

church, entering into every house, and haling men and women committed them to prison.

There are three important facts that I want to note in these verses. The first fact is that there was a great persecution against the church which was at Jerusalem, and a great number of the believers were scattered about throughout the regions of Judaea and Samaria. So far we don't read of any being witnesses unto the uttermost part of the earth. It would take more time for that to happen.

Fact number two found in ACTS 8:1-3 is that the Apostles stayed in Jerusalem. The Kingdom Apostles did not reach out themselves *...in all Judaea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth.* Again it would take more time for that to happen. And it did happen in their lifetime, for we read of Peter himself writing unto the disciples *...scattered throughout Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia,*... in 1 PETER 1:1. Peter most likely visited all of these places during his life. We read of Peter being known unto the Corinthians in 1 CORINTHIANS 1:12; 3:22; 9:5 and 15:5. We find that Peter came to Antioch, Syria in GALATIANS 2:11. And ACTS 9:32 through ACTS 12 tells of Peter preaching outside the regions of Jerusalem.

Fact number three of note in ACTS 8:1-3 is that Saul of Tarsus was very much a part of the reason that *...they were all scattered abroad throughout the regions of Judaea and Samaria, except the apostles.* ACTS 8:3 again tells us: *As for Saul, he made havock of the church, entering into every house, and haling men and women committed them to prison.* Implied in this statement is that Saul of Tarsus also stayed in Jerusalem at this time persecuting the Christians, but shortly that also would change, because as we read in ACTS 8:1 *...they were all scattered abroad throughout the regions of Judaea and Samaria...* . By the time of ACTS 9:1 & 2 we read this of Saul of Tarsus: *And Saul, yet breathing out threatenings and slaughter against the disciples of the Lord, went unto the high priest, 2 And desired of him letters to Damascus to the synagogues, that if he found any of this way, whether they were men or women, he might bring them bound unto Jerusalem.* Damascus was about 136 miles from Jerusalem. ACTS 26:11 in part reads: *...I persecuted them even unto strange cities.* Strange cities means cities other than Jerusalem. ACTS 9:21 further reveals Saul of Tarsus persecutions outside the limits of Jerusalem: *...Is not this he that destroyed them which called on this name in Jerusalem, and came hither for that intent, that he might bring them bound unto the chief priests?* Also ACTS 22:4 tells us again like ACTS 8:3 does, that Saul's persecution of Christians wasn't just limited to the male sex, for we read there: *And I persecuted this way unto the death, binding and delivering into prisons both men and women.*

So we see that the Christians were scattered abroad after the persecution of Stephen, and that Saul of Tarsus was one main reason that the Christians scattered. All this did was start the spreading of the word of God throughout the world. ACTS 8:4 records it like this: *Therefore they that were scattered abroad went every where preaching the word.* The rest of the 8th chapter of ACTS records the spreading of the word of God, and how the Holy Ghost used devout Spirit filled men for this purpose. The Apostles Peter and John then began to minister away from Jerusalem also, for ACTS 8:14 and 15 tells us: *Now when the apostles which were at Jerusalem heard that Samaria had received the word of God, they sent unto them Peter and John: 15 Who, when they were come down, prayed for them, that they might receive the Holy Ghost.*

The Salvation of Saul of Tarsus

Meanwhile Saul of Tarsus continued his persecution against Christians. No one could stop him. Then Jesus came.

(Have you ever taken the time to notice in scripture that when Jesus came upon the scene of whatever situation, how that things changed, and changed for the better? Let me review just a few quick examples from scripture. In JOHN 2 Jesus came to a wedding where they ran out of wine. There Jesus performed His first miracle, and changed the water into wine, thus changing things for the better for those at this wedding. In JOHN 4 Jesus came to a city of Samaria and at the well changed the life of the Samaritan women for the better forever. She believed on Him and became a testimony unto many of the Samaritans, who also believed. {Study JOHN 4, especially

verses 39-42}. For all that believed in Samaria things for them changed for the better. Again in JOHN 4 Jesus came upon the scene of a certain nobleman whose son was sick and nigh unto death. Jesus healed that son, and made things so much better for that family at that time. In JOHN 11 Lazarus died, but when Jesus finally came upon the scene things changed, and changed for the better, for in this chapter Jesus raised Lazarus up from the dead. There are several other accounts in scripture where Jesus raised up people from the dead, thus making things better for those involved. Untold numbers were healed by Jesus when He came on the scene, thus making things better for all involved. Many other situations are discussed in scripture, which when Jesus came, were changed and changed for the better.)

One such situation is in ACTS 9 where we find the Lord Jesus Christ Himself personally stopping Saul of Tarsus persecution against Christians. Think of it like this: Jesus Christ personally arrested Saul of Tarsus, and made sure he never persecuted another Christian the rest of his life. When Jesus came, Saul of Tarsus never was a threat to Christians again. Of course when Jesus came in for this situation things changed, and changed for the better for all Christians, for Saul of Tarsus never was able to arrest another Christian. Things changed for the better for Saul of Tarsus also, for on that day when Jesus came and personally appeared unto Saul; Saul of Tarsus, that proud Pharisee, and the son of a Pharisee saw the Light, the bright Light of Jesus shining brighter than the noon day sun, and realized it was indeed Jesus, and instantly believed and cried out in earnest "Lord? ...Lord what wilt thou have me to do?" At that point in time Saul of Tarsus got saved, thus changing his life for the better for ever. Years later the Apostle Paul was able to write with full knowledge this fact found in ROMANS 10:13 *For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved.*

Was there a greater miracle in scripture than Saul of Tarsus getting saved? Recall from camp this year Brother Hawkins saying a few words concerning miracles. Brother Hawkins noted that miracles require a dire situation, and that somebody has to pay a price. In order for someone to be healed, they must be sick first. In order for someone to be raised from the dead, they have to die first. Well Jesus died for us first, and was raised from the dead by the power of God, which is manifest to us by His Holy Spirit. No doubt this was the greatest miracle ever recorded, and all miracles are great. The miracle of Saul of Tarsus getting saved ranks right up there with the most profound of miracles in scripture. Why do I say this. Because where else in scripture do we read in so many different places about one man getting saved? We find in scripture three detailed accounts of how Saul of Tarsus got saved. When anyone gets saved they pass from death unto life, which is a miracle, and the greatest miracle of your own life. We read these words of Jesus in JOHN 5:24 *Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that heareth my word, and believeth on him that sent me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation; but is passed from death unto life.* When Saul of Tarsus got saved we find the chiefest of sinners passing from death unto life. His dire situation changed, and changed for the much better from that moment on. This was a great miracle, and the Holy Ghost has left it as inspired scripture in three different places in ACTS.

We have (as I mentioned) three accounts in scripture of the conversion of Saul of Tarsus. These accounts are found in ACTS 9, ACTS 22, and ACTS 26. ACTS 9 records the account of Saul of Tarsus getting saved from the perspective of the writer Luke, the author of the book of ACTS. In ACTS 22 and ACTS 26 Luke records Paul's own words of this same account. Each of these three passages of scripture point out some different things concerning the salvation of Saul of Tarsus, so we will reference each account more than once in the following discussion.

We have spent much time considering the background of Saul of Tarsus, whom we know as Paul. We have discussed his Jewish roots, his manner of life, and his way of thinking up to this point in his life. We have also mentioned his successful career, his excellent leadership qualities, and his many worldly accomplishments up to this point in his life. Knowing all of this helps us better appreciate and understand the following accounts.

ACTS 9:1 *And Saul, yet breathing out threatenings and slaughter against the disciples of the Lord, went unto the high priest, 2 And desired of him letters to Damascus to the synagogues, that if he found any of this way, whether they were men or women, he might bring them bound unto Jerusalem. 3 And as he journeyed, he came near*

Damascus: and suddenly there shined round about him a light from heaven: 4 And he fell to the earth, and heard a voice saying unto him, Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me? 5 And he said, Who art thou, Lord? And the Lord said, I am Jesus whom thou persecutest: it is hard for thee to kick against the pricks. 6 And he trembling and astonished said, Lord, what wilt thou have me to do? And the Lord said unto him, Arise, and go into the city, and it shall be told thee what thou must do.

ACTS 22:3 I am verily a man which am a Jew, born in Tarsus, a city in Cilicia, yet brought up in this city at the feet of Gamaliel, and taught according to the perfect manner of the law of the fathers, and was zealous toward God, as ye all are this day. 4 And I persecuted this way unto the death, binding and delivering into prisons both men and women. 5 As also the high priest doth bear me witness, and all the estate of the elders: from whom also I received letters unto the brethren, and went to Damascus, to bring them which were there bound unto Jerusalem, for to be punished. 6 And it came to pass, that, as I made my journey, and was come nigh unto Damascus about noon, suddenly there shone from heaven a great light round about me. 7 And I fell unto the ground, and heard a voice saying unto me, Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me? 8 And I answered, Who art thou, Lord? And he said unto me, I am Jesus of Nazareth, whom thou persecutest. 9 And they that were with me saw indeed the light, and were afraid; but they heard not the voice of him that spake to me. 10 And I said, What shall I do, Lord? And the Lord said unto me, Arise, and go into Damascus; and there it shall be told thee of all things which are appointed for thee to do.

