that were of this sect were also of the highest rank in Jewish society for they were very wealthy and influential. They believed parts of the written law of Moses, but only the parts that agreed with their doctrine, and they denied the oral law of Moses, which the Scribes and Pharisees passed on from one generation to another. They were a priestly clique, but at the same time avowedly irreligious, and most certainly worldly minded. Because of their wealth they controlled the Sanhedrin. Those of Jesus day were most familiar with the Sadducees, who were flourishing at that time, but faded off the scene within a hundred years of the time of Christ. Jesus addressed them in His infinite wisdom in MATTHEW 22, where the Sadducees asked Him a hypothetical question concerning the resurrection, which we now know they didn't believe in either. In Jesus answer to them Jesus assures them of the fact of resurrection, and of the fact of the existence of angels, thus silencing them, for a time. MATTHEW 22:23 *The same day came to him the Sadducees, which say that there is no resurrection, and asked him, 24 Saying, Master, Moses said, If a man die, having no children, his brother shall marry his wife, and raise up seed unto his brother. 25 Now there were with us seven brethren: and the first, when he had married a wife, deceased, and, having no issue, left his wife unto his brother: 26 Likewise the second also, and the third, unto the seventh. 27 And last of all the woman died also. 28 Therefore in the resurrection whose wife shall she be of the seven? for they all had her. 29 Jesus answered and said unto them, Ye do err, not knowing the scriptures, nor the power of God. 30 For in the resurrection they neither marry, nor are given in marriage, but are as the angels of God in heaven. 31 But as touching the resurrection of the dead, have ye not read that which was spoken unto you by God, (in EXODUS 3:6) saying, 32 I am the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob? God is not the God of the dead, but of the living. 33 And when the multitude heard this, they were astonished at his doctrine.* MARK 12 and LUKE 20 also record the same story. So as we move forward keep in mind that the Sadducees didn't believe in angels, or the resurrection, and the Pharisee's did.

The Pharisee's also were part of the Sanhedrin council. The word Pharisee comes from an Aramaic word meaning "separated." This means that the Pharisee chose a manner of life different from the general Jewish public. They stood for the strict rigid observances of the letter and forms of the law of Moses. The Pharisee's were a society of men zealous for religion, who were further resolved not to eat any unclean thing, choosing rather to die, than they might not be defiled. In choosing this kind of separated life style they felt like they were on a higher plane than everyone else. The Pharisee sought for distinction and praise of men for their perceived rituals and so called good works. Josephus notes that there were a little more than 6000 Pharisee's. Josephus also noted

that the Pharisee lived frugally, like the Stoics, and hence had so much weight with the multitude that if they said ought against the king or the high priest it was immediately believed.

Jesus also noted the action of the Pharisees especially in MATTHEW 23. MATTHEW 23:1 *Then spake Jesus to the multitude, and to his disciples, 2 Saying, The scribes and the Pharisees sit in Moses' seat: (or they speak with the authority of Moses) 3 All therefore whatsoever they bid you observe, that observe and do; but do not ye after their works: for they say, and do not. 4 For they bind heavy burdens and grievous to be borne, and lay them on men's shoulders; but they themselves will not move them with one of their fingers. 5 But all their works they do for to be seen of men: they make broad their phylacteries, (phylacteries were small strips of parchment on which were written the following passages of the law of Moses, EXODUS 13:1-16; DEUTERONOMY 6:4-9, 11:13-21, and which, enclosed in small cases, they were accustomed when engaged in prayer to wear fastened by a leather strap to the forehead and to the left arm over against the heart, in order that they might thus be solemnly reminded of the duty of keeping the commands of God in the head and in the heart, according to the directions given in EXODUS 13:16, DEUTERONOMY 6:8, 11:18, which speaks of frontlets between the eyes. These scrolls were thought to have the power, like a charm, to avert various evils and to drive away demons. The Pharisees were accustomed to widen, make broad, their phylacteries, that they might render them more conspicuous and show themselves to be more eager than the majority to be reminded of the law of God.) and enlarge the borders of their garments, 6 And love the uppermost rooms at feasts, and the chief seats in the synagogues, 7 And greetings in the markets, and to be called of men, Rabbi, Rabbi. (Teacher, Teacher) 8 But be not ye called Rabbi: for one is your Master, even Christ; and all ye are brethren. 9 And call no man your father upon the earth: for one is your Father, which is in heaven. 10 Neither be ye called masters: for one is your Master, even Christ. 11 But he that is greatest among you shall be your servant. 12 And whosoever shall exalt himself shall be abased; and he that shall humble himself shall be exalted. 13 But woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye shut up the kingdom of heaven against men: for ye neither go in yourselves, neither suffer ye them that are entering to go in. 14 Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye devour widows' houses, and for a pretence make long prayer: therefore ye shall receive the greater damnation. 15 Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye compass sea and land to make one proselyte, (convert) and when he is made, ye make him twofold more the child of hell than yourselves. 16 Woe unto you, ye blind guides, which say, Whosoever shall swear by the temple, it is nothing; but whosoever shall swear by the gold of the temple, he is a debtor! 17 Ye fools and blind: for whether is greater, the gold, or the temple that sanctifieth the gold? 18 And, Whosoever shall swear by the altar, it is nothing; but whosoever sweareth by the gift that is upon it, he is guilty. 19 Ye fools and blind: for whether is greater, the gift, or the altar that sanctifieth the gift? 20 Whoso therefore shall swear by the altar, sweareth by it, and by all things thereon. 21 And whoso shall swear by the temple, sweareth by it, and by him that dwelleth therein. 22 And he that shall swear by heaven, sweareth by the throne of God, and by him that sitteth thereon. 23 Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye pay tithe of mint and anise and cummin, (all small seeds) and have omitted the weightier matters of the law, judgment, mercy, and faith: these ought ye to have done, and not to leave the other undone. 24 Ye blind guides, which strain at a gnat, and swallow a camel. 25 Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye make clean the outside of the cup and of the platter, but within they are full of extortion and excess. 26 Thou blind Pharisee, cleanse first that which is within the cup and platter, that the outside of them may be clean also. 27 Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye are like unto whited sepulchres, (white washed tombs) which indeed appear beautiful outward, but are within full of dead men's bones, and of all uncleanness. 28 Even so ye also outwardly appear righteous unto men, but within ye are full of hypocrisy and iniquity. 29 Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! because ye build the tombs of the prophets, and garnish the sepulchres of the righteous, 30 And say, If we had been in the days of our fathers, we would not have been partakers with them in the blood of the prophets. 31 Wherefore ye be witnesses unto yourselves, that ye are the children of them which killed the prophets. 32 Fill ye up then the*

*measure of your fathers. 33 Ye serpents, ye generation of vipers, how can ye escape the damnation of hell? 34 Wherefore, behold, I send unto you prophets, and wise men, and scribes: and some of them ye shall kill and crucify; and some of them shall ye scourge in your synagogues, and persecute them from city to city: 35 That upon you may come all the righteous blood shed upon the earth, from the blood of righteous Abel unto the blood of Zacharias son of Barachias, whom ye slew between the temple and the altar. 36 Verily I say unto you, All these things shall come upon this generation. 37 O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, thou that killest the prophets, and stonest them which are sent unto thee, how often would I have gathered thy children together, even as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, and ye would not! 38 Behold, your house is left unto you desolate. 39 For I say unto you, Ye shall not see me henceforth, till ye shall say, Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord.*

