

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

priest were voided by Jesus Christ the ultimate High Priest. Saul of Tarsus went to Damascus to meet Ananias, and Jesus Christ worked it out so that Ananias came first to seek out Saul of Tarsus, and on friendly terms. It is always amazing what the Lord can do, and how He works in mysterious ways sometimes.

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.* This verse helps explain how devout a man Ananias was. Note a couple of things here in this verse. First of all the Lord calls Ananias by his name. JOHN 10:3 tells us that Jesus calls His sheep by name. Later we read these words of Jesus in JOHN 10:27 *My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me:...* Furthermore in JOHN 18:37 Jesus states: *...Every one that is of the truth heareth my voice.* What we should note in these passages of scripture is that it is important for we Christians to hear the voice of the Lord. I guarantee all full overcomers are in tune with the voice of the Lord. 1 THESSALONIANS 4:16-18 tells us: *For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first: 17 Then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord. 18 Wherefore comfort one another with these words.* Are you listening to the voice of the Lord?

The second thing we note in ACTS 9:10 is that Ananias recognizes the voice of the Lord. Otherwise why would Ananias answer: *Behold, I am here, Lord?* Again all full overcomers are in tune with the voice of the Lord. They talk to the Lord often every day, and the Lord talks to them in return. In GENESIS 5:24 we find that Enoch walked with God. In HEBREWS 11:5 we find that Enoch was translated. In JUDE 14 & 15 we read words of God spoken to Enoch. Enoch was our first example in scripture of someone being translated, and as a full overcomer we note that he was intimate in conversation with God. Elijah was the second man in scripture translated. Read 1 KINGS 19 and see how he conversed with God; see also how he heard *"a still small voice,"* which happened to be the voice of the Lord.

In our "Hearing" study we found the phrases "here I am" and "here am I" are often responses to inquires of the Lord to specific individuals. We noted that often times the Lord calls out a persons name from heaven and they answer either "here am I" or "here I am." In Ananias' case the Lord appears unto Ananias in a vision, and Ananias after hearing his name responds: *Behold, I am here, Lord.* Again we note that there was no question in Ananias' mind that he was talking with the Lord. We further noted in our "Hearing" study that an important part of obeying the voice of the Lord is to answer Him when you are called, and of course Ananias also does this. We also noted some of who these people were in scripture that answered the voice of the Lord from heaven "here am I" or "here I am," and they were: Abraham (GENESIS 22:1 & 11), Jacob (GENESIS 31:11, 46:2), Moses (EXODUS 3:4), Samuel (1 SAMUEL 3:4-8), Isaiah (ISAIAH 6:8). We find these very same people in HEBREWS 11. These Old Testament worthies of faith heard the voice of the Lord, they heard with listening ears of hearing, with open hearts of faith, they believed what they heard, and they followed by faith the instructions given unto them from the Lord. These very same people of Old Testament fame heard again the voice of the Lord during the time of His resurrection alluded to in EPHESIANS 4:8-10 and MATTHEW 27:52 & 53, and arose from their graves and appeared unto many. Thus they are found mentioned in the hall of fame of Old Testament full overcomers, referred to as a "great cloud of witnesses" in HEBREWS 12:1. Here in ACTS 9:10 we find Ananias of Damascus answering the call of the Lord, *...Behold, I am here, Lord,...* and as we will see shortly, he was given a very important mission, and a more important message to give to Saul of Tarsus. Imagine if you yourself were given a charge of the Lord to go talk to Bin Laden! Essentially this was what Ananias was told of the Lord to do, that is, go talk to the terrorist who came to kill you.

Before we continue with the instructions Ananias of Damascus was give of the Lord, let's consider some facts about the full overcomers, men and women of faith. We will find that Ananias fits their mold. All full overcomers are given things along their course of faith to overcome. These things full overcomers are given to overcome are not necessarily things of their own choosing, but rather the things they are given to overcome are put in their pathway by God. Sure we would all like to choose the things in

life that we are to overcome, but that is not God's way. Let's look at some examples. Noah never really wanted to build a big ship in his back yard. Nor did Noah ever want to get flooded out, and loses his home either. But God told him to do all of this, and by faith Noah did, facing ridicule of the masses for about 120 years. Never before on earth had there been a flood, but when the flood did come Noah was ready, having been prepared by God for the things that were in his future. Moses wanted to deliver the children of Israel from the bondage of Egypt, but he wanted to do it his way. When that didn't work out God set him aside for forty years. By the time Moses was eighty years old the angel of the Lord appeared unto Moses in a burning bush and essentially told him that he was now to go and deliver the children of Israel from the bondage of Egypt. A couple of chapters in EXODUS tell us how Moses told God he couldn't do this thing. God assured him he could, by faith in God. By faith in God Moses goes on and did some impossible things, and becomes for us one of the greatest examples of an Old Testament full overcomer. If you will take the time to study the life of Moses you will find that he was given many things of God to overcome, and none of these things were really of Moses choosing. None of these things Moses was given to overcome were "easy" to accomplish. None of these things Moses was given to overcome were things that Moses really of himself wanted to do, nor things that he could do by himself. It was only by putting his faith and trust completely in God that he was able to do the overcoming things given of him to do. Abraham too was given many impossible things to do; things that were not easy; things not of his own choosing; all of these things to overcome. None would have been harder for Abraham to do than to sacrifice Isaac, his son of promise, but in GENESIS 22 that was exactly what God had told Abraham to do. In that chapter we find that Abraham believed that God would provide himself a lamb for a burnt offering, and God did provide a lamb. God provided for us a Lamb for our sacrifice for sin. This Lamb is Jesus Christ the Lamb of God, our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. Jesus Christ is our ultimate example of a full overcomer. As a man He was given many impossible things to overcome, and as a man some of these things He did not really want to do. For example in MATTHEW 26:39 during His last night here on earth Jesus prayed: *My Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me:...* . It seems that all of the full overcomers in scripture somewhere along the way cried this similar cry: *My Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me:...* . However that was not all Jesus uttered in MATTHEW 26:39, for after pausing for a moment and realizing that the things He was given to overcome as a man, was given to him by God to accomplish His purpose, and not necessarily was something he really wanted to do, but by faith He did, thus he cries out in faith believing: *...nevertheless not as I will, but as thou wilt.* On your own study all of the Old Testament full overcomers and see for yourself that the things they were given to overcome, the very things that made them full overcomers, were not things of their own choosing, nor were they things that they necessarily wanted to do, or could do by themselves, but could only accomplish such things by putting their faith and trust and 100% confidence in God. The same holds true for those of us who want to be New Testament full overcomers. God sees to it that we are given things in our life to overcome. Things that are not of our own choosing, nor often times things that we want to face. However if any of us are to have God's best we will have to learn to suffer these very same things with Christ Jesus, who for the joy who was set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God. {HEBREWS 12:2}.