ACTS 26:9 I verily thought with myself, that I ought to do many things contrary to the name of Jesus of Nazareth. 10 Which thing I also did in Jerusalem: and many of the saints did I shut up in prison, having received authority from the chief priests; and when they were put to death, I gave my voice against them. 11 And I punished them oft in every synagogue, and compelled them to blaspheme; and being exceedingly mad against them, I persecuted them even unto strange cities. 12 Whereupon as I went to Damascus with authority and commission from the chief priests, 13 At midday, C king, I saw in the way a light from heaven, above the brightness of the sun, shining round about me and them which journeyed with me. 14 And when we were all fallen to the earth, I heard a voice speaking unto me, and saying in the Hebrew tongue, Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me? it is hard for thee to kick against the pricks. 15 And I said, Who art thou, Lord? And he said, I am Jesus whom thou persecutest.

There is a multitude of facts given in these scriptures. ACTS 9:1 points out the focus of Saul of Tarsus at this point in his life where we read: *And Saul, yet breathing out threatenings and slaughter against the disciples of the Lord...* This staunch religious upbringing of Saul only brought him to the point where he was totally focused on *...breathing out threatenings and slaughter against the disciples of the Lord*. The Greek word translated "breathing out" means that threatenings and slaughter were, so to speak, the element from which he drew his breath. In other words his breathing out threatening and slaughter against the disciples was really an outward expression of what was in the heart of Saul of Tarsus. "Threatenings and slaughter" translates into threatenings and murder. Murder was in the heart of Saul of Tarsus. In GALATIANS 5:19-21 the Apostle Paul writes that murder is one of the works of the flesh. In ROMANS 1:28 & 29 Paul writes that murder is the result of a reprobate mind. Paul uses the word "reprobate" in one form or another eight times in his writings. A "reprobate mind" simply means a mind of which God cannot approve. Paul writes in ROMANS 7 of the struggle between the carnal mind, and the mind of Christ, which are in conflict the one with the other in the life of a Christian. The mind of Christ can only be found in a believer, and in ACTS 9:1 Saul of Tarsus was not a believer. Not all believers yield to the mind of Christ that is in them, but all full overcomers will. In ROMANS 8:7 Paul writes that *...the carnal mind is enmity against God: for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be*. Thus we get a little glimpse of the heart and mind of Saul of Tarsus here in ACTS 9:1. Such a sinful heart he had, yet he didn't think so. He was against the disciples of the Lord. But what he was really against was the constant pricking of the goad against his conscience. The words of Christian martyrs, like Stephen, were pricking his heart and conscience.

Let's consider the pricking of the goad for a moment, for it plays an important part our in our understanding of Jesus words to Saul of Tarsus. The goad was an

instrument that was used by those plowing or driving oxen or cattle. It was a long sharp pointed pole about eight feet long. Often the sharp point was made from iron. If the oxen or cattle were to kick against the goad of their driver, some injury would result, thus the driver got control over these large animals and thus was able to make them go where he wanted them to go. When Jesus told Saul of Tarsus: *I am Jesus whom thou persecutest: it is hard for thee to kick against the pricks...* He was saying "you are finding it painful to kick against the ox-goad of your own conscience." ECCLESIASTES 12:11 tells us: *The words of the wise are as goads, and as nails fastened by the masters of assemblies, which are given from one shepherd.* Again it was the Holy Ghost inspired words of Christian martyrs, like Stephen, that were pricking, like a goad, the heart and conscience of Saul of Tarsus. Years later the Apostle Paul wrote from personal experience these words found in HEBREWS 4:12 -- *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 discernor of the thoughts and intents of the heart.*

For a few moments let's consider where Paul was in his thinking on the day he met Jesus for the first time. Paul wrote some things about himself at this point in his life, which we have looked at before in this study. One portion of scripture that stands out in my mind is found in 1 TIMOTHY 1. Paul there writes of the time when he was *...breathing out threatenings and slaughter against the disciples of the Lord...* . Paul writes in 1 TIMOTHY 1:13 that he *...was before a blasphemer, and a persecutor, and injurious: but I obtained mercy, because I did it ignorantly in unbelief.* Paul acknowledges that he ignorantly in unbelief breathed out threatenings and slaughter against the disciples of the Lord. This word "ignorantly" (number 50 in The Strong's Greek Concordance) is a verb used 22 times in the New Testament. Twenty-two is the number of LIGHT. The bright LIGHT of Jesus Christ erased Saul of Tarsus ignorance in unbelief on the road to Damascus. The fact that Jesus is the Light of the world is talked about in many scriptures. See JOHN 1:1-10 for starters. Who was the Light on the darkest of desert nights that lead the children of Israel in the wilderness? It was the Light of Jesus. Yet educated Jews such as Saul of Tarsus ignored the Light of Jesus and His righteousness, and ignorantly went about to establish their own righteousness. This word "ignorantly" used in 1 TIMOTHY 1:13 does not mean he (Saul of Tarsus) was an idiot, but rather means that in spite of his great education, Saul of Tarsus did not know certain things. What he didn't know was the simplicity that is in Christ Jesus. It was unbelief in Jesus, and traditional Jewish ways of thinking that left Saul of Tarsus in this state of ignorance: *...I did it ignorantly in unbelief.* Unbelief is simply a lack of faith. The Apostle Paul himself was able to write about this kind of mind set in the following scriptures. Starting in ROMANS 10 we read these words that Paul wrote unto his fellow Jews: ROMANS 10:1 *Brethren, my heart's desire and prayer to God for Israel is, that they might be saved. 2 For I bear them record that they have a zeal of God, but not according to knowledge. 3 For they being ignorant of God's righteousness, and going about to establish their own righteousness, have not submitted themselves unto the righteousness of God. 4 For Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth.* Paul further wrote this in ROMANS 3:22: *...the righteousness of God which is by faith of Jesus Christ unto all and upon all them that believe.* Again in 2 CORINTHIANS 5:21 Paul writes: *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.* What we have seen in these few verses is that the righteousness of God comes only by believing in and accepting the resurrected Jesus Christ as our own personal Saviour. We find the phrase "the righteousness of God" in eight scriptures. Some of the meanings of the number eight is: NEW CREATION; NEW BIRTH; NEW BEGINNING; and RESURRECTION. All of these meanings in one way or another point us to our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. The number eight is also a number for the Bride of Christ, which represents that rib portion company of Christians from the body of Christ that will make up the Bride of Christ. These are the ones who fully understand and believe and know the depths of *...the righteousness of God.*

All three accounts of the conversion of Saul of Tarsus talk about the sudden light that appeared from heaven. ACTS 9:3 says: *...and suddenly there shined round about him a light from heaven.* In ACTS 22:6 Paul says: *...about noon, suddenly there shone from*

heaven a great light round about me. And ACTS 26:13 records: *At midday, Cking, I saw in the way a light from heaven, above the brightness of the sun, shining round about me and them which journeyed with me.* We know that this light was Jesus appearing unto Saul of Tarsus. We just briefly mentioned some facts concerning light above. In JOHN 8:12 we find these words of Jesus: *...I am the light of the world: he that followeth me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life.* This phrase "the light of life" is only found this one time in scripture. It means that Jesus is the Light of everlasting life. Life is the opposite of death, just like Light is the opposite of darkness. Here in JOHN 8:12 we find that Jesus is both Light and Life. Saul of Tarsus up to this point in his life was living in darkness, and had the sting of death all over him. Later in 1 CORINTHIANS 15:56 Paul wrote: *The sting of death is sin; and the strength of sin is the law.* Such was Saul of Tarsus; dead in trespasses and living in the darkness of sin. Then Jesus came! Jesus the Light of the world came and lit up Saul of Tarsus. So bright was the glory of that Light that Saul of Tarsus fell to the earth. {See ACTS 9:4; 22:7 and 26:14.} So bright was the glory of that Light that Saul of Tarsus was left blind for three days. (More on this later, but for now see ACTS 9:8 & 9 & 18; and ACTS 22:11-13.) So bright was the glory of that Light that Saul of Tarsus that day passed from death unto life! How dark is death, and how bright is life? Additionally JOHN 5:24 tells us: *Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that heareth my word, and believeth on him that sent me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation; but is passed from death unto life.* Because of this bright Light of Jesus shining on Saul of Tarsus, the Apostle Paul was later able to write theses words found 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.*

ALL three accounts of the conversion of Saul of Tarsus talk about the voice of Jesus. ACTS 9:4 *And he fell to the earth, and heard a voice saying unto him, Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me?* ACTS 22:7 *And I fell unto the ground, and heard a voice saying unto me, Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me?* ACTS 26:14 *...I heard a voice speaking unto me, and saying in the Hebrew tongue, Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me? it is hard for thee to kick against the pricks.* ACTS 22:9 further records: *And they that were with me saw indeed the light, and were afraid; but they heard not the voice of him that spake to me.*

Recall from our last study on hearing how it is the Lord Jesus Christ Himself who is the heart examiner. We read in REVELATION 2:23 these words of Jesus *...I am he which searcheth the reins and hearts...* This was a quote 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.* When Saul of Tarsus was breathing out threatenings and slaughter against the disciples of the Lord, he was really breathing out threatenings and slaughter against the Lord Himself. Saul of Tarsus probably didn't know the words of Jesus spoken in MATTHEW 25:40. In MATTHEW 25:40 we read these words of Jesus: *...Verily I say unto you, Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me.* While on the road to Damascus Jesus reached His limit with old Saul of Tarsus, and came and appeared Himself unto Saul and asked him this question found in ACTS 9:4, 22:7 and 26:14 *...Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me?* This was a heart penetrating question. Saul of Tarsus knew from the lips of martyrs like Stephen that he was really persecuting the Lord, otherwise why did Saul at this time not ask the question: "when did I Persecute you Lord?" Rather Saul of Tarsus asks this question of the Lord recorded in ACTS 9:5, 22:8 and 26:15: *"Who art thou, Lord?"* Jesus answers Saul of Tarsus' question in these same three verses, and ACTS 22:8 records it like this: *I am Jesus of Nazareth, whom thou persecutest.* This simple answer of the Lord completely answered any doubts Saul of Tarsus may of had of who it was that was talking to him.