After reading Jesus rebuke of the Pharisees in MATTHEW 23, it seems most remarkable that any of the Pharisee's ever got saved, but some did! Paul was proud to be a Pharisee, and the son of a Pharisee before he got saved! God so loved the world that He sent His only begotten Son Christ Jesus into the world to save sinners, even to save the chiefest of sinners, whom Paul called himself in 1 TIMOTHY 1:15; and that former proud self-righteous Pharisee became the chief Apostle sent unto us poor Gentiles to preach unto us the forgiveness of sins, and tell about the unsearchable riches of God in Christ Jesus, and the opportunity that is ours to inherit all things, and reign with Christ as His sugkleronomos joint-heir! *He raiseth up the poor out of the dust, and lifteth up the beggar from the dunghill, to set them among princes, and to make them inherit the throne of glory:...* Hannah acknowledged in 1 SAMUEL 2:8, and our Apostle Paul taught us the same truth. EPHESIANS 2:4 *But God, who is rich in mercy, for his great love wherewith he loved us, 5 Even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ, (by grace ye are saved;) 6 And hath raised us up together, and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus: 7 That in the ages to come he might shew the exceeding riches of his grace in his kindness toward us through Christ Jesus. 8 For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God. 2 CORINTHIANS 9:15 Thanks be unto God for his unspeakable gift.* Thank God that He saved a young Pharisee, and an associate of the Sanhedrin council named Saul of Tarsus, for Saul of Tarsus became our Apostle Paul, who we are to follow to the loftiest of heights. It was our Apostle Paul who wrote in COLOSSIANS 3:1 *If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God.*

Think of all of the Scribes and Pharisees in scripture, and the Sanhedrin council, whose members closely followed the law, and you won't find one example from them where they manifest the love of God. There was no love of God manifest in these believers of the law. There was only murder and hate in their zealous hearts. Jesus told the Scribes and Pharisee's in MATTHEW 23:34 & 35 -- *Wherefore, behold, I send unto you prophets, and wise men, and scribes: and some of them ye shall kill and crucify; and some of them shall ye scourge in your synagogues, and persecute them from city to city: 35 That upon you may come all the righteous blood shed upon the earth, from the blood of righteous Abel unto the blood of Zacharias son of Barachias, whom ye slew between the temple and the altar.* The Greatest Prophet that these same Scribe's and Pharisee's soon there after killed was Jesus. And Stephen, just before he himself was murdered by the Sanhedrin council, said this unto them in ACTS 7:51 *Ye stiffnecked and uncircumcised in heart and ears, ye do always resist the Holy Ghost: as your fathers did, so do ye. 52 Which of the prophets have not your fathers persecuted? and they have slain them which shewed before of the coming of the Just One; of whom ye have been now the betrayers and murderers: 53 Who have received the law by the disposition of angels, and have not kept it.* Murder was in their hearts, not the love of God, not the grace of God, not the mercy of God. Think of all the legalists out there in the world today, and notice in their life the lack of God's love manifest in their lives. 1 JOHN 4:8 *He that loveth not knoweth not God; for God is love. ...10 Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins. ...16 And we have known and believed the love that God hath to us. God is love; and he that dwelleth in love dwelleth in God, and God in him.*

We now will turn our attention to the actions of the Sanhedrin council with the Apostles at Jerusalem as is recorded in ACTS 3 through 5. In ACTS 3 the lame man was healed by the faith of Peter and John, and Peter preached his second impromptu Holy Ghost inspired sermon on the steps of the temple in Jerusalem. Here is part of what Peter said starting in ACTS 3:13 *The God of Abraham, and of Isaac, and of Jacob, the God of our fathers, hath glorified his Son Jesus; whom ye delivered up, and denied him in the presence of Pilate, when he was determined to let him go. 14 But ye denied the Holy One and the Just, and desired a murderer to be granted unto you; 15 And killed the Prince of life, whom God hath raised from the dead; whereof we are witnesses. 16 And his name through faith in his name hath made this man strong, whom ye see and know: yea, the faith which is by him hath given him this perfect soundness in the presence of you all. 17 And now, brethren, I wot (I know) that through ignorance ye did it, as did also your rulers. 18 But those things, which God before had shewed by the mouth of all his prophets, that Christ should suffer, he hath so fulfilled. ...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.*

The Sanhedrin council was not at all pleased with the action of the Apostles, and we read of this in ACTS 4. ACTS 4:1 *And as they spake unto the people, the priests, and the captain of the temple, and the Sadducees, came upon them, 2 Being grieved that they taught the people, and preached through Jesus the resurrection from the dead. (Recall that the Sadducees didn't believe in the resurrection.) 3 And they laid hands on them, and put them in hold unto the next day: for it was now eventide. Verse 4 tells the result of Peter's preaching ...4 Howbeit many of them which heard the word believed; and the number of the men was about five thousand. So we see that the Sanhedrin council could not, and did not stop the mighty working power of the Holy Ghost, who added about five thousand souls to the kingdom of heaven that day! ACTS 4:5 *And it came to pass on the morrow, that their rulers, and elders, and scribes, 6 And Annas the high priest, and Caiaphas, and John, and Alexander, and as many as were of the kindred of the high priest, were gathered together at Jerusalem. 7 And when they had set them in the midst, they asked, By what power, or by what name, have ye done this? 8 Then Peter, filled with the Holy Ghost, said unto them, Ye rulers of the people, and elders of Israel, 9 If we this day be examined of the good deed done to the impotent man, by what means he is made whole; 10 Be it known unto you all, and to all the people of Israel, that by the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, whom ye crucified, whom God raised from the dead, even by him doth this man stand here before you whole. 11 This is the stone which was set at nought of you builders, which is become the head of the corner. 12 Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved.**

Before we read any further make at note that the reason salvation in the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth was rejected by these Sanhedrin rulers, was because they didn't believe that He was the Messiah, their Saviour. They were looking to their following the works of the law of Moses for their salvation. They didn't understand the love of God, or the grace of God, nor did they believe about the salvation of God through Jesus Christ. Then we read in ACTS 4:13 *Now when they saw the boldness of Peter and John, and perceived that they were unlearned and ignorant men, they marvelled; and they took knowledge of them, that they had been with Jesus. 14 And beholding the man which was healed standing with them, they could say nothing against it. 15 But when they had commanded them to go aside out of the council, they conferred among themselves, 16 Saying, What shall we do to these men? for that indeed a notable miracle hath been done by them is manifest to all them that dwell in Jerusalem; and we cannot deny it. 17 But that it spread no further among the people, let us straitly threaten them, that they speak henceforth to no man in this name. 18 And they called them, and commanded them not to speak at all nor teach in the name of Jesus. 19 But Peter and John answered and said unto them, Whether it be right in the sight of God to hearken unto you more than unto God, judge ye. 20 For we cannot but speak the things which we have seen and heard.*

In ACTS 5 we read how the word of the Lords greatly increased there at Jerusalem right under the nose of the Sanhedrin council. ACTS 5:12 *And by the hands of the apostles were many signs and wonders wrought among the people; (and they were all with one accord in Solomon's porch. 13 And of the rest durst no man join himself to them: but the people magnified them. 14 And believers were the more added to the Lord, multitudes both of men and women.) 15 Insomuch that they brought forth the sick into the streets, and laid them on beds and couches, that at the least the shadow of Peter passing by might overshadow some of them. 16 There came also a multitude out of the cities round about unto Jerusalem, bringing sick folks, and them which were vexed with unclean spirits: and they were healed every one.*