Let's get back to Ananias and see how he fits this mold of a man of faith. We mentioned that Ananias was told of Lord in a vision how he was to go find the terrorist that had originally come to Damascus to seek and kill him. This is not something that Ananias wanted to do, nor was it something of his own choosing. Ananias is bold enough to answer the Lord in this matter, stating in ACTS 9:13 & 14 -- *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.* However, being a devout godly man, and a man who put his faith and trust in the Lord, we find Ananias, by faith, will follow these seemingly hard for him to understand instructions of the Lord. In return for following by faith these instructions of the Lord we find that Ananias will be there when Saul of Tarsus receives again his sight. Also Ananias will be there when Saul of Tarsus is filled with the Holy Ghost. How would you have liked to have been there the day the future Apostle Paul received the

Holy Ghost? Additionally Ananias would be there when Saul of Tarsus was baptized, an event most significant in the life of a Jewish Christian. We will mention some more things concerning Ananias and Saul of Tarsus shortly.

The Lord arranged this meeting between Saul of Tarsus and Ananias. The Lord Jesus Christ Himself told both men to "*Arise, and go.*" To Saul of Tarsus we already read these instructions given him from Jesus: ACTS 9:6 *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 22:10 *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.* Now here in ACTS 9:11 we read the 911 instructions that the Lord gave Ananias: *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,...* . We know by experience, and from reading MARK 7:37 that Jesus does "all things well," so when He arranges a meeting between two people, even former enemies, we expect all things to go well. I guarantee that neither man, Saul of Tarsus or Ananias of Damascus, ever forgot the day they met. Saul of Tarsus never forgot the day he was filled with the Holy Ghost, just as everyone one of us who are filled with the Holy Ghost have never forgot that initial experience. And as we mentioned above Ananias was there when Saul of Tarsus got filled with the Holy Ghost. Ananias was there when Saul of Tarsus once again received his sight. Ananias was there when Saul of Tarsus was baptized. Ananias was there in Damascus a friend for Saul of Tarsus, who on that road to Damascus had lost all his so called friends. PROVERBS 18:24 *A man that hath friends must shew himself friendly: and there is a friend that sticketh closer than a brother.* It wouldn't take much of a friend to stick closer to me than my brother does, but there are some brothers who stick real close to each other, like Rick and Ron Underwood for example. The point of PROVERBS 18:24 is that no matter how close your brother may stick to you, Jesus is a friend that sticketh closer. Ananias became a friend to Saul of Tarsus. Ananias introduced Saul of Tarsus to other disciples there at Damascus. Ananias, along with these other disciples at Damascus, became Saul of Tarsus' new found friends, whose common ground was Jesus Christ.

Earlier we mentioned the fact that Saul of Tarsus headquartered out of Damascus the first three years after meeting Jesus on the road to Damascus. After three years he was sought after by fellow Jews who wanted to kill him. ACTS 9:25 and 2 CORINTHIANS 11:32 & 33 tells of his escaping from Damascus by the hands of his friends who let him down by the wall of Damascus in a basket by night. The scripture doesn't specifically say so, but I would be willing to bet that Ananias was right there helping Saul of Tarsus escape that night he left Damascus. And just thinking of myself for a minute, I realize that the best friends that I have are my fellow Christians; people I can have close fellowship with; Jesus Christ being our common ground. It is wonderful to have such good friends. So we see that Jesus Christ Himself arranged for Saul of Tarsus to meet Ananias, "*...a devout man according to the law, having a good report of all the Jews which dwelt there.*" {ACTS 22:12}. And no doubt they became real good friends. They had the common ground of Jesus Christ as their own personal Saviour. Additionally they were both Jews very familiar with the customs of the law, and they were both instructed by Jesus Christ Himself to *Arise, and go* to a certain place in Damascus, where they were to initially meet.

Jesus was very specific in his instructions to Ananias on how to locate Saul of Tarsus for ACTS 9:11 again states: *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:....* These are pretty specific instructions, instructions that are not at all hard to follow. Straight street still exists in Damascus. It is one of the old main thoroughfares running west to east. The street called Straight was built by the Romans, and extended about 1500 meters with a gate on each end of it. There were columns that used to line both sides of the street, with markets and houses on both sides. The columns also supported an aqueduct. Thus we note that one who lived on Straight street really had it made, for there we find food, shelter, and water, and all the necessities of life. Straight street is symbolic to us in scripture, for it represents *...having all sufficiency in all things...* (2 CORINTHIANS 9:8) that we find in Christ Jesus. In Christ Jesus we find spiritual food, the water of life, a shelter in the time of storm, and all the necessities of

spiritual life. PROVERBS 3:6 tells us: *In all thy ways acknowledge him, and he shall direct thy paths.* PSALMS 37:23 further states: *The steps of a good man are ordered by the LORD: and he delighteth in his way.* Following these instructions one will find the "...straight paths for your feet..." spoken of in HEBREWS 12:13. The street which is called Straight was symbolic in Saul of Tarsus' life too, for from that day forward that he was filled with the Holy Ghost on Straight street, he followed the straight path of the leading of the Holy Ghost, and in the end he received God's best.