Then Saul of Tarsus believed, and having called on the Lord, asked Jesus this second question recorded in ACTS 9, and ACTS 22. ACTS 9:6 *And he trembling and astonished said, Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?* ACTS 22:10 *And I said, What shall I do, Lord?* This was a statement of faith, for at that point in time Saul of Tarsus got saved, thus changing his life for the better for ever. That is why with full assurance of faith years later the Apostle Paul was able to write with full knowledge, and first hand

experience this fact found in ROMANS 10:13 *For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved.*

Lord, what wilt thou have me to do? and What shall I do, Lord? are really the same question, which a Pharisee taught from his youth to be a Pharisee would naturally ask, for from his youth Saul of Tarsus has been living a religion of do. I wonder how many times Saul of Tarsus asked his Pharisee Father, "what shall I do?" But now for the first time in his life Saul of Tarsus would realize that there was nothing more he could do other than believe Jesus. *What shall I do, Lord?* is a statement of belief in Jesus, and shows Saul's willingness to go on with the Lord. In an instant of time he has given up years of seemingly wasted learning, and a very high profile career. He knows he now has no where to go, and nothing to do. He realizes deep in his heart the facts of 2 CORINTHIANS 5:17, which reads: *Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new.*

Jesus then tells Saul to arise. Recall that the brightness of the glory of Jesus had knocked Saul of Tarsus, and those with him, to the earth. Jesus did not come to earth in the first place to knock man down, but rather He came to lift man up, if they would only believe on Him. The same is true when Jesus appeared unto Saul of Tarsus. Jesus did not appear unto Saul of Tarsus to knock him down, but rather to lift him up. Now that Saul was a believer he was living on resurrection ground. Saul of Tarsus had passed from death unto life. JOHN 5:24 tells us: *Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that heareth my word, and believeth on him that sent me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation; but is passed from death unto life.* This is what is meant when Jesus says to Saul of Tarsus in ACTS 9:6, and ACTS 22:10: "Arise." "Arise up from the dead" is one of the meanings here. ACTS 26:16 tells it like this: *But rise, and stand upon thy feet..* . The reason Jesus wanted Saul of Tarsus to stand upon his feet carries at least a two-fold meaning here also. Jesus wanted Saul to realize that he had now passed from death unto life, as we have mentioned, and Jesus wanted Saul of Tarsus to pay close attention to what He was instructing him to do, so he had this new born soldier in the Lord's army to stand at attention. So Jesus says to Saul of Tarsus: *But rise, and stand upon thy feet...* .

Let's look at these words "thy feet." The phrase "thy feet" is not by accident found twenty times in scripture. Twenty is the number of REDEMPTION. GALATIANS 3:13 & 14 speaks this of REDEMPTION: *Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us: for it is written, Cursed is every one that hangeth on a tree: 14 That the blessing of Abraham might come on the Gentiles through Jesus Christ; that we might receive the promise of the Spirit through faith.* The Apostle Paul often wrote of REDEMPTION, and wrote the following concerning Jesus, whom he first met on the road to Damascus: 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:...* . One of the meanings of REDEMPTION is a "release from sin." Saul of Tarsus here in ACTS 26:16 has just been released from sin, and so he has every right to now stand upon his feet.

God told Moses in EXODUS 3:5 *...put off thy shoes from off thy feet, for the place whereon thou standest is holy ground.* Stephen repeats this statement in ACTS 7:33 in a sermon that Saul of Tarsus heard. Now Saul of Tarsus find his feet on holy ground (so to speak); ground that was lit up by the brightness of Jesus. And really from that day forward everywhere the Apostle Paul went, he brought a message from the light of Jesus that first shown upon him that day on the road to Damascus. The prophet Ezekiel too saw the brightness of the glory of the Lord in EZEKIEL 1:26-28, and he too fell upon his face to the earth. And we read what the Lord spoke unto him this in EZEKIEL 2:1 *And he said unto me, Son of man, stand upon thy feet, and I will speak unto thee.* The same thing is here happening to Saul of Tarsus. That is, he was told to stand on his feet to receive instructions from the Lord Jesus Christ Himself. Saul of Tarsus was about to receive good tidings from Jesus Christ Himself. We read in ISAIAH 52:7 *How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of him that bringeth good tidings, that publisheth peace; that bringeth good tidings of good, that publisheth salvation; that saith unto Zion, Thy God reigneth!* And the Apostle Paul quotes this verse from ISAIAH when he writes in ROMANS 10:15 *And how shall they preach, except they be sent? as it is written, How beautiful are the feet of them that preach the gospel of peace, and bring glad tidings of good things!* Saul of Tarsus is about to be sent by Jesus Himself to preach the gospel of

peace and glad tidings of good things, and that is why the Lord first told him to ...rise, and stand upon thy feet... .

The instructions that Saul of Tarsus received from Jesus that day on the road to Damascus are recorded for us in ACTS 26:16-18. 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.* These three verses are really one sentence spoken by Jesus. There is a lot said in this one sentence. In this one sentence we find the answer to Saul of Tarsus' question: *Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?* and *What shall I do, Lord?* In this one sentence we find Saul of Tarsus given instructions that would take him through every day for the rest of his life. In this one sentence we find Saul of Tarsus made a minister and a witness for Jesus Christ. In this one sentence we find Saul of Tarsus anointed an Apostle! In this one sentence we find Saul of Tarsus is now wanted of the Jews! In this one sentence we find Saul of Tarsus also wanted of the Gentiles. In this one sentence we find Saul of Tarsus delivering others from darkness unto light; opening blind eyes that they may see. In this one sentence we find Saul of Tarsus learning of an inheritance among them which are sanctified by faith in Christ Jesus! In this one sentence we find Saul of Tarsus a changed man forever. I dare say the list of things found in this one sentence is nearly endless, so let's examine some of these things.

First off as we cover some of the things said in this one sentence of ACTS 26:16-18, I want to note a definition from Strong's Concordance that tells us an Apostle is a delegate, a messenger, he that is sent, or one sent forth with orders. Apostle comes from a root word meaning to send, to send forth, to send away, or to send out. In ACTS 26:17 we find Saul of Tarsus sent to the Gentiles by Jesus Christ Himself. Jesus says it like this in verse 17: *Delivering thee from the people, and from the Gentiles, unto whom now I send thee.* Paul didn't make himself an Apostle, rather it was the Lord Jesus Christ who made Paul an Apostle, and Jesus told Paul this here in ACTS 26:17. The Apostle Paul never forgot this, and often acknowledged it was Jesus Himself who made him the Apostle that he was. There are plenty of scriptures in Paul's gospel which also reference this fact. Here are some of these scriptures in the order we find them in the Bible. ROMANS 1:1 *Paul, a servant of Jesus Christ, called to be an apostle, separated unto the gospel of God,* 2 *(Which he had promised afore by his prophets in the holy scriptures,) 3 Concerning his Son Jesus Christ our Lord, which was made of the seed of David according to the flesh; 4 And declared to be the Son of God with power, according to the spirit of holiness, by the resurrection from the dead: 5 By whom we have received grace and apostleship, for obedience to the faith among all nations, for his name: 6 Among whom are ye also the called of Jesus Christ: 7 To all that be in Rome, beloved of God, called to be saints: Grace to you and peace from God our Father, and the Lord Jesus Christ.* ROMANS 11:13 *...I am the apostle of the Gentiles, I magnify mine office:...* 1 CORINTHIANS 1:1 *Paul, called to be an apostle of Jesus Christ through the will of God,...* 1 CORINTHIANS 9:2 *If I be not an apostle unto others, yet doubtless I am to you: for the seal of mine apostleship are ye in the Lord.* 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.* 2 CORINTHIANS 1:1 *Paul, an apostle of Jesus Christ by the will of God,...* GALATIANS 1:1 *Paul, an apostle, (not of men, neither by man, but by Jesus Christ, and God the Father, who raised him from the dead;).* EPHESIANS 1:1 *Paul, an apostle of Jesus Christ by the will of God,...* COLOSSIANS 1:1 *Paul, an apostle of Jesus Christ by the will of God,...* 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;...* 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 1:1 *Paul, an apostle of Jesus Christ by the will of God, according to the promise of life which is in Christ Jesus,...* 2 TIMOTHY 1:11 *Whereunto I am appointed a preacher, and an apostle, and a teacher of the Gentiles.* TITUS 1:1 *Paul, a servant of God, and an*

apostle of Jesus Christ, according to the faith of God's elect,... . And so we see that it was Jesus Christ who called Paul to be an Apostle, and He did so on the day Saul of Tarsus got saved.