Next we read how this went over with the Sanhedrin council. ACTS 5:17 *Then the high priest rose up, and all they that were with him, (which is the sect of the Sadducees,) and were filled with indignation, 18 And laid their hands on the apostles, and put them in the common prison. 19 But the angel of the Lord by night opened the prison doors, and brought them forth, and said, 20 Go, stand and speak in the temple to the people all the words of this life. 21 And when they (the Apostles) heard that, they entered into the temple early in the morning, and taught. But the high priest came, and they that were with him, and called the council together, and all the senate of the children of Israel, and sent to the prison to have them brought. 22 But when the officers came, and found them not in the prison, they returned, and told, 23 Saying, The prison truly found we shut with all safety, and the keepers standing without before the doors: but when we had opened, we found no man within. 24 Now when the high priest and the captain of the temple and the chief priests heard these things, they doubted of them whereunto this would grow. 25 Then came one and told them, saying, Behold, the men whom ye put in prison are standing in the temple, and teaching the people. 26 Then went the captain with the officers, and brought them without violence: for they feared the people, lest they should have been stoned. 27 And when they had brought them, they set them before the council: and the high priest asked them, 28 Saying, Did not we straitly command you that ye should not teach in this name? and, behold, ye have filled Jerusalem with your doctrine, and intend to bring this man's blood upon us. 29 Then Peter and the other apostles answered and said, We ought to obey God rather than men. 30 The God of our fathers raised up Jesus, whom ye slew and hanged on a tree. 31 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. 32 And we are his witnesses of these things; and so is also the Holy Ghost, whom God hath given to them that obey him. 33 When they heard that, they were cut to the heart, and took counsel to slay them. The Jewish Sanhedrin council had Jesus crucified, and wished to now kill the Apostles here in ACTS 5, but they were persuaded by a master Pharisee named Gamaliel not to do so, and we read some of his words in ACTS 5:38 *And now I say unto you, Refrain from these men, and let them alone: for if this counsel or this work be of men, it will come to nought: 39 But if it be of God, ye cannot overthrow it; lest haply ye be found even to fight against God. 40 And to him they agreed: and when they had called the apostles, and beaten them, they commanded that they should not speak in the name of Jesus, and let them go. 41 And they departed from the presence of the council, rejoicing that they were counted worthy to suffer shame for his name. 42 And daily in the temple, and in every house, they ceased not to teach and preach Jesus Christ.**

Next came the events of ACTS 6 where the word of God increased even more, and the disciples were multiplied, and the seven full of the Holy Ghost were chosen to help in the ever increasing ministry. Note what is stated in ACTS 6:7 *And the word of God increased; and the number of the disciples multiplied in Jerusalem greatly; and a great company of the priests were obedient to the faith.* How do you think the Sanhedrin council reacted to a great company of the priests becoming believers? This did not sit well with them, and then we read of the events recorded in ACTS 6:8 *And Stephen, full of faith and power, did great wonders and miracles among the people.* We looked at this earlier in ACTS 6:9-15 how that Stephen was brought before the Jewish Sanhedrin council because of his high profile of being ... *full of faith and power,...* and doing ... *great wonders and miracles among the people.* ACTS 6:9 *Then there arose certain of the synagogue,*

*which is called the synagogue of the Libertines, and Cyrenians, and Alexandrians, and of them of Cilicia and of Asia, disputing with Stephen. 10 And they were not able to resist the wisdom and the spirit by which he spake. 11 Then they suborned men, which said, We have heard him speak blasphemous words against Moses, and against God. 12 And they stirred up the people, and the elders, and the scribes, and came upon him, and caught him, and brought him to the council, 13 And set up false witnesses, which said, This man ceaseth not to speak blasphemous words against this holy place, and the law: 14 For we have heard him say, that this Jesus of Nazareth shall destroy this place, and shall change the customs which Moses delivered us. 15 And all that sat in the council, looking stedfastly on him, saw his face as it had been the face of an angel.* Stephen was basically arrested by the same Sanhedrin Council that Jesus was brought before, and that the Apostles were twice brought before, and now Stephen was given an opportunity to speak unto the Jewish Sanhedrin Council. Stephen's words are found as his sermon before the Sanhedrin Council in ACTS 7. As we proceed keep in mind that the mindset of the Sanhedrin Council was now to slay those who preached Jesus. ACTS 7 also records Stephen's last words, for in fact the 7<sup>th</sup> chapter of ACTS are Stephen's last words.

The words of Stephen's sermon of ACTS 7 are very powerful because this sermon was Holy Ghost inspired. This sermon was an impromptu sermon too. Now think in your own mind how many actual sermons are recorded in scripture. Not that many really. DEUTERONOMY was Moses last words spoken unto the children of Israel, so perhaps it could be thought of as a sermon. MATTHEW 5, 6, and 7 records Jesus Sermon on the Mount. ACTS 2 records Peter's first sermon, ACTS 3 his second, and ACTS 10 records Peter's sermon at the house of Cornelius. Very few complete sermons of Paul are recorded in scripture, however in ACTS 13 we find Paul's sermon that he preached in Antioch in Pisidia, and when we studied that portion of scripture we noted that this was a pattern sermon, the kind of what he first preached in synagogues in all the cities he visited. The interesting thing about the sermon Paul preached in ACTS 13 in Antioch in Pisidia is that it was similar to what Stephen preached before the Jewish Sanhedrin council in ACTS 7. And a young man named Saul of Tarsus heard Stephen's sermon, and so powerful was this sermon that Stephen's words pricked Saul of Tarsus' heart, and conscience. Years later Saul of Tarsus, who was then known as the Apostle Paul, told Luke the words of Stephen's sermon, and Luke recorded them for us to read in ACTS 7. The words of Stephen's sermon were that powerful that they could be remembered word-for-word years later!

We read earlier in ACTS 6:11 of the false words spoken against Stephen: *...We have heard him speak blasphemous words against Moses, and against God.* Then as Stephen stood before this assembly of the Jewish Sanhedrin council with the look of an angel about him we read in ACTS 7:1 *Then said the high priest, Are these things so?* The council wanted to hear from Stephen's own mouth him speak blasphemous words against Moses, and against God, and against this holy place meaning the temple, and against the law of Moses. This was the Jewish Sanhedrin council's mind set against Stephen. So Stephen answers these charges under the power and inspiration of the Holy Ghost with words quick and powerful, and sharper than any twoedged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow; words that got right down to the thoughts and intents of the heart of this Jewish Sanhedrin council, {see HEBREWS 4:12}. Without notes Stephen began his address by politely addressing the council, and quickly acknowledging "the God of glory." ACTS 7:2 states Stephen's words like this: *And he said, Men, brethren, and fathers, hearken; The God of glory appeared unto our father Abraham, when he was in Mesopotamia, before he dwelt in Charran,...*

We first see here Stephen respectfully addressing this Jewish Sanhedrin council. Then we find Stephen using the most reverent words to describe God, calling Him "The God of glory." In his sermon Stephen calls God, "God" seventeen times, seventeen being the number that points to VICTORY IN CHRIST JESUS. Stephen calls God, "the Lord" five times (GRACE), and he calls God "the most High" one time, not to mention the many references to God in this sermon using the words, "he," "my," and "I." So we see that not once did Stephen use blasphemous words against

God, which we also knew he wouldn't, nor didn't do. He also mentions Jesus "the Just One" once. (The translation of "Jesus" in ACTS 7:45 references Joshua.) Even though Stephen was called before the Sanhedrin council to defend himself, we do not find Stephen mentioning himself at all until verse 56, at which point in time he was done with his sermon. So we see that the focus of Stephen's sermon was mainly upon God, and what He had done for the children of Israel back to the days of Abraham, and how their fathers and grandfathers, had constantly failed to recognize God's hand in their lives, and how they had continuously failed to trust God, and put their faith in Him. There were exceptions to Israel's general unbelief in examples of some famous men of faith, whose lives Stephen also points out in his sermon. Men of faith such as Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, and Joseph, and Moses, and Joshua, and David are highlighted in Stephen's sermon. Interestingly these very same men are listed as heroes of faith many years later in the letter Paul writes unto the HEBREWS. Whoever would have thought that some of the inspiration for HEBREWS 11 came from Stephen's sermon, but perhaps it did. In my own mind I imagine that there was never a day that went by when the Apostle Paul didn't think of the words of Stephen's sermon. So powerful was this sermon that we still read it today. So powerful was this sermon that it pricked the heart of old Saul of Tarsus, no doubt causing him many sleepless nights pondering it's haunting truth. So powerful was this sermon that some twenty five to thirty years later Paul was still able to quote it word for word to Luke who left us this record we read in ACTS 7. The impact of Stephen's sermon reaches down to us today. How so you may ask? Would we have Paul's gospel message without Stephen? We must recognize and acknowledge that the words the Holy Ghost gave Stephen to say unto the Sanhedrin council pricked the heart and conscience of Saul of Tarsus as we noted above, so much so that when Jesus arrested Saul of Tarsus on the road to Damascus He told him *...I am Jesus whom thou persecutest: it is hard for thee to kick against the pricks...* ACTS 9:5. Knowing that these words of Jesus were indeed the truth, Saul of Tarsus immediately answers in faith believing *...Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?* (ACTS 9:6). The same story is told by the Apostle Paul in ACTS 26, and the short version of what Jesus told Saul of Tarsus that day is that Jesus was going to make him the Apostle unto the Gentiles! The impact of Stephen's sermon pricked the heart and conscience of Saul of Tarsus causing him to accept Jesus as his personal Saviour the moment Jesus arrested him on the road to Damascus, and as a result Saul of Tarsus was sent forth by Jesus unto the Gentiles to be the Apostle unto the Gentiles, and this Saul of Tarsus became our Apostle Paul. This is how Stephen's sermon impacted us! It wasn't Stephen who accomplished this, it was the power of the Holy Ghost who accomplished this, and it is acknowledged twice in scripture that Stephen was a man full of faith, and full of the Holy Ghost. Study ACTS 6:5 and ACTS 6:8.