Let's review ACTS 9:11 & 12 and see some more of Jesus instructions to Ananias concerning Saul of Tarsus: *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.* After locating Saul of Tarsus in the house of Judas on the street called Straight, Ananias was to note the fact that Saul of Tarsus would be praying. In the vision the Lord told Ananias ...*behold, he prayeth.* In other words the Lord told Ananias, "look, I want you to see that this man Saul of Tarsus, and when you see him you will know its him because he prayeth." By the time Ananias got there Saul of Tarsus would have been praying three days. Praying was an occupation that Saul of Tarsus continued in the rest of his life. In 1 THESSALONIANS 5:17 Paul encourages us also to: *Pray without ceasing.* While Saul of Tarsus was involved in this continual praying at the house of Judas in Damascus, we find in verse 12 above that he was given of the Lord a vision about ...*a man named Ananias coming in, and putting his hand on him, that he might receive his sight.* Recall that Saul of Tarsus was blinded by the glory of the Light of Jesus on the road to Damascus, and had to be led by the hand into Damascus. {ACTS 9:8 and ACTS 22:11}. One result of this physical blindness for Saul of Tarsus, his first real trial as a Christian, was the opportunity to *Pray without ceasing.* We should also note that this time of praying also resulted in some answers from the Lord. No doubt Saul of Tarsus had inquired of the Lord during his time of ceaseless prayer on how long he would be left blind. The Lord graciously answered him in a vision, where as we noted above, the Lord told him about ...*a man named Ananias coming in, and putting his hand on him, that he might receive his sight.*

There is a double meaning here concerning ...*that he might receive his sight.* Physically Saul of Tarsus came to Damascus blind, so he expects to receive his physical eyesight back when Ananias comes and puts his hand on him. More importantly to Saul of Tarsus would be his spiritual sight. Our spiritual sight is important to all of us. And none of us can see spiritual things as we ought to without being filled with the Holy Ghost. Jesus told his disciples in JOHN 14, 15, and 16 about the importance of the Holy Ghost. The Holy Ghost was to be a Comforter to them, and (of course) to us. {JOHN 14:26}. The Holy Ghost was also known as the Spirit of truth, as noted in JOHN 16:13. JOHN 16:13 reads: *Howbeit when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth: for he shall not speak of himself; but whatsoever he shall hear, that shall he speak: and he will shew you things to come.* The blind need some kind of guide to be their eyes, and this is one aspect of what the Holy Ghost is to us. The Holy Ghost among His many other duties, was to open spiritual eyes, and shew you things to come; things that it takes spiritual eyes to see. Ananias already had his spiritual eyes open, and knew that when he met Saul of Tarsus he was to lay hands on him that he might receive two things: (1) his physical sight, and (2) the Holy Ghost who would in turn open his spiritual eyes. We will see this happen when we get to verses 17 & 18 of ACTS 9.

However first we read of some serious questioning to the Lord by Ananias. We see this in ACTS 9:13 & 14, after Ananias was told were to go find Saul of Tarsus. ACTS 9:13 *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.* Ananias, though a saved man and filled with the Holy Ghost, and as we have noted a man of faith, still needed clarification on the Lord's instructions, for he had some serious doubts concerning Saul of Tarsus. The Lord had been real specific in His instructions to Ananias, however the Lord had not expressed to Ananias up to this point that Saul of Tarsus was a changed man, having become a believer in Jesus Christ on the road to Damascus. Ananias needed this assurance from the Lord that Saul of Tarsus' was safe to approach, and indeed a believer. Ananias knew in his heart the reality 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. And so we find the Lord answering Ananias' questioning in the next two verses of ACTS 9.

ACTS 9:15 *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.* Note that phrase in verse 15 "Go thy way." The phrase "Go thy way" is found nineteen times in scripture. Nineteen is the number having to do with FAITH. We have already talked about the FAITH of Ananias, and now we see it again in this statement to "Go thy way." The way that the Lord wanted Ananias to go however was really not the same way Ananias would have chosen for himself. If Ananias were to really go his way, and follow his own desires, and his own leading, would he really be following by faith the leading of the Lord? No, of course not. So when the Lord says to Ananias "Go thy way," He means for Ananias to go by FAITH and follow the instructions given him in the vision. In other words the Lord is saying "take My way, and make it thy way." This is no different than any worthy of faith following the instructions given them of the Lord, and doing so by FAITH. Ananias, or any worthy of FAITH, has to accept and receive these instructions given them of the Lord as their own personal guidance for what they are by FAITH to do. "Go thy way" here means for Ananias to go the way he was instructed of the Lord to go, and to by FAITH do the things he was instructed of the Lord to do. Once Ananias accepts these instructions as his own, then the way he goes from that point forward will be the correct path, which the Lord here calls "thy way." The reason that Ananias can so readily accept these instructions was because he was a devout man, a godly man in other words, a man who believed the word of God, and a man who could by FAITH follow instructions of the Lord. No doubt Ananias had learned in his heart the facts of PROVERBS 3:5 & 6, which reads: *Trust in the LORD with all thine heart; and lean not unto thine own understanding. 6 In all thy ways acknowledge him, and he shall direct thy paths.* Ananias will shortly put his faith into action by following the leading of the Lord, thus acknowledging that the Lord is directing his path. In verse 17 we find that "...Ananias went his way,..." meaning that he went by FAITH in the way the Lord had instructed him to go.