Of course Saul of Tarsus wasn't ready or trained of the Lord the day he got saved to be the great Apostle he became, but he was called that day to the work of an Apostle. Secondly in this long sentence of ACTS 26:16-18 we find the Lord telling Saul of Tarsus how it was that he was going to learn how to be an Apostle. 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;...* . Jesus told Saul of Tarsus that "I have appeared unto thee for this purpose," and "I will appear unto thee;..." again in the future. This brings us to the certification process that Paul would undertake to become the Apostle Paul. We read of this in GALATIANS 1. 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.* Let me paraphrase what Paul wrote here like this in my own words: *I Paul have a certificate of the Lord stating that the gospel which I preach is not something that I learned from man, even though I had some wonderful teachers. Rather the gospel which I preach came to me directly by Jesus Christ Himself, who appeared unto me several different times at several different places, and revealed this gospel unto me.*

Now we are jumping ahead a little bit here in the life of the Apostle Paul, but scripture gives several accounts along the way of Paul's life when the Lord appeared unto him. Of course the first appearance of Jesus unto Paul was on the road to Damascus, which is recorded in three portions of ACTS. GALATIANS 1:12 which we just read indicates that Jesus Christ Himself appeared unto Paul in one fashion or another numerous different times, and revealed Himself unto Paul, and gave him the gospel he preached. In 2 CORINTHIANS 12:7 Paul writes of "*the abundance of the revelations*" that were given him of Jesus Christ. In EPHESIANS 3:3 Paul writes "*How that by revelation he (Jesus Christ) made known unto me the mystery;...*" . And it was Jesus Christ who revealed these many mysteries unto Paul that he was able to write about. How many times did Jesus appear unto Paul so far? I can't say, but no doubt there were numerous appearances. And we read in scripture of several more appearances by Jesus Christ unto Paul.

In ACTS 22:17-21 we again read of the Lord Jesus Christ appearing unto Paul and again sending him unto the Gentiles. ACTS 22:17 *And it came to pass, that, when I was come again to Jerusalem, even while I prayed in the temple, I was in a trance; 18 And saw him saying unto me, Make haste, and get thee quickly out of Jerusalem: for they will not receive thy testimony concerning me. 19 And I said, Lord, they know that 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. 21 And he said unto me, Depart: for I will send thee far hence unto the Gentiles.*

Another time the Lord appeared unto Paul was after he went far hence unto the Gentiles, during the time of the event which took place in ACTS 14:19 while on his first missionary journey. ACTS 14:19 *And there came thither [certain] Jews from Antioch and Iconium, who persuaded the people, and, having stoned Paul, drew [him] out of the city, supposing he had been dead.* We conjecture that it was at this time when the events of II CORINTHIANS 12:1-4 happened in the life of Paul, even though he doesn't so state that this happened to himself. II CORINTHIANS 12:1 *It is not expedient for me doubtless to glory. I will come to visions and revelations of the Lord. 2 I knew a man in Christ above fourteen years ago, (whether in the body, I cannot tell; or whether out of the body, I cannot tell: God knoweth;) such an one caught up to the third heaven. 3 And I knew such a man, (whether in the body, or out of the body, I cannot tell: God knoweth;) 4 How that he was caught up into paradise, and heard unspeakable words, which it is not lawful for a man to utter.* In other words there was no language to tell the wonderful heavenly words spoken by Jesus, even though Paul knew three languages.

Still another time the Lord appeared unto Paul was during the time of one of the darkest hours of his Christian life, (it was the middle of the night), and Paul may have

felt like his ministry was now over, even though he had not yet accomplished all that the Lord had told Ananias of Damascus that Paul would do. (The Lord had appeared unto Ananias in ACTS 9:15 and told him that Paul would be a chosen vessel to bear the name of the Lord unto the Gentiles, and kings, and the children of Israel. Up to this point in Paul's life he has met with very few kings, if any). This time that the Lord appeared unto Paul is found in ACTS 23:11 *And the night following the Lord stood by him, and said, Be of good cheer, Paul: for as thou hast testified of me in Jerusalem, so must thou bear witness also at Rome.*

Then there is the time the Lord appeared unto Paul was during the storm of ACTS 27 when Paul and those with him again face shipwreck. ACTS 27: 20 *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. 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. 26 Howbeit we must be cast upon a certain island.*

Then probably the next to last time the Lord appeared unto Paul is found in I TIMOTHY 4. I TIMOTHY 4:16 *At my first answer no man stood with me, but all [men] forsook me: [I pray God] that it may not be laid to their charge. 17 Notwithstanding the Lord stood with me, and strengthened me; that by me the preaching might be fully known, and [that] all the Gentiles might hear: and I was delivered out of the mouth of the lion. 18 And the Lord shall deliver me from every evil work, and will preserve [me] unto his heavenly kingdom: to whom [be] glory for ever and ever. Amen.* Shortly after this time the Apostle Paul saw the Lord in heaven, and was greeted with words similar to those found in MATTHEW 25:21 *His lord said unto him, Well done, [thou] good and faithful servant: thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will make thee ruler over many things: enter thou into the joy of thy lord.*

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 far we have covered these facts from this one sentence of ACTS 26:16-18. Saul of Tarsus was here called to be an Apostle, and the Lord Jesus Christ Himself was the one who many times along life's way appeared unto Saul of Tarsus, and taught him the gospel he was to preach. The next point I want to address from this sentence is the fact that Saul of Tarsus was sent unto the Gentiles. Imagine Saul of Tarsus, that Pharisee, that staunch son of a Pharisee, that man who had lived his life according to the law of Moses so carefully, an expert in the law of Moses, now being ordered of the Lord Jesus Christ Himself to go to those heathen Gentiles who were not under the law, nor knew nothing, or very little about the law! We know from scripture that the Jews often became indignant at the very mention of the word "Gentile." Probably the best example of this fact is found in ACTS 22. The Apostle Paul was making his defense speech before the Jews in Jerusalem in this chapter, and he had their undivided attention until he said the word "Gentiles" in verse 21. ACTS 22:22 tells what happened next: *And they gave him audience unto this word, (Gentiles) and then lifted up their voices, and said, Away with such a fellow from the earth: for it is not fit that he should live.* From that point on for several years Paul was a prisoner of the Roman Empire, (Gentiles). While in prison Paul continued to preach mainly to prisoners, most of whom were also Gentiles. While a prisoner Paul was allowed visitors, to whom he also preached, some of whom were Gentiles. While a prisoner Paul also got to preach to kings, like king Agrippa in ACTS 26, and governors like Felix in ACTS 24, and Porcius Festus in ACTS 24, all Gentiles. While a prisoner Paul also got to preach to Caesar, a point alluded to in 2 TIMOTHY 4, (see also ACTS 25:10; 25:21 and 28:19). PHILIPPIANS 1:13 and 4:22 tell how Paul as a prisoner also got to preach to those of Caesar's household, Gentiles.

Now let's go back in our thinking again to the day Saul of Tarsus met Jesus on the road to Damascus, and Jesus told him that He was sending Saul to the Gentiles. This, no doubt, was a shocker to Saul, but he didn't seem to flinch at this statement like the Jews of ACTS 22:22 did. When Saul asked Jesus "*Lord, what wilt thou have me to do? and What shall I do, Lord?*" Jesus answered him that He was sending him to the Gentiles. This was Jesus announcement of a major change, and that Saul of Tarsus would be one of the main ones ushering in this change. The reason for this change in program is found in JOHN 1:11 *He came unto his own, and his own received him not.* This change in program we call The Church Age, or this Age of Grace, which we are currently living in. ACTS 15:14 is probably one of the best single scripture that describes this change, and reads like this: *Simeon hath declared how God at the first did visit the Gentiles, to take out of them a people for his name.* Simeon is Peter, who was sent by the Lord in ACTS 10 to the Gentile house of Cornelius. Peter was very skeptical about going to the house of Cornelius in the first place, but being convinced by the Lord in a trance, Peter went. During the course of his visit an astonishing thing happened; all at the house of Cornelius got filled with the Holy Ghost and began to speak with tongues. When Peter got back to Jerusalem in ACTS 11 the Jews strongly contended with him about his preaching unto the Gentiles in the first place, and with much persuasion Peter convinced the believers at Judaea that God is no respecter of persons. However Peter wasn't given the gospel unto the Gentiles; Paul was. Peter was used of the Lord however to lead many Gentiles to Christ, who Paul the Apostle to the Gentiles later got to teach, (see 1 CORINTHIANS 1:12; 3:22 and 9:5).