The short version of Stephen's Holy Ghost inspired sermon in ACTS 7 is this; he reviewed the history of the children of Israel from Abraham to Moses to David and Solomon. The Holy Ghost had Stephen mention the angel of the Lord three times, which no doubt further infuriated the Sadducees of the Sanhedrin council, for they didn't believe in angels. Stephen mentions the angel of the Lord, or references him in ACTS 7:30; 7:35; 7:38, and in ACTS 7:53, which we will read in a moment. Stephen's sermon concludes with these words: ACTS 7:47 *But Solomon built him an house. 48 Howbeit the most High dwelleth not in temples made with hands; as saith the prophet, 49 Heaven is my throne, and earth is my footstool: what house will ye build me? saith the Lord: or what is the place of my rest? 50 Hath not my hand made all these things? 51 Ye stiffnecked and uncircumcised in heart and ears, ye do always resist the Holy Ghost: as your fathers did, so do ye. 52 Which of the prophets have not your fathers persecuted? and they have slain them which shewed before of the coming of the **Just One**; of whom ye have been now the betrayers and murderers: 53 Who have received the law by the disposition of angels, and have not kept it.* The **Just One** is a reference to Jesus, one of His many titles found only twice in scripture. The second time we find Jesus called the **Just One** is in ACTS 22 where Paul gives his testimony of when he got saved, and getting prayed for three days later by Ananias of Damascus. ACTS 22:12 *And one Ananias, a devout man according to the law, having a good report of all the Jews which dwelt there, 13 Came unto me, and stood, and said unto me, Brother Saul, receive thy sight. And the same hour I looked up upon*

him. 14 And he said, The God of our fathers hath chosen thee, that thou shouldest know his will, and see that **Just One**, and shouldest hear the voice of his mouth. Imagine Paul as he heard Ananias of Damascus telling him about the very same **Just One** Stephen had spoken of. Do you think Ananias' words were Holy Ghost inspired too? Obviously yes! Certainly the mention of the **Just One** took Paul back to Stephen's sermon. Stephen's sermon ended with the words we read above from ACTS 7:51 *Ye stiffnecked and uncircumcised in heart and ears, ye do always resist the Holy Ghost: as your fathers did, so do ye. 52 Which of the prophets have not your fathers persecuted? and they have slain them which shewed before of the coming of the Just One; of whom ye have been now the betrayers and murderers: 53 Who have received the law by the disposition of angels, and have not kept it.*

Keep in mind Stephen was being extremely respectful as he addressed this Sanhedrin council. And he was a man full of faith and full of the Holy Ghost inspired to say what he said by the Holy Ghost. With that in mind let's look at the carefully chosen word "**stiffnecked**" Stephen was inspired by the Holy Ghost to use in his closing statements to the Sanhedrin council. ACTS 7:51 *Ye stiffnecked and uncircumcised in heart and ears, ye do always resist the Holy Ghost: as your fathers did, so do ye.* Stephen was quoting Old Testament scripture from EXODUS, DEUTERONOMY, and 2 CHRONICLES in using the word "**stiffnecked**." "**Stiffnecked**" is a metaphor originally taken from stubborn or unruly oxen who could not be broken into the yoke, and whose stroke necks could not be bended unto the right or left. Members of the Sanhedrin council would have been very familiar with the meaning behind "**stiffnecked**." "**Stiffnecked**" means: stubborn, headstrong, obstinate, hard hearted, and difficult just to mention a few of the stronger words defining "**stiffnecked**." On your own study the whole chapter of ISAIAH 48 for a better explanation of "**stiffnecked**," and there in verse 4 you will read these words of the Lord spoken unto Israel: *Because I knew that thou art obstinate, and thy neck is an iron sinew, and thy brow brass.* This defines "**stiffnecked**." In total we find the word "**stiffnecked**" nine times in scripture, nine being the number that points to FINALITY or DIVINE COMPLETENESS. All nine references to "**stiffnecked**" in scripture point to the children of Israel. The first mention of "**stiffnecked**" is in EXODUS 32. By the time of EXODUS 32 the law had been given in EXODUS 20, and explained in detail in chapters 21 through 23. In EXODUS chapters 24 through 31 we find Moses called of God to the top of the mount where he was given instructions concerning the building of the tabernacle. Moses was in the mount forty days, and in the mean while the children of Israel had built a golden calf, and worshipped it. We then read this in EXODUS 32:7 *And the LORD said unto Moses, Go, get thee down; for thy people, which thou broughtest out of the land of Egypt, have corrupted themselves: 8 They have turned aside quickly out of the way which I commanded them: they have made them a molten calf, and have worshipped it, and have sacrificed thereunto, and said, These be thy gods, O Israel, which have brought thee up out of the land of Egypt. 9 And the LORD said unto Moses, I have seen this people, and, behold, it is a stiffnecked people: 10 Now therefore let me alone, that my wrath may wax hot against them, and that I may consume them: and I will make of thee a great nation.* Of course we know this didn't happen as Moses interceded unto God on the children of Israel's behalf. We next read in EXODUS 33:1 *And the LORD said unto Moses, Depart, and go up hence, thou and the people which thou hast brought up out of the land of Egypt, unto the land which I swear unto Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob, saying, Unto thy seed will I give it: 2 And I will send an angel before thee; and I will drive out the Canaanite, the Amorite, and the Hittite, and the Perizzite, the Hivite, and the Jebusite: 3 Unto a land flowing with milk and honey: for I will not go up in the midst of thee; for thou art a stiffnecked people: lest I consume thee in the way. 4 And when the people heard these evil tidings, they mourned: and no man did put on him his ornaments. 5 For the LORD had said unto Moses, Say unto the children of Israel, Ye are a stiffnecked people: I will come up into the midst of thee in a moment, and consume thee: therefore now put off thy ornaments from thee, that I may know what to do unto thee. 6 And the children of Israel stripped themselves of their ornaments by the mount Horeb.* In EXODUS 34 we find Moses again upon Mount Sinai where a second set of tables of stone were written by the finger of God, and Moses prayed these words in EXODUS 34:9 *And he said, If now I have found grace in thy sight, O*

*Lord, let my Lord, I pray thee, go among us; for it is a **stiffnecked** people; and pardon our iniquity and our sin, and take us for thine inheritance.*