The Lord then reveals some things to Ananias concerning His plans for Saul of Tarsus. ACTS 9:15 *...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.* Do we read here that Ananias was to share this information with Saul of Tarsus? No, however we don't read that Ananias was not to share this information with him either. Here in ACTS 9:10-17 we find that Ananias was given instructions where to find Saul of Tarsus, and he was to pray for the return of Saul of Tarsus' eyesight. Ananias was also given insight into the future of Saul of Tarsus, and such information could be shared with Saul of Tarsus when his spiritual eyes and ears were opened to receive such information.

We find that the Lord revealed five things to Ananias concerning Saul of Tarsus here in ACTS 9:15 & 16. First we find that Saul of Tarsus was a "chosen vessel" unto God. Second we find that Saul of Tarsus was to bear the name of Jesus unto the Gentiles. Third we find that Saul of Tarsus was to bear the name of Jesus unto kings. Forth we find that Saul of Tarsus was to bear the name of Jesus unto the children of Israel. And fifth we find that Saul of Tarsus was to suffer great things for bearing the name of Jesus unto so many.

Let's look at some of these points a little closer. The fact that Saul of Tarsus was a "chosen vessel" unto God is no small statement in scripture. And both of these words "chosen" and "vessel" are of extreme importance to understand. Consider the word "vessel" first. There is a lot of meaning in just this one word "vessel." Implied in the meaning of "vessel" is the fact that usually a "vessel" is formed or made by someone. "Vessels" come in all shapes and sizes, and can be formed out of many materials, such as wood, gold, silver, clay, glass, and the list goes on. "Vessels" are designed to hold or to contain something, or many something's. For example ships are considered large "vessels" and they contain or possess many things all at the same time. There really is no limit as to what a particular "vessel" may possess. Consider just one eight ounce glass "vessel" for a moment. It could possess an ocean full of water given enough time, it's

only limits are that it can only possess eight ounces of water at one time. And an eight ounce glass "vessel" is not limited by only possessing water, for it can also contain eight ounces of any fluid, or any other material which could fit in it. The possibilities are endless as to what an eight ounce glass "vessel" can hold. And what would an eight ounce glass of gold dust be worth? How about an eight ounce glass full of diamonds?

Now that we have expanded our thinking on "vessels" somewhat, let's narrow our focus down to the human "vessel." The Lord God made the human vessel GENESIS 2:7 tells us, stating: *And the LORD God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living soul.* The human "vessel" comes in all shapes and sizes, and a variety of colors. The human "vessel" that was formed by the Lord God was made to contain many things at once; some of these things are tangible and some of these things are intangible. For example, there are limits as to what one human "vessel" can eat or drink at one time, but there is really no limit as to how much knowledge one human "vessel" can possess at one time. There also is no limit to the amount of the love of God that any one human "vessel" can possess, however we live in a world where we find some human "vessels" possessing vast amounts of hate. Consider now the chosen "vessels" of God. God is the potter spoken of in JEREMIAH 18 who makes the "vessels" of clay into something useful unto Him. These "vessels" are His workmanship. The Apostle Paul writes us in EPHESIANS 2:10 *For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them.* The Apostle Paul also writes in 2 CORINTHIANS 4:7 *But we have this treasure in earthen vessels, that the excellency of the power may be of God, and not of us.* This treasure that the Apostle Paul is referring to here is the glorious gospel of Christ. Your earthen "vessel" is not limited as to how much of the glorious gospel of Christ it can possess. Your earthen "vessel" is only limited by your unbelief. The worthies of faith latch on to as much of the glorious gospel of Christ as their "vessel" can hold, thus they ask the Lord to fill their cup (vessel), and to give them a larger cup (vessel) to fill. How much "exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think" can your "vessel" hold? {See EPHESIANS 3:20}.

In ACTS 9:15 we find that Saul of Tarsus was a "chosen vessel" unto God. The Greek word translated "chosen" here is number 1589 in the Strong's Greek Concordance. This word is only used seven times in New Testament scripture, and further is only translated this one time as "chosen." The other six times we find that it is translated "election." It references the fact that before the foundation of the world God decreed his selection and blessing to certain persons as vessels of choice, by which He determined to bless them through Christ Jesus by grace alone. Saul of Tarsus was such a "chosen vessel." Go look in the mirror and you will see another "chosen vessel." The seven scriptures where we find this Greek word number 1589 in the Strong's Greek Concordance are: ACTS 9:15; ROMANS 9:11; 11:5; 11:7; 11:28; 1 THESSALONIANS 1:4; and 2 PETER 1:10. You will note that three of these scriptures are from ROMANS 11, the chapter which speaks of Israel's future. Here is some of what Paul wrote concerning Israel's future in ROMANS 11.

ROMANS 11:1 *I say then, Hath God cast away his people? God forbid. For I also am an Israelite, of the seed of Abraham, of the tribe of Benjamin. 2 God hath not cast away his people which he foreknew. Wot ye not what the scripture saith of Elias? how he maketh intercession to God against Israel, saying, 3 Lord, they have killed thy prophets, and digged down thine altars; and I am left alone, and they seek my life. 4 But what saith the answer of God unto him? I have reserved to myself seven thousand men, who have not bowed the knee to the image of Baal. 5 Even so then at this present time also there is a remnant according to the election of grace. 6 And if by grace, then is it no more of works: otherwise grace is no more grace. But if it be of works, then is it no more grace: otherwise work is no more work. 7 What then? Israel hath not obtained that which he seeketh for; but the election hath obtained it, and the rest were blinded 8 (According as it is written, God hath given them the spirit of slumber, eyes that they should not see, and ears that they should not hear;) unto this day. 9 And David saith, Let their table be made a snare, and a trap, and a stumblingblock, and a recompence unto them: 10 Let their eyes be darkened, that they may not see, and bow down their back alway. 11 I say then, Have they stumbled that they should fall? God forbid: but rather through their fall salvation is come unto the Gentiles, for to provoke them to jealousy.*

Let's me give you a quote from Sister Bodie on the above portion of scripture found in her ROMANS study. "How were they" (the children of Israel) "blinded? Was this arbitrary with God? No indeed. The Word of God was spoken to them and they refused to accept the truth. The light shone upon them; but they did not yield to its power: hence it had the effect of hardening their heart and blinding their mind. Their eyes became heavy and their ears dull of hearing. God and His Word are so divinely one that obedience to the Truth is as obedience to God, and vice versa. They cannot be separated without disastrous results." End of quote from Sister Bodie.