Let's pause here for a moment and go back to DEUTERONOMY 7 and read why the Jews were God's chosen people. 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; 2 And when the LORD thy God shall deliver them before thee; thou shalt smite them, and utterly destroy them; thou shalt make no covenant with them, nor shew mercy unto them: 3 Neither shalt thou make marriages with them; thy daughter thou shalt not give unto his son, nor his daughter shalt thou take unto thy son. 4 For they will turn away thy son from following me, that they may serve other gods: so will the anger of the LORD be kindled against you, and destroy thee suddenly. 5 But thus shall ye deal with them; ye shall destroy their altars, and break down their images, and cut down their groves, and burn their graven images with fire. 6 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. 7 The LORD did not set his love upon you, nor choose you, because ye were more in number than any people; for ye were the fewest of all people: 8 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. 9 Know therefore that the LORD thy God, he is God, the faithful God, which keepeth covenant and mercy with them that love him and keep his commandments to a thousand generations; 10 And repayeth them that hate him to their face, to destroy them: he will not be slack to him that hateth him, he will repay him to his face. 11 Thou shalt therefore keep the commandments, and the statutes, and the judgments, which I command thee this day, to do them.*

Centuries later Jesus the Messiah was sent to the Jews, but like we read in JOHN 1:11 above: *He came unto his own, and his own received him not.* Now here in ACTS 26:16-18 in one sentence Jesus announces to Saul of Tarsus that He is going to make him a minister, a witness, and really an apostle, not unto the Jews, God's chosen people of whom Saul of Tarsus was one of it's proudest member, but rather Jesus was going to make Saul of Tarsus an apostle unto the Gentiles! What a shocker! And what a hard thing it would have been for proud old Saul of Tarsus to receive had he not received this news from the Lord Jesus Christ Himself. This statement was exceeding, abundantly above all Saul of Tarsus could even think. However we find Saul of Tarsus did receive this shocking news with all readiness of mind, {ACTS 17:11} with all humility of mind, {ACTS 20:19} in lowliness of mind, {PHILIPPIANS 2:3} and in all humbleness of mind {COLOSSIANS 3:12}. This was the beginning of Saul of Tarsus letting the mind of Christ

rule and reign within his spirit. I know he didn't understand all of this sentence at this point in time in his life, yet by faith he accepted these words of Jesus as the words of truth they were. And we also know from JOHN 14:6 that Jesus said: *I am the way, the truth, and the life...* . From that day forward in Saul of Tarsus' life, Jesus was his focal point. In other words Jesus became his first love.

We have read in DEUTERONOMY 7 why God chose the Jews to be a special people unto Himself, which somewhat helps explain their narrow minded thinking toward the Gentiles. But as Peter had to learn in ACTS 10:34 & 35 -- ...God is no respecter of persons: *35 But in every nation he that feareth him, and worketh righteousness, is accepted with him.* God has always been a God of grace unto all people. Gentiles were saved all through out scripture. Enoch was not a Jew, and God translated him because Enoch put his faith and trust in God. Noah was not a Jew, but GENESIS 6:8 tells us that *...Noah found grace in the eyes of the LORD.* All of us are descendants of Noah. Had Noah not found grace in the eyes of the Lord, none of us would be here. Rahab was a Gentile harlot, but by putting her faith and trust in the God of Israel she became one of the grandmothers of Jesus, a fact she herself never knew! So did Ruth the Moabitess, a Gentile. The Shulamite of SONG OF SOLOMON too was a Gentile, typical of the Bride of Christ. NUMBERS 11:4 mentions the "mixt multitude" (Gentiles) that was redeemed out of Egypt along with the children of Israel. Both MATTHEW 12:17-21 and LUKE 2:32 quote from ISAIAH 42, which speaks of Jesus. MATTHEW 12:21 tells us: *And in his name shall the Gentiles trust.* LUKE 2:32 reminds us that Jesus is: *A light to lighten the Gentiles, and the glory of thy people Israel.* Jesus healed many Gentiles during his ministry here on earth proving once again ...God is no respecter of persons. In JOHN 4 Jesus dealt with the woman of Samaria, a Gentile, who in verse 9 reminded Jesus: *...for the Jews have no dealings with the Samaritans.* However after Jesus revealed Himself unto her she became a testimony for Him. JOHN 4:41 & 42 state: *And many more believed because of his own word; 42 And said unto the woman, Now we believe, not because of thy saying: for we have heard him ourselves, and know that this is indeed the Christ, the Saviour of the world.* And in REVELATION 5:9 we read of all the full overcomers singing 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...* . Every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation includes Gentile overcomers from every walk in life; Gentiles, who like Enoch, and Noah, and Rahab, and Ruth, believed God, and walked by faith with God.

Why did I mention all of this about the Gentiles? To get us to better appreciate the magnitude of this statement Jesus made to Saul of Tarsus when He arrested him on the road to Damascus: *...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; Delivering thee from the people, and from the Gentiles, unto whom now I send thee, 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.* {ACTS 26:16-18}.

We mentioned earlier that ACTS 26:16-18 is really one sentence. 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.* In this one sentence we find Saul of Tarsus told that he would be delivering others from darkness unto light, and opening blind eyes that they may see; turning them from the power of Satan unto God. What a mouth full just this one part of Jesus statement unto Saul of Tarsus is! So let's focus on some thoughts from verse 18.

We know that glory of the bright light of Jesus blinded Saul of Tarsus on that road to Damascus. ACTS 9:8 & 9 tells us: *And Saul arose from the earth; and when his eyes were opened, he saw no man: but they led him by the hand, and brought him into Damascus. 9 And he was three days without sight, and neither did eat nor drink.* ACTS 22:11 records it like this: *And when I could not see for the glory of that light, being led by the hand of*

them that were with me, I came into Damascus. Saul of Tarsus was physically blinded by the glory of the light of Jesus, while at the same time his spiritual eyes were open to see Jesus, and receive Him into his heart as his own personal Saviour. There is kind of a double irony here. Saul of Tarsus was physically blinded while at the same time being spiritually enlightened. Also while in this physically blind condition he was told he would be sent to the Gentiles to open their spiritual blind eyes too. While physically blinded, Saul of Tarsus was in darkness and need someone to lead him by the hand. While in this condition Jesus told him that he would be the one used to take spiritually blinded Gentiles by the hand, and lead them to the Light of Jesus, thus turning them from darkness to light. This is how it is said in ACTS 26:18 *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.*

I am always amazed since we did our meaning of numbers study years ago how I am constantly find more and more how perfectly inspired of the Holy Ghost the scriptures are. I see this again in the little word "turn" in ACTS 26:18. The Greek word that is used here in ACTS 26:18 that translates into our English "turn" is *epistrepho* {ep-ee-stref'-o}, number 1994 in our Strong Greek Concordance. We find this word (*epistrepho* {ep-ee-stref'-o}, number 1994 in our Strong Greek Concordance) used 39 times in the New Testament. The number 39 was a hard one to define when we did our numbers study, but we found it to mean CHANGE. This is exactly what Jesus was telling Saul of Tarsus here, that He was going to use Saul in the ministry to make a tremendous positive CHANGE in the lives of millions of Gentiles! The way this CHANGE would be made is to "turn" the Gentiles from the darkness of sin unto the Light of our lovely Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ; to "turn" them from the power of Satan unto the exceeding greater power of God. This Greek word (*epistrepho* {ep-ee-stref'-o}, number 1994 in our Strong Greek Concordance) is translated into the following words or phrases in our Bible: turn; be converted; return; turn about; and turn again. Some examples of how this word is used by Paul in scripture follow. In ACTS 14 Paul and Barnabas were in the middle of their missionary journey, which we call Paul's first missionary journey, and they had come to the town of Lystra. While at Lystra Paul was used of the Lord to heal a lame man. The whole town then began to worship Paul and Barnabas, which so upset Paul and Barnabas that they rent their clothes and cried out in ACTS 14:15 *And saying, Sirs, why do ye these things? We also are men of like passions with you, and preach unto you that ye should turn <1994> from these vanities unto the living God, which made heaven, and earth, and the sea, and all things that are therein:...* In ACTS 26:20 Paul tells how his preaching was *...first unto them of Damascus, and at Jerusalem, and throughout all the coasts of Judaea, and then to the Gentiles, that they should repent and turn <1994> to God, and do works meet for repentance.* The first Epistle in time that Paul wrote was 1 THESSALONIANS. In 1 THESSALONIANS 1:9 Paul wrote about speaking unto many people who witnessed the CHANGE that had taken place to those of Thessalonica, stating: *For they themselves shew of us what manner of entering in we had unto you, and how ye turned <1994> to God from idols to serve the living and true God;...* And really this verse is the essence of Paul's gospel unto the Gentiles, for he preached a message that CHANGED their live for the positive forever, and they *turned <1994> to God from idols to serve the living and true God.* Thus Paul fulfilled those things spoken of him in ACTS 26:17 & 18 -- *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 positive CHANGE that Jesus is talking to Saul of Tarsus about here revolves around this key word "turn" of ACTS 26:18, which we have just looked at noting how it points to CHANGE. In verse 18 two things of bondage mentioned to turn "from," and two free things are mentioned to "receive." One definition of CHANGE is to replace one thing with something else. Jesus in ACTS 26:18 is telling Saul of Tarsus that he would be a minister used to CHANGE the Gentiles from a place of darkness, and replace that with a place of light. Jesus also in ACTS 26:18 is telling Saul of Tarsus that he would be a minister used to CHANGE the Gentiles from the darkness of the power of Satan, and

replace this with the light and the manifold power of God. Let's look at these points a little closer.