In DEUTERONOMY 9 as Moses gives his final speech unto the children of Israel we find him recalling these very same events. Read DEUTERONOMY 9 on your own to get the whole story, which the Jewish Sanhedrin council before whom Stephen stood also knew, and were familiar with. We will only read a portion from DEUTERONOMY 9 starting with verse 6 – *Understand therefore, that the LORD thy God giveth thee not this good land to possess it for thy righteousness; for thou art a **stiffnecked** people. 7 Remember, and forget not, how thou provokedst the LORD thy God to wrath in the wilderness: from the day that thou didst depart out of the land of Egypt, until ye came unto this place, ye have been rebellious against the LORD. 8 Also in Horeb ye provoked the LORD to wrath, so that the LORD was angry with you to have destroyed you. 9 When I was gone up into the mount to receive the tables of stone, even the tables of the covenant which the LORD made with you, then I abode in the mount forty days and forty nights, I neither did eat bread nor drink water: 10 And the LORD delivered unto me two tables of stone written with the finger of God; and on them was written according to all the words, which the LORD spake with you in the mount out of the midst of the fire in the day of the assembly. 11 And it came to pass at the end of forty days and forty nights, that the LORD gave me the two tables of stone, even the tables of the covenant. 12 And the LORD said unto me, Arise, get thee down quickly from hence; for thy people which thou hast brought forth out of Egypt have corrupted themselves; they are quickly turned aside out of the way which I commanded them; they have made them a molten image. 13 Furthermore the LORD spake unto me, saying, I have seen this people, and, behold, it is a **stiffnecked** people: 14 Let me alone, that I may destroy them, and blot out their name from under heaven: and I will make of thee a nation mightier and greater than they.*

Later in the history of Israel we read these words given unto the children of Israel found in 2 CHRONICLES 30:7 *And be not ye like your fathers, and like your brethren, which trespassed against the LORD God of their fathers, who therefore gave them up to desolation, as ye see. 8 Now be ye not **stiffnecked**, as your fathers were, but yield yourselves unto the LORD, and enter into his sanctuary, which he hath sanctified for ever: and serve the LORD your God, that the fierceness of his wrath may turn away from you.* Again members of the Sanhedrin council would have been very familiar with the meaning behind “**stiffnecked**,” but never imagined themselves to so harden to the law of Moses, or the commandments of God. Again “**stiffnecked**” is a figure of speech originally taken from stubborn or unruly oxen who could not be broken into the yoke, and whose stroke necks could not be bended unto the right or left. Members of the Sanhedrin council would have been very familiar with the meaning behind “**stiffnecked**.” “**Stiffnecked**” means: stubborn, headstrong, obstinate, hard hearted, and difficult. We have shown how this “**stiffnecked**” Sanhedrin council withstood Jesus, and the Apostles several times, and had taken counsel as to how to kill them in ACTS 5:33. Indeed they were a “**stiffnecked**” bunch to whom Stephen said under the inspiration of the Holy Ghost in ACTS 7:51 *Ye **stiffnecked** and uncircumcised in heart and ears, ye do always resist the Holy Ghost: as your fathers did, so do ye. 52 Which of the prophets have not your fathers persecuted? and they have slain them which shewed before of the coming of the Just One; of whom ye have been now the betrayers and murderers: 53 Who have received the law by the disposition of angels, and have not kept it.* The response to Stephen’s sermon by the Sanhedrin Council is found in the next verses of ACTS 7. ACTS 7:54 *When they heard these things, they were cut to the heart, and they gnashed on him with their teeth. 55 But he, being full of the Holy Ghost, looked up stedfastly into heaven, and saw the glory of God, and Jesus standing on the right hand of God, 56 And said, Behold, I see the heavens opened, and the Son of man standing on the right hand of God. 57 Then they cried out with a loud voice, and stopped their ears, and ran upon him with one accord, 58 And cast him out of the city, and stoned him: and the witnesses laid down their clothes at a young man’s feet, whose name was Saul. 59 And they stoned Stephen, calling upon God, and saying, Lord Jesus, receive my spirit. 60 And he kneeled down, and cried with a loud voice, Lord, lay not this sin to their charge. And when he had said this, he fell asleep.* In killing Stephen we find this Jewish

Sanhedrin council in violation of their own law, which we read in their own words in JOHN 18:31 ...*It is not lawful for us to put any man to death.*

In ACTS 7:58 we are introduced for the first time in scripture to a young “**stiffnecked**” Pharisee named Saul of Tarsus, who was very much guilty of Stephen’s death. We read in ACTS 8:1 *And Saul was consenting unto his death.* In ACTS 22:19 and 20 the Apostle Paul acknowledges that when he was known as Saul of Tarsus ...*I imprisoned and beat in every synagogue them that believed on thee: 20 And when the blood of thy martyr Stephen was shed, I also was standing by, and consenting unto his death, and kept the raiment of them that slew him.* Paul several times in his own writings acknowledges in his own words his actions as a young “**stiffnecked**” Pharisee named Saul of Tarsus persecuting the church of God. We read Paul writing about this several times in his epistles, and in so doing he was in essence acknowledging again Stephen’s powerful testimony that we read in ACTS 6 and 7. In GALATIANS 1:13 & 14 Paul writes: *For ye have heard of my conversation in time past in the Jews’ religion, how that beyond measure I persecuted the church of God, and wasted it: 14 And profited in the Jews’ religion above many my equals in mine own nation, being more exceedingly zealous of the traditions of my fathers.* A similar statement is found in 1 CORINTHIANS 15:9 *For I am the least of the apostles, that am not meet to be called an apostle, because I persecuted the church of God.* Late in his life the Apostle Paul wrote in 1 TIMOTHY 1:12 *And I thank Christ Jesus our Lord, who hath enabled me, for that he counted me faithful, putting me into the ministry; 13 Who was before a blasphemer, and a persecutor, and injurious: but I obtained mercy, because I did it ignorantly in unbelief. 14 And the grace of our Lord was exceeding abundant with faith and love which is in Christ Jesus. 15 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 shew forth all longsuffering, for a pattern to them which should hereafter believe on him to life everlasting.*

The Lord, who knows the end from the beginning, also knows how to deal with the “**stiffnecked**” Pharisee, the likes of Saul of Tarsus. Saul of Tarsus well knew these verses from ISAIAH 46, which are the words of the Lord. ISAIAH 46:8 *Remember this, and shew yourselves men: bring it again to mind, O ye transgressors. 9 Remember the former things of old: for I am God, and there is none else; I am God, and there is none like me, 10 Declaring the end from the beginning, and from ancient times the things that are not yet done, saying, My counsel shall stand, and I will do all my pleasure: 11 Calling a ravenous bird from the east, the man that executeth my counsel from a far country: yea, I have spoken it, I will also bring it to pass; I have purposed it, I will also do it. 12 Hearken unto me, ye stouthearted, that are far from righteousness: 13 I bring near my righteousness; it shall not be far off, and my salvation shall not tarry: and I will place salvation in Zion for Israel my glory.* The “**stouthearted**” mentioned here in ISAIAH 46:12 is very much akin to the obstinate “**stiffnecked**” we have been studying about. Thus when the Lord Jesus Christ himself appeared unto that obstinate “**stiffnecked**” Saul of Tarsus on the road to Damascus after Stephen’s words had pricked his heart for several months, it was His good pleasure, after Saul of Tarsus acknowledged Jesus as his Lord and Saviour, to anoint Saul of Tarsus as the future Apostle Paul. That 99 word sentence we studied in our life of the Apostle Paul study found in ACTS 26:16-18 explained the fact that Saul of Tarsus would become our Apostle Paul. ACTS 26:16 *But rise, and stand upon thy feet: for I have appeared unto thee for this purpose, to make thee a minister and a witness both of these things which thou hast seen, and of those things in the which I will appear unto thee; 17 Delivering thee from the people, and from the Gentiles, unto whom now I send thee, 18 To open their eyes, and to turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins, and inheritance among them which are sanctified by faith that is in me.* The definition of an apostle is a delegate, a messenger, he that is sent, or one sent forth with orders. Here Jesus on the road to Damascus was sending Saul of Tarsus unto the Gentiles with orders to be their Apostle, thus our Apostle! Paul writes in ROMANS 11:13 *For I speak to you Gentiles, inasmuch as I am the apostle of the Gentiles, I magnify mine office.* Sixteen times in his epistles Paul acknowledges that he is an Apostle. Again sixteen is the number associated with

LOVE. There is no way we can fathom the immense expanse of the LOVE of God toward us, who *...so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life...* (JOHN 3:16), and sent us an Apostle named Paul to expound in his one hundred chapters of Holy Ghost inspired scripture facts about the high calling of God, which is ours in Christ Jesus. If God could take the guy who called himself the chiefest of sinners, and give him God's best, what excuse do we have of not following Paul as he followed Christ? The answer is none. There is no reason why we too cannot have God's best. In fact He wants us to have His best, and that is why He sent us that former "**stiffnecked**" Pharisee to prove to us that truly *...He raiseth up the poor out of the dust, and lifteth up the beggar from the dunghill, to set them among princes, and to make them inherit the throne of glory...* 1 SAMUEL 2:8.