Now consider Saul of Tarsus, that "chosen vessel" of God. Before he got saved he too was like the children of Israel mentioned above, who were blinded in their unbelief with ears dull of hearing. But when Jesus Christ, The Word of Truth Himself, appeared unto Saul of Tarsus on the road to Damascus, Saul of Tarsus accepted the Truth. Jesus Light shined upon him, and Saul of Tarsus yielded unto His power. In the process his spiritual eyes were opened, and his ears too were opened to receive the instructions of God. True he was left physically blind for a season, which gave him plenty of time to pray and ponder the wonderful things he witnessed of God. In time Saul of Tarsus, that "chosen vessel" of God, came to a complete understanding of his calling of God, the fact of his "election" that he was as it were "one born out of due time," (1 CORINTHIANS 15:8) and made "the apostle of the Gentiles" (ROMANS 11:13), who "fully preached the gospel of Christ." (ROMANS 15:19).

We mentioned above that there were five things revealed unto Ananias concerning Saul of Tarsus in ACTS 9:15 & 16 -- *...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.* So far we have only covered the fact of what it meant to be a "chosen vessel" unto God. And this is a very important point to understand. Ananias understood the importance of these words "chosen vessel." The second point we need to note from this portion of scripture is that Saul of Tarsus was to bear the name of Jesus unto the Gentiles. The Apostle Paul acknowledged this fact when he wrote in ROMANS 11:13 *For I speak to you Gentiles, inasmuch as I am the apostle of the Gentiles, I magnify mine office.* The third point narrows down the fact that Saul of Tarsus was to bear the name of Jesus unto certain kings, and most of them too were Gentiles. Of course we know from studying the life of the Apostle Paul that the way he got to meet these kings face to face was as a prisoner of Jesus Christ. In ACTS 26 we find the Apostle Paul as a prisoner brought before King Agrippa. Paul recounted unto the King, and those present, facts of his conversion, some of which we have been studying. In ACTS 26:28 we find King Agrippa making a statement unto Paul: *Then Agrippa said unto Paul, Almost thou persuadest me to be a Christian.* Later in life, still a prisoner, we find the Apostle Paul making his appeal unto Caesar. (Study 2 TIMOTHY 4:16 & 17). The point for us to realize here is that Saul of Tarsus was to also bear the name of Jesus unto certain kings.

The forth point of ACTS 9:15 & 16 was that Saul of Tarsus was a "chosen vessel" to also bear the name of Jesus unto *...the children of Israel.* We find the Apostle Paul constantly in his travels going to the synagogues. In the synagogues is where the Jews met for their Sabbath day services. Paul being a Pharisee, and the son of a Pharisee, and dressed as a Pharisee would be asked by the Jews in these synagogues to speak unto them. He was more than willing to do this, and even wrote in ROMANS 10:1 *Brethren, my heart's desire and prayer to God for Israel is, that they might be saved.* Many Jews got saved because of Paul's preaching. But as strange as it may sound, Paul's going to the synagogues also opened the door for him to speak unto the Gentiles. ACTS 13 records one of Paul's early sermons, and we studied this chapter a couple of years ago in Sunday School. In ACTS 13:42 we read: *And when the Jews were gone out of the synagogue, the Gentiles besought that these words might be preached to them the next sabbath.* The next Sabbath day came, and so did the whole town to hear Paul preach. The Jews were envious and spoke against the words of the Apostle Paul, which was not really a smart thing to do in the eyes of God. ACTS 13:46-48 records what happened next: *Then Paul and Barnabas waxed bold, and said, It was necessary that the word of God should first have been spoken to you: but seeing ye put it from you, and judge yourselves unworthy of everlasting life, lo, we turn to the Gentiles. 47 For so hath the Lord commanded us, saying, I have set thee to be a light of the Gentiles, that thou shouldest be for salvation*



unto the ends of the earth. 48 And when the Gentiles heard this, they were glad, and glorified the word of the Lord: and as many as were ordained to eternal life believed. Multiply this times the number of synagogues Paul attended and spoke to, and you can see how he preached to untold thousands of Jews, and in the process reached untold thousands of Gentiles. So much so that in ACTS 17:6 Paul was accused of turning the world upside down. So the fact was that Saul of Tarsus was a "chosen vessel" to also bear the name of Jesus unto ...*the children of Israel*,... and in the process of speaking to the Jews, the door was opened for many more Gentiles to hear, and receive the Word of God.