Webster's Dictionary gives one definition of bondage as being in subjection to some force, compulsion, or influence. Sin is the influence we were all born under. PSALMS 51:5 indicates that we all were conceived in sin and shapen in iniquity. ROMANS 3:23 further tells us that we all *...have sinned, and come short of the glory of God.* Sin equates to the "darkness" referenced in ACTS 26:18. "Darkness" often times in scripture is associated with death. A couple of quick examples of this are found in reference to the Egyptians and their relationship with Israel. When the children of Israel were come upon the Red Sea in EXODUS 14, the angel of God was a light unto the children of Israel, but darkness unto the Egyptians. The children of Israel passed across the Red Sea that night, but death came upon the Egyptians as they attempted to do the same. JOSHUA 24:7 records it like this: *And when they cried unto the LORD, he put darkness between you and the Egyptians, and brought the sea upon them, and covered them; and your eyes have seen what I have done in Egypt: and ye dwelt in the wilderness a long season.* There are 28 references to "darkness" in the book of JOB. Many of these same scriptures in JOB also reference death. There are also many other scriptural references that connect the association between "darkness" and "death." "Darkness" also is associated with Satan. (There are those today who dress in black to show their association with the darkness of sin and death. Christian parents shouldn't allow their children to so conform with those of the world who dress like this. ROMANS 12:2 tells us: *And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God.* If a child insists on being conformed to the fashions of this world, a Christian parent should also let it be know, as the Apostle Paul did in 1 CORINTHIANS 7:31 *...for the fashion of this world passeth away.*) The Apostle Paul makes a good argument concerning the association of the darkness of Satan and death in the following verses of EPHESIANS 2. EPHESIANS 2:1 *And you hath he quickened, who were dead in trespasses and sins; 2 Wherein in time past ye walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience: 3 Among whom also we all had our conversation in times past in the lusts of our flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind; and were by nature the children of wrath, even as others. 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.* Essentially this is the message Jesus told Paul on the road to Damascus that he should preach: *...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; Delivering thee from the people, and from the Gentiles, unto whom now I send thee, 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.* {ACTS 26:16-18}.

Sin also equates to being under the influence of "the power of Satan" referenced also in ACTS 26:18. We found in our meaning of numbers study a number for BONDAGE, and that was the number 18. $18=6+6+6$. 666 is the number of the beast or anti-Christ of REVELATION 13:18. Subsequent to doing our meanings of number study we discovered 18 names associated with Satan. These 18 names are also grouped in three groups of six; $6+6+6$. We also found in our meaning of numbers study that the number 6 had three meanings: (1) it is the number of MAN, (2) it is the number of SATAN, and (3) it is the number of SATAN'S INFLUENCE OVER WORLDLY MAN. We also found that Satan was the sixth character mentioned in scripture behind (1) God the Father, (2) God the Son, (3) God the Holy Spirit, (4) Adam, and (5) Eve. Satan was first manifest in scripture by one of his eighteen other names, that being serpent, {See REVELATION 12:9; 20:2; 2 CORINTHIANS 11:3; and GENESIS 3:1,2, 13-15}. In GENESIS 3 Satan, manifest as a serpent, used his influence over worldly man to introduce sin into the world, thus we read in

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.* This is one aspect of "the power of Satan" referenced in ACTS 26:18. Never forget that Satan is also noted to be "the prince of the power of the air" in EPHESIANS 2:2, which we read also above.

This "power of Satan" is manifest throughout all scripture because God ordained it so. God allows "the power of Satan" to be manifest here on earth in order to bring the full overcomers to that lofty inheritance that is theirs in Christ Jesus. Scriptures from EZEKIEL 28 and ISAIAH 14 reference Satan. EZEKIEL 28:13 and 15 tells of God creating Satan. EZEKIEL 28:15 reads: *Thou wast perfect in thy ways from the day that thou wast created, till iniquity was found in thee.* ISAIAH 14:13 and 14 tells us this of Satan's iniquity: *For thou hast said in thine heart, I will ascend into heaven, I will exalt my throne above the stars of God: I will sit also upon the mount of the congregation, in the sides of the north: 14 I will ascend above the heights of the clouds; I will be like the most High.* The essence of this statement is that Satan is power hungry; that is he want to be like the most High, who is God. So God for now has made Satan "the prince of the power of the air" as noted in EPHESIANS 2:2. Satan even tempted Jesus with worldly power LUKE 4:6 tells us: *And the devil said unto him, All this power will I give thee, and the glory of them: for that is delivered unto me; and to whomsoever I will I give it.* ISAIAH 14:15 foretells of the end of Satan: *Yet thou shalt be brought down to hell, to the sides of the pit.* Read REVELATION 20 to see how this is going to happen. Yet for now we find Satan constantly before the throne of God accusing the brethren before our God day and night. {Study REVELATION 12:10 for confirmation of this statement}. The question arises then, why does God still allow Satan access before the throne of God? God allows access of Satan before the throne of God so that God can use Satan as a tool to achieve part of the work that needs to be accomplished in the life of a believer. To be a full overcomer requires many obstacles in the life of a believer to overcome. If Satan can be used of God as an instrument of some of these many obstacles then so be it; for this is part of those all things that work together for good to them that love God, and to them who are the called according to his purpose {paraphrasing ROMANS 8:28}. What the full overcomer learns in walking with God is that "the power of Satan" is real, and is a greater force than any man can deal with, but as 1 JOHN 4:4 states: *...greater is he that is in you, than he that is in the world.*

ACTS 26:18 *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.* We have now discussed the two things of bondage mentioned in ACTS 26:18 that the Gentiles were to turn from, and that being "darkness" and "the power of Satan," which, as we have noted, are closely connected things. Let's now look at the two free things found in this verse that we are to "receive." Before we look at these two free things, let's define "receive." "Receive" as used in our text means for someone to take, to claim, to procure, for one's self, lay hold upon, take possession of, to appropriate to one's self, to apprehend for one's self that which has been freely offered!

The first thing that anyone who has lived in darkness under the influence of the power of Satan needs to receive is the forgiveness of sins. The phrase "forgiveness of sins" is found five (GRACE) times in scripture. EPHESIANS 2:5 & 2:8 both tell us "by grace are ye saved," so it is no wonder that the phrase "forgiveness of sins" is found five (GRACE) times in scripture. These five scriptures are ACTS 5:31; 13:38; 26:18; EPHESIANS 1:7 and COLOSSIANS 1:14. All sinners, whether rich or poor, big or small, fat or skinny, famous or not famous, tattooed or not tattooed, Gentile or Jew, bond or free, good or really bad, handicapped or whole, etc. need "forgiveness of sins." As we notice in our text of ACTS 26:18 the "forgiveness of sins" is something we can receive; "forgiveness of sins" is something we need to receive; "forgiveness of sins" is something we must receive in order to be saved; and "forgiveness of sins" is something we receive for free. After learning that *...all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God...* in ROMANS 3:23, we read in the very next verse that all who have received "forgiveness of sins" are *...justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus.* To receive forgiveness of sins is the best free deal ever offered throughout the history of mankind.

Millions through the centuries have appropriated their opportunity to receive "forgiveness of sins."

The Greek word (number 859 in the Strong's Greek Concordance) that translates to our English "forgiveness" in ACTS 26:18 is found 17 times in the New Testament, and is translated into the following English words in New Testament scripture: remission, forgiveness, deliverance, and liberty. Before we look at how and where some of these words are used, recall that 17 is the number that has to do with VICTORY IN CHRIST JESUS. All sinners who received remission of sins should also learn that they have received a tremendous VICTORY IN CHRIST JESUS over the grips and bounds of Satan. MATTHEW 26:28 indicates that Jesus shed His blood for the remission of sins. ACTS 10:43 further tells us that whosoever believeth in Jesus shall receive remission of sins. In LUKE 4:18 we find Jesus essentially preaching a sermon from ISAIAH 61:1 & 2, where He twice uses this Greek word (number 859 in the Strong's Greek Concordance) that translates to our English "forgiveness" in ACTS 26:18. LUKE 4:18 states: *The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he hath anointed me to preach the gospel to the poor; he hath sent me to heal the brokenhearted, to preach deliverance <859> to the captives, and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty <859> them that are bruised,...* Another way of saying this is that Jesus came to preach VICTORY IN CHRIST JESUS to the captives,... and Jesus came to set at liberty through the VICTORY IN CHRIST JESUS those whose lives are broken in pieces, shattered and crushed.

The first thing Jesus told Saul of Tarsus in ACTS 26:18 that he was to preach unto the Gentiles, and that they would receive was "the forgiveness of sins." Additionally the second thing Jesus tells Saul of Tarsus in ACTS 26:18 that the Gentiles were to receive is an *...inheritance among them which are sanctified by faith that is in me*. We must realize first of all that these are two different, and separate things Saul of Tarsus was told that the Gentiles were to receive through his preaching. "The forgiveness of sins" is not an inheritance of a believer. "Forgiveness of sins" is a "free gift given of God to undeserving, guilty men, when they repent, and believe the Gospel," is how Brother Copley stated it. None of us inherit "forgiveness of sins." "Forgiveness of sins" comes by putting our faith and trust in Jesus Christ, and believing that He alone died on the cross to save sinners, and rose again three days later to prove the resurrection power of God, to live forever more our eternal Lord and Saviour. After one receives the "forgiveness of sins" Jesus came to earth and died for, then and only then can this believer receive an *...inheritance among them which are sanctified by faith that is in me*. This part of ACTS 26:18 ranks right up there with one of the more important statements found in scripture. This statement goes way over the heads of most preaching today. Hopefully by the time we get through examining this statement we all will have a clearer understanding of what it means to have an *...inheritance among them which are sanctified by faith that is in me*.