In the above portion of our lesson we have spent much time explaining how it was Stephen in his address to the Sanhedrin council who had had introduced Paul to the fact that Jesus is currently on **the right hand of God**. We found this in Stephen's words of ACTS 7:55 & 56 -- *But he, being full of the Holy Ghost, looked up stedfastly into heaven, and saw the glory of God, and Jesus standing on the right hand of God, 56 And said, Behold, I see the heavens opened, and the Son of man standing on the right hand of God.* We also noted above the eight times Paul mentions in his epistles that Jesus is currently sitting the at **right hand of God**, the Majesty on high. Here again are those eight scriptures: ROMANS 8:34 *Who is he that condemneth? It is Christ that died, yea rather, that is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us.* What is Jesus now doing at **the right hand of God**? He is making intercession for us. EPHESIANS 1:20 *Which he wrought in Christ, when he raised him from the dead, and set him at his own right hand in the heavenly places.* COLOSSIANS 3:1 *If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God.* HEBREWS 1:3 *Who being the brightness of his glory, and the express image of his person, and upholding all things by the word of his power, when he had by himself purged our sins, sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high.* HEBREWS 1:13 *But to which of the angels said he at any time, Sit on my right hand, until I make thine enemies thy footstool?* HEBREWS 8:1 *Now of the things which we have spoken this is the sum: We have such an high priest, who is set on the right hand of the throne of the Majesty in the heavens.* HEBREWS 10:12 *But this man, after he had offered one sacrifice for sins for ever, sat down on the right hand of God.* HEBREWS 12:2 *Looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith; who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God.* These last five references are from HEBREWS, the letter Paul wrote unto the Hebrew Christians, some of whom no doubt also had interaction with the very same Jewish Sanhedrin council that killed Stephen.

In studying the eighty words of Holy Ghost inspired scripture found in HEBREWS 12:1 & 2 we have covered many Biblical principles, and several topics from GENESIS to REVELATION. We truly have a Bible full of thoughts directed toward the New Testament full overcomers found in this one sentence. We have saved the best, the most profound, and probably the hardest part to expound upon for last. HEBREWS 12:1 *Wherefore seeing we also are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset us, and let us run with patience the race that is set before us, 2 Looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith; who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God.* The part we haven't yet looked in depth too is *...the joy that was set before him...* . Realize as we look into this statement that this topic cannot be fully appreciated in a few words. Paul writes in EPHESIANS 2:7 *That in the ages to come he might shew the exceeding riches of his grace in his kindness toward us through Christ Jesus.* "The ages to come" is how long it will take to fully understand *...the joy that was set before him...* . And note here also in EPHESIANS 2:7 that *...the joy that was set before him...* involves "us," specifically God's immeasurable kindness towards us through Christ Jesus! So take note of the fact that we are *...the joy that was set before him...* but there is much more to this part of our study, for

our focus is to be upon Him ...*Jesus the author and finisher of our faith; who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God.* If our focus remains upon us, or other people, places, or things, then we will miss God's best. God's best is Jesus, and we are to be ...*Looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith.* God's best for us is ...*that ye should be married to another, even to him who is raised from the dead, that we should bring forth fruit unto God...* ROMANS 7:4. That is why the Holy Ghost encourages our Apostle Paul to write to us that we should be ...*Looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith...* .

There is only one "looking unto" statement found in scripture, and it is here in our text of HEBREWS 12:2 where we, the potential New Testament full overcomer, are encouraged with the strongest thoughts possible from verse 1 to be ...*Looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith...* . Titus was one of the Apostle Paul's best students, and closest followers, who accompanied Paul many times on his missionary journeys. Titus became one of the church Apostles as a study of 2 CORINTHIANS 8:23 reveals. To his fellow Apostle, and son in the faith, Paul wrote an epistle in which he encouraged Titus to be ...*Looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ...* TITUS 2:13. Titus too had been personally taught by Paul the very same principles found in HEBREWS 12:1 & 2 to ...*lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset us, and let us run with patience the race that is set before us, Looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith; who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God.* The race course runner mentioned in HEBREWS 12:1 has a mark, a focus mentioned in HEBREWS 12:2 *Looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith...* which mark is further identified in PHILIPPIANS 3:14 *I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus.* Three verses later Paul writes this encouragement: PHILIPPIANS 3:17 *Brethren, be followers together of me, and mark them which walk so as ye have us for an ensample.* This statement is a repeat of what Paul wrote in 1 CORINTHIANS 11:1 *Be ye followers of me, even as I also am of Christ.* Thus we continue to find that Paul's gospel teaches us to be ...*Looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith...* .

Realize also as we begin to examine this thought of the ...*joy that was set before him...* that the theme of HEBREWS 12:1 & 2 still revolves about **faith**, and those who live their lives "by faith" just like the Old Testament worthies of **faith** did. Jesus is the Author and Finisher of **faith**, and as we are told here in HEBREWS 12:2 Jesus is the Author and finisher of **our faith**. We have previously noted that fact that there are thirty-seven "by faith" statements found in scripture. We have also noted in this study that the number thirty-seven is the number that has to do with **THE WORD OF GOD**. REVELATION 19:13 defines **THE WORD OF GOD** noting that it is one of the many names of Jesus. REVELATION 19:13 *And he was clothed with a vesture dipped in blood: and his name is called The Word of God.* **THE WORD OF GOD** (Jesus) is the Author and finisher of **our faith**. The second "by faith" statement found in scripture is in ACTS 26:18 where Jesus first told that former proud law abiding Pharisee Saul of Tarsus the he was being sent forth unto the Gentiles to ...*open their eyes, and to turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins, and inheritance among them which are sanctified by faith that is in me...* Christ Jesus! Imagine the impact this statement had on Saul of Tarsus, our Apostle Paul. Paul wrote in GALATIANS 2:16 this statement that the Lord Jesus Christ revealed unto him by the power of the Holy Ghost: *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.* Again in this verse we see Jesus is the Author and Finisher of **faith**. Paul continues to write on this subject stating in GALATIANS 3:11 *But that no man is justified by the law in the sight of God, it is evident: for, The just shall live by faith.* The Apostle Paul wrote: ...*the just shall live by faith...* three times: ROMANS 1:17, GALATIANS 3:11 and HEBREWS 10:38. Also in HEBREWS 11:6 Paul wrote a fundamental fact about **faith**: *But without faith it is*

*impossible to please him: {God} for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him.* This statement made in HEBREWS 11:6 explains full overcoming **faith** by which the Old Testament full overcomers obtained a good report according to HEBREWS 11:2. So we find in HEBREWS 12:2 that part of the *...joy that was set before him...* revolves around those who in the days beyond the cross would live their lives full of the Holy Ghost and of **faith**.