The fifth thing that was revealed unto Ananias concerning Saul of Tarsus here in ACTS 9:15 & 16 was the fact that because he was to bear the name of Jesus unto the Gentiles, and kings, and the children of Israel, he would suffer many things, and not just many things in particular, but more specifically many great things! ACTS 9:15 & 16 again states it like this: *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.* The reality of this statement is the fact that suffering is part of bearing the name of Jesus. This is not a popular message, thus it is seldom preached in assemblies today, but a necessary message to those who would be full overcomers. Most assemblies today do not preach to full overcomers, for if they did the doctrine of suffering with Christ would be preached. We have been taught facts of suffering with Christ Jesus often here at Living Water Tabernacle. We have covered this same theme many times in my Sunday School class also. Briefly let me review some facts that we recently covered in our study on "Hearing." Starting with 2 TIMOTHY 3:12, which reads: *Yea, and all that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution.* This suffering way according to ROMANS 8:17 is a key part in becoming *joint-heirs with Christ*; that is, we can be ...*joint-heirs with Christ if so be that we suffer with him, that we may be also glorified together...* with Him. In our Sons of God study we noted that the only way a Son of God can become a *joint-heir with Christ*, is to be willing to *suffer with him*. The Apostle Paul re-emphasizes this point in that often misunderstood scripture of 2 TIMOTHY 2:12; *If we suffer, we shall also reign with him: if we deny him, he also will deny us.* Brother Hill has often taught the truth of this statement by pointing out the fact that Paul is telling Timothy this; Timothy if we suffer with Jesus Christ, we shall also reign with Him, however if we, in our hearts, deny Him the right to suffer with Him, then He has no choice but to deny us the right of joint-heirship with Him. This has nothing to do with the fact of ones salvation, but has everything to do with living lives of faith, and going on to have Gods best in our lives. All Christians are heirs of God, but not all Christians are joint-heirs with Christ, for not all Christians are willing to suffer with Christ Jesus, and this is what ROMANS 8:17 is pointing out. So to be a ...*joint-heir with Christ...* means to be willing to ...*suffer with him*. Those Saints of Smyrna, which we studied about in our "Hearing" study, were willing to suffer with Christ, even unto death, and thus they became full overcomers. Larry Vance wrote an excellent tract entitled "Christian Sufferings" if you want to study the subject of suffering with Christ Jesus in greater detail.

Let's now review again ACTS 9:15 & 16 and see two more important points, which we so far have passed over. ACTS 9:15 & 16 again states it like this: *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.* Note the following from these two verses. First of all the Lord revealed unto Ananias of Damascus the five facts we covered above concerning Saul of Tarsus. But in verse 16 we see that it was the Lord who would show Saul of Tarsus the "great things" he must suffer for Jesus' name sake. And if you will carefully study Ananias of Damascus in ACTS 9:10-17, and ACTS 22:12-16 you will note that Ananias didn't tell Saul of Tarsus of "great things" he was going to suffer for Jesus name sake. What can we take out of this statement for ourselves? One thing we should all know by now is that each of us has our own race course to run with patience. On this race course each one of us has to realize that Jesus is the Author and finisher of our faith, {see HEBREWS 12:1 & 2}, meaning that it is our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ who will bring things of His design on our race course to suffer, if need be, for the purpose

of making ...you perfect in every good work to do his will, working in you that which is wellpleasing in his sight, through Jesus Christ; to whom be glory for ever and ever. Amen. {HEBREWS 13:21}. All of us on this race course to win God's best also know ROMANS 8:28, which expounds to us like this: *And we know that all things (whether they seem good to us, or bad to us; whether we suffer loss of some kind, or illness of some kind; all of these things) work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose.* So my point here is this; it is the Lord Jesus Christ who will also have to show each of us what kind of great things we too may have to suffer for His name's sake. For after all, we are His workmanship, as we have so often read in EPHESIANS 2:10 *For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them.*

The second point I want to note here in ACTS 9:15 & 16 concerns THE PREACHING OF THE GOSPEL. Essentially this was what the Lord was telling Ananias of Damascus concerning Saul of Tarsus; that he would be preaching the gospel, and not to just a few, but unto many, both Jews and Gentiles, and to men and women from every walk in life, from the poor unto even Kings. In our meaning of the numbers study we found that there was a number for THE PREACHING OF THE GOSPEL, and it was the number 27. When studying about the number 27 we found that the word "preaching" is found 27 times in scripture, twelve times in association with the Apostle Paul. In ACTS 15:35 we read that Paul was "...teaching and preaching the word of the Lord,..." Sometimes like in ACTS 20:9 Paul was long in preaching. In ACTS 20:25 and 28:31 we find that Paul was "...preaching the kingdom of God..." In ROMANS 16:25 we find that Paul was "...preaching of Jesus Christ, according to the revelation of the mystery, which was kept secret since the world began..." In 1 CORINTHIANS 1:18 we find that Paul was "...preaching of the cross..." Three verses later in 1 CORINTHIANS 1:21 we find Paul telling us that "...it pleased God by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe." A few verses later we find the Apostle Paul stating in 1 CORINTHIANS 2:4 *And my speech and my preaching was not with enticing words of man's wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power:...* 1 CORINTHIANS 15 we know as the resurrection chapter. Paul writes in 1 CORINTHIANS 15:14 *And if Christ be not risen, then is our preaching vain, and your faith is also vain.* In 2 CORINTHIANS 10:14 we find that Paul was also "...preaching the gospel of Christ..." In 2 TIMOTHY 4:17, probably his last letter, the Apostle Paul writes: "...that by me the preaching might be fully known, and that all the Gentiles might hear..." And finally in TITUS 1:3 Paul writes: *"But hath in due times manifested his word through preaching, which is committed unto me according to the commandment of God our Saviour."* So we note the importance of THE PREACHING OF THE GOSPEL in Paul's gospel. Again the number for THE PREACHING OF THE GOSPEL is the number 27.

To Ananias of Damascus the Lord stated this in ACTS 9:15 & 16 -- *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.* The Greek word translated "bear" in verse 15 (number 941 in the Strong's Greek Concordance) is found 27 times in New Testament scripture. So we could say verse 15 it like this: But the Lord said unto him, Go thy way: for he is a chosen vessel unto me, to THE PREACHING OF THE GOSPEL before the Gentiles, and kings, and the children of Israel:...