Again this *...inheritance among them which are sanctified by faith that is in me...* is available to all believers, but not all believers will receive all the inheritance that is available to them. Before we go to far examining this statement, let's define "inheritance," and "sanctified." Sanctification means to be separated unto God, which men can only enter by faith in Christ Jesus. Sanctification means set apart for Gods use, and is what ROMANS 6, 7, and 8 are all about. Jesus prays for our sanctification in His prayer of JOHN 17, and you will see this if you will study it out. Notice how Jesus prays in the following verses: JOHN 17:14 *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. 18 As thou hast sent me into the world, even so have I also sent them into the world. 19 And for their sakes I sanctify myself, that they also might be sanctified through the truth.* ACTS 26:18 puts us in notice of the fact that all believers *...are sanctified by faith that is in...* Christ Jesus. That is all believers are separated unto God from the world by faith in Jesus Christ. We know that there are degrees of separation also as some believers apprehend more and more of the word of God than do others. Some believers separate themselves apart from the world more than do other believers because some believers believe more of God's word than do others.

What we find then is different inheritances among the believers. From ancient Hebrew times we find that an inheritance consisted of passing property down from one generation to another, with the eldest usually given the larger portion. The value system of God is similar when it comes to inheritance, with the full overcomers obtaining the greatest portion. REVELATION 21:7 tells us: *He that overcometh shall inherit all things; and I will be his God, and he shall be my son.* Now all believers are sons of God by their new birth in Christ Jesus. 1 JOHN 3:1 & 2 tells us: *Behold, what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God; therefore the world knoweth us not, because it knew him not. 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.* GALATIANS 3:26 further tells us: *For ye are all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus.* All of God's children have an inheritance. ROMANS 8:17 explains degrees of heir-ship. 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.* We see here that there are heirs, and that there are joint-heirs with Christ. The joint-heirs with Christ are the Bride of Christ, those who were willing to study their Bible and draw close unto Christ by the leading of the Holy Spirit on a life long quest to obtain God's best, and follow the Apostle Paul as he followed Christ, and go on to marry Christ Jesus. Recently we studied in our HEARING study REVELATION chapters 2 & 3. Seven churches were found in these two chapters, and each church mentioned had different rewards of the Saints. This speaks to us a little of the different inheritances which will be found of the different Saints.

The Apostle Paul, after spending three years with the Saints at Ephesus, left them and continued on a missionary journey. One night he came close to Ephesus and called for the Ephesian elders to meet with him. During this meeting Paul expressed his thoughts to the Ephesian elders, and his words express the spirit of the full overcomer. The full text of his speech can be found in ACTS 20:17-38. The portion of this text that we need to focus on that relates to our current study is ACTS 20:32, which reads: *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 that the inheritance spoken of is given unto them "among all them which are sanctified" first of all. Again ACTS 26:18 puts us in notice of the fact that all believers *...are sanctified by faith that is in... Christ Jesus.* Secondly, notice that the greater inheritance that Paul alludes to here in ACTS 20:32 is given to those who study and take in *...the word of his grace, which is able to build you up.*

To conclude our thoughts on ACTS 26:18 let's again revisit one word in this verse. ACTS 26:18 *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 word we want to revisit is "receive." And how does one receive? We receive things constantly from the Lord, yet most of the time fail to realize it. We receive input from all of our five senses, and each input we receive is really a gift of God. For example with our eyes we see things, which is to say we receive what is before us to see. With our ears we hear things, which also is to say we receive input to our ears. Some of the things we hear, we hear real good, and some of the things we receive with our ears we faintly hear. The things of God we receive with our heart is what the Lord is most interested in. In the parable of the sower found in MATTHEW 13, MARK 4, and LUKE 8 we find the sower soweth the word, which is the word of God. The receiver often times doesn't receive the word that was sown we find in this parable. And even if the receiver receives the word that was sown, it doesn't become a hundred percent fruitful but in only a few of the receiving hearts. Does your heart receive the word of God? Does your heart receive the word of God thirty percent? Sixty percent? One hundred percent? {See MARK 4:20}. These are the kinds of questions we each need to ask ourselves, for it brings it right down to the amount of faith we really have. How much of God's word I believe is really a measure of how much of God's word I have personally received in my heart for myself. For example, do I really believe the story of Daniel and the lions den, that he really survived a night after being tossed in with the lions? {See DANIEL 6}. Well I read it in the Bible so it must have happened,

but in my heart do I believe ten per cent of this story? Thirty per cent? Sixty percent? One hundred percent? In other words do I believe ...*Jesus Christ the same yesterday, and to day, and for ever.* {HEBREWS 13:8}. Do I really believe ...*Jesus Christ the same yesterday, and to day, and for ever...* ten per cent? Thirty per cent? Sixty percent? Or one hundred percent? Do I really believe ROMANS 8:28 *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...* ten per cent? Thirty per cent? Sixty percent? Or one hundred percent? Have I in my heart received one hundred percent of the word of God I have received with one or more of my senses? The full overcomers receive in their heart one hundred percent of the word of God as being the truth that it is. The full overcomers "receive" the greatest ...*inheritance among them which are sanctified by faith that is in...* Christ Jesus. The reason the full overcomers "receive" the greatest ...*inheritance among them which are sanctified by faith that is in...* Christ Jesus is because they are like the Berean Saints of ACTS 17:11 who ...received the word with all readiness of mind, and searched the scriptures daily, whether those things were so. The full overcomers have received the Holy Ghost since they believed (see ACTS 19:2). The full overcomers have further received Paul's gospel, as those noted in 1 THESSALONIANS 2:13, which reads: ...*because, when ye received the word of God which ye heard of us, ye received it not as the word of men, but as it is in truth, the word of God, which effectually worketh also in you that believe.* The full overcomer knows the facts of COLOSSIANS 3:23 & 24 that ...*whatsoever ye do, do it heartily, as to the Lord, and not unto men; 24 Knowing that of the Lord ye shall receive the reward of the inheritance: for ye serve the Lord Christ.* In the end the full overcomers receive God's best, because while here on earth they allowed the Holy Ghost to work in their lives, and actively by faith willingly received of God all things that came their way, whether good or bad and distressful, knowing full well that all things, whether good or bad and distressful, work together for their good, because they still indeed love God, and know by the truth of the gospel that they are the called according to His eternal and divine purpose. In the words of ACTS 20:32 the full overcomers are the one's who receive with all readiness of mind ...*the word of his grace, which is able to build you up.* It is no wonder then that we find these same full overcomers saying in REVELATION 4:11 *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.* The full overcomers then are not only the receivers of God's best, but are also found to be givers also, for here in REVELATION 4:11 we find them giving of themselves, and leading out in praise and worship and thanksgiving and glory and honour unto the Lord, an occupation of thanksgiving that started early on in their race course after receiving the good news of an ...*inheritance among them which are sanctified by faith that is in...* Christ Jesus. {ACTS 26:18}.

We know that Saul of Tarsus received these words of the Lord Jesus Christ Himself while on that road to Damascus: ...*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; Delivering thee from the people, and from the Gentiles, unto whom now I send thee, 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.* {ACTS 26:16-18}. After receiving these instructions, Jesus told Saul of Tarsus to go into Damascus where he would receive further instructions. ACTS 9:6 records: ...*And the Lord said unto him, Arise, and go into the city, and it shall be told thee what thou must do.* And ACTS 22:10 states it like this: *And I said, What shall I do, Lord? And the Lord said unto me, Arise, and go into Damascus; and there it shall be told thee of all things which are appointed for thee to do.*

Recall from ACTS 9:1 & 2; ACTS 22:5 & 6; and ACTS 26:11 & 12 that Saul of Tarsus was on the road to Damascus for the sole purpose of arresting certain Christians in Damascus, and bringing them to Jerusalem to be punished. Jesus Christ had just changed Saul of Tarsus' life, and had given him a new mission, which would essentially start in Damascus.

Damascus is one of the most ancient cities found in scripture, and is located in Syria about 130 miles north of Jerusalem. Josephus notes that Damascus was founded by Uz, son of Aram, grandson of Shem, great grandson of Noah. Damascus is mentioned 60 times in scripture. 60 we learned in our numbers study is a number having to do with SECOND TIME or SECOND PLACE. For example Sarah's name is found by it's different spellings 60 times in scripture. Sarah was given a SECOND TIME at youth, and during this SECOND TIME she bare Isaac. In our current study we find Saul of Tarsus given a SECOND TIME in his life here at Damascus to follow a new career. In the Old Testament in GENESIS 15:2 we find Eliezer of Damascus to be Abraham's faithful steward. In GENESIS 24 Eliezer, though not mentioned by name in this chapter, is the one who seeks out a bride for Isaac. Thus Eliezer is a figure of the Holy Ghost, the agent of the Trinity who prepares the bride for her husband. Each of the fifteen times we find "Damascus" in the New Testament is in association with the Apostle Paul, (the former Saul of Tarsus). Saul of Tarsus got filled with the Holy Ghost in Damascus, a point we will cover in more detail later in this study. The Holy Ghost was the leading and inspiring power behind Saul of Tarsus' second career.