Thus we note again in HEBREWS 12:2 that there was a *...joy that was set before him...* as Jesus faced the cross. There was a *...joy that was set before him...* as Jesus despised the shame of going to the cross. There was a *...joy that was set before him...* as Jesus looked once again to being with His Father in heaven. There was a joy beyond all of that! A joy He had not yet experienced if you can imagine such a thing. Jesus told His disciples some of the *...joy that was set before him...* in JOHN 16. JOHN 16:12 *I have yet many things to say unto you, but ye cannot bear them now. 13 Howbeit when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth: for he shall not speak of himself; but whatsoever he shall hear, that shall he speak: and he will shew you things to come. 14 He shall glorify me: for he shall receive of mine, and shall shew it unto you. 15 All things that the Father hath are mine: therefore said I, that he shall take of mine, and shall shew it unto you.* The *...joy that was set before him...* here was the joy of sending the Holy Ghost to expound unto the receivers of the Holy Ghost all truth. Let's enlarge upon this thought for a moment. Jesus told some parables in LUKE 15, and a parable is a story designed to illustrate some deeper truth. In LUKE 15:8-10 we find the parable of the lost coin, which was diligently searched for till it was found, and when it finally was found, oh what rejoicing there was. The point of the story was that there is something far greater than the joy of finding a lost coin. There is exceeding joy over a lost soul who is saved. Jesus expressed it like this in LUKE 15:10 *Likewise, I say unto you, there is joy in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner that repenteth.* Truly that was part of the *...joy that was set before him...* as Jesus despised the shame of going to the cross, but beyond that imagine the *...joy that was set before him...* as one receives the infilling of the Holy Ghost! Do you think there is joy in the presence of God over just one receiving the gift of the Holy Ghost after they become believers? The answer is obviously yes, for we ourselves felt such heavenly joy the moment we received the gift of the Holy Ghost, and began to speak in other tongues as the Spirit gave us utterance. Jesus knew this kind of joy, yet there was still a *...joy that was set before him...* beyond all of that! We just studied Stephen's testimony, that he was a man full of faith, and full of the Holy Ghost. Stephen was a *...joy that was set before him...* but there was still a *...joy that was set before him...* beyond Stephen's lifetime. Beyond Stephen's lifetime was the bulk of the church age. Stephen's testimony was instrumental in introducing Saul of Tarsus to that Just One, who is Jesus Christ of Nazareth. Saul of Tarsus became our Apostle Paul as we explained earlier. And the Apostle Paul also was a man full of the Holy Ghost, and full of faith. The Apostle Paul was a *...joy that was set before him...* for unto Paul was revealed Paul's gospel message that was given to fill up, to complete the word of God according to COLOSSIANS 1:25. The Apostle Paul was a *...joy that was set before him...* *...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:...* this according to COLOSSIANS 1:27. So yes the Apostle Paul was a *...joy that was set before him...* but there was still a *...joy that was set before him...* beyond Paul's lifetime. Paul knew what was *...the joy that was set before him...* for Paul himself wrote about it, and his gospel message is all about *...the joy that was set before him...*. So we are beginning to see that there was a *...joy that was set before him...* that reaches down to you and me living at the end of this church age. The Holy Ghost has been working in the hearts and lives of Spirit filled believers during this church age; working in them Paul's gospel message, and *...the joy that was set before him...* Christ Jesus our Lord. We also are beginning to see that there are several points that helps answer the question: what is *...the joy that was set before him...*? In the archive section of the Living Waters Tabernacle there is a classic sermon from W. J. Franklin given in 1982 entitled "The joy set before Him." Brother Franklin dives into this very question. And there are several layers of thoughts that helps answer the question of

what is *...the joy that was set before him...* ? One of the many points Brother Franklin made was that *...the joy that was set before him...* beyond His going to the cross, and sitting on the right hand of God had to be something that He had not yet experienced, something He didn't yet have, something great, and something large.

As we start to examine the depths of the answer to the question of what is *...the joy that was set before him...* let's read again COLOSSIANS 1:16 & 17 where the reference is speaking of Jesus: *For by him were all things created, that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers: all things were created by him, and for him: 17 And he is before all things, and by him all things consist.* Let's now read again what is written in JOHN 1. JOHN 1:1 *In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. 2 The same was in the beginning with God. 3 All things were made by him; and without him was not any thing made that was made.* We just read above that the Word is Jesus, so these two portions of scripture from COLOSSIANS 1, and JOHN 1 speak of Jesus, who made all things, by whom all things consist, and without Jesus was not any thing made that was made.

Let's pause here for a moment and realize that there are things of His creation at the depths of the sea that man has only recently discovered. Here are found creatures that can't live anywhere else because they thrive in the darkest depths of the sea where the pressure is the greatest. These things were created by Him, and for Him, and for His good pleasure, yet they are not *...the joy that was set before him...* . Recently man has also discovered what else is in the vast expanse of what is in the microscopic universe. Here too are found things created by Him, and for Him, and for His good pleasure, yet these are not *...the joy that was set before him...* . Also in recent years during my lifetime man has also discovered things in the vast beyond of our universe that were previously unknown to us. These things too were created by Him, and for Him, and for His good pleasure, yet they are not *...the joy that was set before him...* . So we must marvel that there was a *...joy that was set before him...* who had created all things, and by whom all things consist, a *...joy that was set before him...* that He had not yet experienced.

In the light of eternity it has only been a speck of time since man was created. Let's go back to GENESIS 1 and do a quick review. GENESIS 1:20 *And God said, Let the waters bring forth abundantly the moving creature that hath life, and fowl that may fly above the earth in the open firmament of heaven. 21 And God created great whales, and every living creature that moveth, which the waters brought forth abundantly, after their kind, and every winged fowl after his kind: and God saw that it was good. 22 And God blessed them, saying, Be fruitful, and multiply, and fill the waters in the seas, and let fowl multiply in the earth. 23 And the evening and the morning were the fifth day. 24 And God said, Let the earth bring forth the living creature after his kind, cattle, and creeping thing, and beast of the earth after his kind: and it was so. 25 And God made the beast of the earth after his kind, and cattle after their kind, and every thing that creepeth upon the earth after his kind: and God saw that it was good. 26 And God said, Let us make man in our image, after our likeness: and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth. 27 So God created man in his own image, in the image of God created he him; male and female created he them. 28 And God blessed them, and God said unto them, Be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth, and subdue it: and have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over every living thing that moveth upon the earth. 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. 30 And to every beast of the earth, and to every fowl of the air, and to every thing that creepeth upon the earth, wherein there is life, I have given every green herb for meat: and it was so. 31 And God saw every thing that he had made, and, behold, it was very good. And the evening and the morning were the sixth day.*

Why did we read these facts again? We read facts concerning the creation of man, and his having been given dominion over the fish of the sea, the fowl of the air and every living thing that moveth upon the earth to introduce a thought concerning *...the joy that was set before him...* . The

fish of the sea, the fowl of the air and every living thing that moveth upon the earth was not ...*the joy that was set before him*... as Jesus looked beyond the cross. The ...*joy that was set before him*... that Jesus has still not yet experienced involves man who was created in His own image! Note this part again: GENESIS 1:26 *And God said, Let us make man in our image, after our likeness: and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth. 27 So God created man in his own image, in the image of God created he him; male and female created he them.* Brother Hill when he read this portion of scripture would pause after reading the word “us,” and would ask “I wonder who the “us” if referring too?” Then he would answer this question acknowledging what we read above in COLOSSIANS 1:16 & 17 where the reference is speaking of Jesus: *For by him were all things created, that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers: all things were created by him, and for him: 17 And he is before all things, and by him all things consist.* The “us” in GENESIS 1:26 is Jesus. Note again what is said in GENESIS 1:27 *So God created man in his own image, in the image of God created he him; male and female created he them.* Thus man is created in Jesus image, and note that the reference to man here includes both male and female. This is further explained in GENESIS 5:1 & 2 -- *This is the book of the generations of Adam. In the day that God created man, in the likeness of God made he him; 2 Male and female created he them; and blessed them, and called their name Adam, in the day when they were created.* Adam means man, and references both male and female. The ...*joy that was set before him*... that Jesus has still not yet experienced involves man who was created in His own image!