Now note in verse 16 the phrase "great things." "Great things" is a phrase found in only 27 scriptures in the Bible. "Great things" is a phrase that often points us upward unto God. In 1 SAMUEL 12:24 we find Samuel encouraging the children of Israel with these words: "...fear the LORD, and serve him in truth with all your heart: for consider how great things he hath done for you." The reference is also unto God in the following "great things" found in the book of JOB. JOB 5:9 *Which doeth great things and unsearchable; marvellous things without number:...* JOB 9:10 *Which doeth great things past finding out; yea, and wonders without number.* JOB 37:5 *God thundereth marvellously with his voice; great things doeth he, which we cannot comprehend.* In PSALMS we read some more "great things" concerning God. PSALMS 71:19 *Thy righteousness also, O God, is very high, who hast done great things: O God, who is like unto thee!* PSALMS 126:3 *The LORD hath done great things for us; whereof*

we are glad. In LUKE 1:49 Mary the Mother of Jesus cries out in praise unto God, stating: *For he that is mighty hath done to me great things; and holy is his name.* These are but a few of the 27 scriptures where we find the phrase "great things." 27 being the number that has to do with THE PREACHING OF THE GOSPEL could be found stated this way in ACTS 9:16 -- *For I will shew him how THE PREACHING OF THE GOSPEL will cause him to suffer some "great things" for my name's sake.*

This is quite a load required of Saul of Tarsus, and a load he could not bear without being filled with the Holy Ghost. The load we are talking about is the things what Saul of Tarsus was given of the Lord to bear in ACTS 9:15 & 16. ACTS 9:15 & 16 -- *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.* In bearing this load Saul of Tarsus would suffer great things for Jesus' name's sake. THE PREACHING OF THE GOSPEL by Saul of Tarsus, known to us as the Apostle Paul, and bearing this load in which he would suffer great things for Jesus' name's sake would require the help, and leading, and teaching, and the power of the Holy Ghost. Ananias of Damascus would be used of the Lord to open the eyes of Saul of Tarsus literally, and spiritually, by introducing Saul of Tarsus to the Holy Ghost. When Saul of Tarsus got filled with the Holy Ghost in ACTS 9:17, he received 27 points of help, and these 27 points of help is what enabled him to bear this great load, and suffer these great things for Jesus' name's sake as he went on to answer his calling to THE PREACHING OF THE GOSPEL. Let me explain these 27 points of help from the Holy Ghost.

Again 27 is the number that has to do with THE PREACHING OF THE GOSPEL. 27 is the product of 3 times 9. One of the meanings of the number three is THE HOLY SPIRIT, the third person of the trinity. The meaning for the number nine is FINALITY or DIVINE COMPLETION. In studying about the number nine we learned that the FINAL touches of a full overcoming life can only be DIVINELY COMPLETED by the help and the power of the Holy Ghost. We found three lists of nine associated with the Holy Ghost, which means there are 27 things given of the Holy Ghost to aid in THE PREACHING OF THE GOSPEL; to aid in bringing the FINAL touches to a Christian life; to aid in seeing that a full overcomer is DIVINELY COMPLETED. Let's look for a moment at these three lists of nine associated with the Holy Ghost.

There are nine gifts of the Holy Ghost found in 1 CORINTHIANS 12, which was written by the Apostle Paul, and of course preached by the Apostle Paul. 1 CORINTHIANS 12:4 *Now there are diversities of gifts, but the same Spirit. 5 And there are differences of administrations, but the same Lord. 6 And there are diversities of operations, but it is the same God which worketh all in all. 7 But the manifestation of the Spirit is given to every man to profit withal. 8 For to one is given by the Spirit (1) the word of wisdom; to another (2) the word of knowledge by the same Spirit; 9 To another (3) faith by the same Spirit; to another (4) the gifts of healing by the same Spirit; 10 To another (5) the working of miracles; to another (6) prophecy; to another (7) discerning of spirits; to another (8) divers kinds of tongues; to another (9) the interpretation of tongues: 11 But all these worketh that one and the selfsame Spirit, dividing to every man severally as he will.*

There is the nine-fold fruit of the Holy Spirit found in GALATIANS 5, which also was written by the Apostle Paul, and of course preached by the Apostle Paul. GALATIANS 5:22 *But the fruit of the Spirit is (1) love, (2) joy, (3) peace, (4) longsuffering, (5) gentleness, (6) goodness, (7) faith, 23 (8) Meekness, (9) temperance: against such there is no law.*

There are nine offices of the Holy Ghost. (1) The Holy Ghost is the reprover (the concivtor, the one who brings to light) the following three things found in JOHN 16. JOHN 16:8 *And when he is come, he will reprove the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment: 9 Of sin, because they believe not on me; 10 Of righteousness, because I go to my Father, and ye see me no more; 11 Of judgment, because the prince of this world is judged.* (2) The Holy Ghost is the agent of the new birth. JOHN 3:5 *Jesus answered, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God. 6 That which is born of the flesh is flesh; and*