In both ACTS 9:6 and ACTS 22:10 Saul of Tarsus was commanded of Jesus to "go" into Damascus. There are two different Greek words used in these two texts that translate into our English as "go." One "go" means to continue the journey (ACTS 22:10), and the other "go" means to enter into (Damascus). This instruction sounds simple enough, but Saul of Tarsus was given of the Lord a handicap on the road to Damascus, a handicap which would make it virtually impossible for him to "go" into Damascus. Why often times does the Lord ask us to do things that are impossible to do? The answer is because He wants us to put our faith and trust in Him, for he can do anything, but fail. MARK 9:23 in part tells us: *...If thou canst believe, all things are possible to him that believeth.* How much of this statement do you believe? ten per cent? Thirty per cent? Sixty percent? Or one hundred percent? The Lord looks way beyond our physical abilities, and our handicaps. Saul of Tarsus' handicap here was physical blindness. ACTS 9:8 records it like this: *And Saul arose from the earth; and when his eyes were opened, he saw no man: but they led him by the hand, and brought him into Damascus.* ACTS 22:11 states: *And when I could not see for the glory of that light, being led by the hand of them that were with me, I came into Damascus.* Realize that minutes before the Lord Jesus Christ Himself appeared unto Saul of Tarsus, that Saul of Tarsus was leading the charge of his followers into Damascus. After being blinded by the brightness and the glory of the Light of Jesus, Saul of Tarsus was being led by the hand of his associates. This would be then how Saul of Tarsus followed Jesus "impossible" instructions to "go" into Damascus.

After being told of the Lord in both ACTS 9:6 and ACTS 22:10 to "Arise, and go into" Damascus, Saul of Tarsus was given his next instruction, found in both of these same verses: *"...it shall be told thee..."* By whom, and by what means Saul of Tarsus wasn't at that time told how it was that *"...it shall be told thee..."* Saul of Tarsus didn't question the Lord on how it was going to happen either, but rather he just believe the Lord's instruction, and though it was difficult for him, he, being led by the hand, came into Damascus. Saul of Tarsus came into Damascus by faith in other words, as we will further see here in a minute.

In ACTS 9:6 we again read Saul of Tarsus instructions: *...Arise, and go into the city, and it shall be told thee what thou must do.* Let's look at that word "must" a little closer. "Must" means: it is necessary, there is need of, it behooves, and it is right and proper. "Must" comes into our English here from the Greek word *dei* {die} (number 1163 in the Strong's Greek Concordance), and numerically adds up to the number 19. The number 19 we found in our numbers study to be the number of FAITH! Another way of saying this portion of ACTS 9:6 would be like this: *...Arise, and go into the city, and it shall be told thee what thou must* (by faith, in faith, and through faith)*do.* Saul of Tarsus came into Damascus by faith in Christ Jesus, because it was necessary that he do so in faith, so that he could receive through faith the right and proper instructions for himself of all things that were appointed him to do!

This brings us to ACTS 22:10, which records Saul of Tarsus' instructions like this: *Arise, and go into Damascus; and there it shall be told thee of all things which are appointed for thee to do.* Here we find a little different wording from the statement in ACTS 9:6. In ACTS 9:6 we find *...it shall be told thee what thou must do...* and here in ACTS

22:10 we read *...it shall be told thee of all things which are appointed for thee to do*. Let's do a little test here on how we receive the word of God again. Do you in your heart really think Saul of Tarsus was told while in Damascus "all things" that were appointed for him to do? How great is your conviction that this statement is true: *...it shall be told thee of all things which are appointed for thee to do*? ten per cent? Thirty per cent? Sixty percent? Or one hundred percent? Jesus told Saul of Tarsus to go into Damascus and *...it shall be told thee of all things which are appointed for thee to do*. I know this to be a one hundred percent true statement. If you study ACTS 9 along with GALATIANS 1 you will see that Saul of Tarsus was at Damascus approximately three years, with a side trip into the desert of Arabia, where no doubt the Lord fully revealed His gospel unto Saul of Tarsus. By the time three years later when he left Damascus, actually escaped from Damascus as noted in 2 CORINTHIANS 11:32 & 33, be assured that Saul of Tarsus had been told "all things" that were appointed for him to do.

A key word for us to examine in ACTS 22:10 is "appointed:" *...it shall be told thee of all things which are appointed for thee to do*. This word "appointed" comes from the Greek word "tasso," which is found eight times in the New Testament, with the following meanings: appoint (3 times) {MATTHEW 28:16; here in ACTS 22:10; ACTS 28:23}, ordain (2 times) {ACTS 13:48; ROMANS 13:1}, set (1 time) {LUKE 7:8}, determine (1 time) {ACTS 15:2}, addict (1 time) {1 CORINTHIANS 16:15} for a total of 8. The number eight we learned in our study of the meanings of the numbers is a number with several important meanings, and it has to do with NEW CREATION; NEW BIRTH; NEW BEGINNING; RESURRECTION; and the BRIDE; five things, or five different meanings. The Apostle Paul taught us much about each of these five things, because the Lord had "appointed" (assigned; ordered; destined) it so. Now each of these five things, and the many other things revealed unto Paul, were not revealed unto him all at once, nor in one day. In fact some of these things became a life long pursuit of Paul's. Consider the fact of the RESURRECTION for example. Saul of Tarsus positively knew on the road to Damascus of the fact of the RESURRECTION of Jesus Christ, for resurrected Jesus Christ Himself appeared unto him on that road. Yet many years of following Jesus later the Apostle Paul wrote in PHILIPPIANS 3:10 & 11 -- *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*. The Apostle Paul also magnified the subject of RESURRECTION in 1 CORINTHIANS 15, which we also know as the RESURRECTION chapter. The point is, all of just these facts concerning RESURRECTION were part of the "all things" which were "appointed" of Paul to know, and to do. And Saul of Tarsus was told in Damascus "all things" that were appointed him to do during the course of the rest of his life, thus it put him on the correct course for the rest of his life. Also jumping ahead just for a minute let me note that it wasn't just the devout disciple Ananias of Damascus who told Saul of Tarsus things he was appointed to do, though Ananias was used of the Lord to tell him some of what he was to do. It took the Lord Jesus Christ Himself to fully reveal the "all things" that were "appointed" of Saul of Tarsus to do. {Study ACTS 22:14 to see who it was that taught Saul of Tarsus these "all things... ..appointed." ACTS 22:14 *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.*}

ACTS 9 tells us best what happened next. ACTS 9:7 *And the men which journeyed with him stood speechless, hearing a voice, but seeing no man. 8 And Saul arose from the earth; and when his eyes were opened, he saw no man: but they led him by the hand, and brought him into Damascus. 9 And he was three days without sight, and neither did eat nor drink*. Realize that these men that journeyed with Saul of Tarsus were his subordinates; men who were willing to do the dirty work commanded them of Saul of Tarsus before he got saved. Saul of Tarsus was now a changed man, having met the Lord Jesus Christ Himself in person on the road to Damascus. These subordinates of Saul of Tarsus heard a voice, but saw no man, and were left speechless. The scripture doesn't tell us if any of these subordinates of Saul of Tarsus themselves got saved. Certainly they observed the change in the life of Saul of Tarsus, and must have witnessed some of the other events that shortly took place in his life. No doubt Saul of Tarsus himself tried to explain to them what had happened, but in the end for each of these men, their decision

whether or not to receive Jesus as their own personal Saviour was theirs alone to make.

We note in verse 9 that Saul of Tarsus was in Damascus three days, still blinded from the glory of the bright Light of Jesus. Basically Saul of Tarsus at this time was a man alone with Jesus in fasting and prayer. So in our thinking let's leave him there in Damascus alone in prayer and fasting, and introduce Ananias of Damascus.

Ananias of Damascus

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.

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. 15 For thou shalt be his witness unto all men of what thou hast seen and heard. 16 And now why tarriest thou? arise, and be baptized, and wash away thy sins, calling on the name of the Lord.

Ananias of Damascus is only mentioned in scripture in connection with Saul of Tarsus. We read of him in ACTS 9 and ACTS 22 in the scriptures listed above. In 1 KINGS 19 we find Elijah thinking he was the only one in Israel who had not bowed unto Baal, but the Lord told him later in that same chapter that there were 7000 in Israel who had not bowed unto Baal. Yet we don't read the story of any of them individually in scripture. No doubt they were all devout men and women. What does this have to do with Ananias? Ananias was a devout Christian in Damascus, whom we have very little background information about, but we do know some things about him. There probably were hundreds, if not thousands just like Ananias scattered abroad in various cities after the death of Stephen. ACTS 8:1 indicates that there were many devout Christians scattered abroad after the death of Stephen. We read in scripture of very few of them, and yet many of them went on to have God's best. Many of these same devout Christians had been put into prison, or had even been put to death because of Saul of Tarsus. All of these devout Christians persecuted by Saul of Tarsus were in some measure a testimony to Saul of Tarsus. Perhaps the Apostle Paul had some of these very same devout Christians personally in mind when he wrote in HEBREWS 11:39 *...And these all, having obtained a good report through faith,...* . Ananias of Damascus was on Saul of Tarsus' list of people to persecute before he got saved.

Paul's own words of ACTS 22:12 gives us quiet a bit of background on Ananias. *ACTS 22:12 And one Ananias, a devout man according to the law, having a good report of all the Jews which dwelt there,...* . The Greek word translated "devout" here in ACTS 22:12 is only used four times in the New Testament, and simply means "godly." (There are also two other Greek words that translate into our English as "devout.") So we see that Ananias was a godly man. We too know this to be a fact from what we read of him in ACTS 9 and ACTS 22. Ananias was a good Jewish Christian, for ACTS 22:12 tells us he was *...a devout man according to the law, having a good report of all the Jews which dwelt there,...* . No doubt Ananias was on the top of Saul of Tarsus' "hit list" with the letters he carried from the high priest there at Jerusalem. But that was before Jesus came into the life of Saul of Tarsus. Saul of Tarsus life had been changed, and his letters from the high