The creative act of forming man is further explained in GENESIS where we also find it was the good pleasure of His will to create man a living soul! We read this in GENESIS 2:7 *And the LORD God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living soul.* The Apostle Paul quotes from this verse in 1 CORINTHIANS 15:45 *And so it is written, The first man Adam was made a living soul;... .* From this man that became a living soul will come a ...*joy that was set before him*... that He, Christ Jesus, has not yet experienced. Now let's read what is said in GENESIS 2:18-20, a portion of scripture you have probably read hundreds of times. GENESIS 2:18 *And the LORD God said, It is not good that the man should be alone; I will make him an help meet for him. 19 And out of the ground the LORD God formed every beast of the field, and every fowl of the air; and brought them unto Adam to see what he would call them: and whatsoever Adam called every living creature, that was the name thereof. 20 And Adam gave names to all cattle, and to the fowl of the air, and to every beast of the field; but for Adam there was not found an help meet for him.* Ponder this thought found in verses 19 and 20 for a moment. The man Adam was presented by God the opportunity to name every beast of the field, and every fowl of the air. We are not told by what manner they came to Adam, but you can imagine that they came in at least pairs of male and female. We know that God did not just create one of everything, for in GENESIS 1:24 & 25 we are told: *And God said, Let the earth bring forth the living creature after his kind, cattle, and creeping thing, and beast of the earth after his kind: and it was so. 25 And God made the beast of the earth after his kind, and cattle after their kind, and every thing that creepeth upon the earth after his kind: and God saw that it was good.* This creation was brought before Adam to name. As Adam no doubt marveled at God's creation, he must have also thought within himself that each of these animals have a mate except for me. God knew what Adam was thinking, thus the text we read in GENESIS 2:18 *And the LORD God said, It is not good that the man should be alone; I will make him an help meet for him.* The first man Adam didn't know that there was going to be a ...*joy that was set before him*... that he had not yet experienced, but God did, and this joy would come out of the body of Adam. Stated another way, when God formed man (Adam) out of the dust of the ground in GENESIS 2:7 Eve was within him, awaiting the time to be manifested unto Adam. This is explained in GENESIS 2:21-23, which reads: *And the LORD God caused a deep sleep to fall upon Adam, and he slept: and he took one of his ribs, and closed up the flesh instead thereof; 22 And the rib, which the LORD God had taken from man, made*

he a woman, and brought her unto the man. 23 And Adam said, This is now bone of my bones, and flesh of my flesh: she shall be called Woman, because she was taken out of Man. Eve was made from the rib of Adam. Eve was not made from the whole body of Adam, only from the rib taken closest to his heart. 1 TIMOTHY 2:13 explains: *For Adam was first formed, then Eve.* Eve was the **...joy that was set before him...**

Adam and the **...joy that was set before him...** Eve, are types to us in scripture of Jesus Christ, and His Bride. Paul further expounds upon this subject in 1 CORINTHIANS 15, EPHESIANS 5, plus many other places in his epistles. 1 CORINTHIANS 15:44 *...There is a natural body, and there is a spiritual body.* 45 *And so it is written, The first man Adam was made a living soul; the last Adam was made a quickening spirit.* ...47 *The first man (Adam) is of the earth, earthy: the second man (Adam) is the Lord from heaven.* Here we find the first Adam being the natural man Adam, and the last Adam being none other than the Lord Jesus Christ from heaven. ROMANS 5:14 further tells that Adam *...is the figure of him that was to come...* . “Him that was to come” references Christ. We read above in COLOSSIANS 1:16 & 17 that Christ created all things, and that by Him all things consist. Then we read this statement in COLOSSIANS 1:18 *And he is the head of the body, the church: who is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead; that in all things he might have the preeminence.* Here we find that Christ is the head of the body of Christ, the body of Christ being a reference to the church of His believers. 1 CORINTHIANS 12:27 explains it like this: *Now ye are the body of Christ, and members in particular.* Now here is the part that the majorities of Christian assemblies don’t see, or teach, and that is the majority of the church, the body of Christ, is in a deep sleep like Adam was in GENESIS 2:21. Out of this sleeping church a small rib portion of Saints, those closest to His heart, remain awake and are being built into that choice company of tried Saints that will forever be known as the Lamb’s wife, the Bride of Christ, the **...joy that was set before him,...**!! This actually is the “great mystery” Paul speaks about in EPHESIANS 5:30-32. EPHESIANS 5:30 *For we are members of his body, of his flesh, and of his bones.* 31 *For this cause shall a man leave his father and mother, and shall be joined unto his wife, and they two shall be one flesh.* 32 *This is a great mystery: but I speak concerning Christ and the church.* The “great mystery” that the majorities of Christian assemblies don’t see, or teach is that whole body of Christ, the church, is not going to be the Bride of Christ. Eve was not made out of the whole body of Adam, for as we read in GENESIS 2:22 Eve, Adam’s wife, was made from one of Adam’s ribs, a rib taken from him while he was asleep. Likewise the Lamb’s wife, the Bride of Christ, will be made from a small rib portion of Saints taken from the body of Christ, His church, His sleeping church!!! To the bridal Saints Paul writes in 1 THESSALONIANS 5:6 *Therefore let us not sleep, as do others; but let us watch and be sober.* This is written to Christians of this church age. Sinners are dead in trespasses and sins according to EPHESIANS 2:1, and thus are not asleep.

The majorities of Christian assemblies don’t see, or are not taught about ranks in the resurrection either, which is why they think the whole church is the Bride of Christ, but scripture doesn’t teach us this either. Paul writes in 1 CORINTHIANS 15:22 & 23 *For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive.* 23 *But every man in his own order: Christ the firstfruits; afterward they that are Christ’s at his coming.* The word “order” comes from the Greek word “tagma” (number 5001 in The Strong’s Greek Concordance) found only this one time in scripture, and it means: (1) that which has been arranged in order, thing placed in order; (2) a body of soldiers, a corps; (3) a band, a troop, a class, A RANK. There are different ranks in an army, and each rank, or band, or troop, marches in different orders at different times. The Apostle Paul likens the resurrection to this. Simply put there are different ranks in the resurrection. The first rank will be the Bride of Christ, the ultimate **...joy that was set before him,...**!! The bridal Saints are watching for Christ’s soon appearing, and know the facts of another mystery revealed unto the Apostle Paul, that being the mystery of final change, also called the exit mystery, talked about in 1 CORINTHIANS 15:51 *Behold, I shew you a mystery; We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed,* 52 *In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump: for the trumpet shall sound,*

*and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed.* Truly the Lamb's wife was the ultimate ...**joy that was set before him**,... as Jesus faced the cross.

In summary HEBREWS 12:1 & 2 is written to encourage us to be full overcomers; New Testament worthies of faith, who were equipped with some better things not offered the Old Testament full overcomers. The Old Testament worthies of faith did not yet have the Holy Ghost given them for they lived before the day of Pentecost when the Holy Ghost was given in ACTS 2. The Old Testament worthies of faith also didn't have the New Testament teaching to follow, thus they did not have Paul's gospel, one of the better things we of the church age have been given that the Old Testament faithful didn't have. And we of this church age have been given the opportunity to be New Testament full overcomers, and those who achieve this rank will forever be known as the Lamb's wife, the Bride of Christ!!! This rank can only be reached by the guidance of the Holy Ghost, and by living our lives **by faith** like the Old Testament worthies did. HEBREWS 12:1 tells us to lay aside every weight, every encumbrance, and we can only do so **by faith**. HEBREWS 12:1 also tells us to lay aside the sin which doth so easily beset us, which is a reference to unbelief. Unbelief is not the way we live **by faith**. HEBREWS 12:1 also tells us to be focused race course runners, running **by faith** the race our faithful Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ has prepared for us. HEBREWS 12:2 tells us where our focus is to be, which is ...*Looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith*. HEBREWS 12:1 & 2 tells us that we have a prospect "**set before us**" who is Christ, and He also had a like prospect "**set before Him**" who is His Bride to be, potentially you and me, who are the ...**joy that was set before him**,...!! HEBREWS 12:1 & 2 thus encourages us to live overcoming lives **by faith** knowing we have offered us "some better thing" that the Old Testament worthies weren't offered, and that being the opportunity to win Christ as Bridegroom!!! That being said let us ...*press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus...* PHILIPPIANS 3:14.

HEBREWS 12:1 *Wherefore seeing we also are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset us, and let us run with patience the race that is set before us, 2 Looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith; who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God.*