that which is born of the Spirit is spirit. 7 Marvel not that I said unto thee, Ye must be born again. 8 The wind bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh, and whither it goeth: so is every one that is born of the Spirit. (3) The Holy Ghost is a witness to sonship. ROMANS 8:16 (from a Paraphrased version) *For His Holy Spirit speaks to us deep in our hearts, and tells us that we are the children of God:...* . (4) The Holy Ghost is the Comforter. JOHN 14:26 *But the Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my name, he shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you.* JOHN 14:16 *And I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you for ever;...* . JOHN 15:26 *But when the Comforter is come, whom I will send unto you from the Father, even the Spirit of truth, which proceedeth from the Father, he shall testify of me:...* . JOHN 16:7 *Nevertheless I tell you the truth; It is expedient for you that I go away: for if I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you; but if I depart, I will send him unto you.* (5) The Holy Ghost is our guide and teacher into all of the truth. JOHN 16:13 *Howbeit when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth: for he shall not speak of himself; but whatsoever he shall hear, that shall he speak: and he will shew you things to come.* JOHN 14:26 *But the Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my name, he shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you.* JOHN 15:26 *But when the Comforter is come, whom I will send unto you from the Father, even the Spirit of truth, which proceedeth from the Father, he shall testify of me:...* . JOHN 14:16 *And I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you for ever;...* . (6) The Holy Ghost is the director of ministers. ACTS 13:1 *Now there were in the church that was at Antioch certain prophets and teachers; as Barnabas, and Simeon that was called Niger, and Lucius of Cyrene, and Manaen, which had been brought up with Herod the tetrarch, and Saul. 2 As they ministered to the Lord, and fasted, the Holy Ghost said, Separate me Barnabas and Saul for the work whereunto I have called them. 3 And when they had fasted and prayed, and laid their hands on them, they sent them away. 4 So they, being sent forth by the Holy Ghost, departed unto Seleucia; and from thence they sailed to Cyprus. ACTS 16:6 Now when they had gone throughout Phrygia and the region of Galatia, and were forbidden of the Holy Ghost to preach the word in Asia, 7 After they were come to Mysia, they assayed to go into Bithynia: but the Spirit suffered them not. There are many other scriptures which also point out how the Holy Ghost is the director of ministers. (7) The Holy Ghost is the inspirer of scriptures. 2 TIMOTHY 3:16 *All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: 17 That the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works. 2 PETER 1:20 Knowing this first, that no prophecy of the scripture is of any private interpretation. 21 For the prophecy came not in old time by the will of man: but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost.* ACTS 1:16 *Men and brethren, this scripture must needs have been fulfilled, which the Holy Ghost by the mouth of David spake before concerning Judas, which was guide to them that took Jesus. (8) The Holy Ghost is the distributor of the nine gifts we read about in 1 CORINTHIANS 12. (9) The Holy Ghost is the agency of the trinity who calls and prepares the Bride to forever be the wife of Jesus. Many scriptures bring this point out, but for so many not filled with the Holy Ghost, these things are hidden in the shadows, and not seen by uninspired eyes. One example of this is the story of a bride for Isaac in GENESIS 24. Few realize that this story of GENESIS 24 is but a type and shadow of the preparing of a bride for our heavenly Isaac, Jesus. We did a long study on GENESIS 24. Brother Norm Skarie has put the whole thing on his web site, so now the whole world has access to the facts we studied in GENESIS 24. There are nine things given of Abraham's servant (typical of the Holy Ghost in that chapter) to Rebekah (the bride to be) in GENESIS 24. Abraham's servant gave Rebekah (1) an earring, (2) two bracelets, (3) jewels of silver, (4) jewels of gold, (5) raiment, (6) camels to ride, (7) abundant provisions for the long journey, (8) instructions concerning Isaac, (9) and ultimately through all kinds of obstacles, he guided her to him. Again, The Holy Ghost is the one who prepares the Bride of Christ to rule and reign with Him.**

We have just shown 27 things given of the Holy Ghost to aid in THE PREACHING OF THE GOSPEL; to aid in bringing the FINAL touches to a Christian life; to aid in seeing that a full overcomer is DIVINELY COMPLETED. What does all of this have to do with Ananias of Damascus, and Saul of Tarsus? Saul of Tarsus is called of God to become the Apostle Paul, the Apostle to the Gentiles. He will need to be full of the Holy Ghost to properly PREACH THE GOSPEL. Ananias of Damascus will be the one who introduces Saul of Tarsus to the Holy Ghost. Do you think Saul of Tarsus, the Apostle Paul, ever forgot the day he got filled with the Holy Ghost? No. And here in ACTS 9:10-16 the Lord Jesus Christ Himself is giving Ananias a front row seat (so to speak) to witness this most important event to the man given the calling of THE PREACHING OF THE GOSPEL to the Gentiles.

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.* We have certainly covered a lot of points concerning this portion of scripture. And our time has not be wasted here either, for we learned much concerning the importance that God places in just ones man life. Ananias of Damascus was called of God to do some important task, without whom Saul of Tarsus would have been improperly equipped to fulfill the mission God had given him. Saul of Tarsus mission was THE PREACHING OF THE GOSPEL. Paul states it like this in COLOSSIANS 1:25 *Whereof I am made a minister, according to the dispensation of God which is given to me for you, to fulfil the word of God.* That word "fulfil" is number 4137 in the Strong's Greek Concordance, and it means: to make full, to fill up, i.e. to fill to the full, to complete. Paul's gospel was given to him, in other words, to fill up, or to complete scripture! This is one reason why we should learn and know the gospel of Paul, and his PREACHING OF THE GOSPEL.

Ananias of Damascus had no way of knowing that Saul of Tarsus would turn out to be the Apostle Paul until the Lord in a vision revealed this unto him, as noted in ACTS 9:10-16. Armed with this information, and having a great amount of faith and courage in the Lord Jesus Christ, and being led of the Holy Ghost, we read in ACTS 9:17 this concerning Ananias of Damascus: *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.* Here is another verse loaded with good information, so let's now examine some thoughts from this verse a little closer.

When Ananias went his way, he wasn't going the way he himself would have chosen to go. Ananias had no intention of ever meeting Saul of Tarsus on his own. Saul of Tarsus was a terrorist to Ananias, ACTS 9:13 & 14 plainly point this out. However we find that Ananias of Damascus was more interested in doing the will of the Lord than he was in doing his own will. Thus Ananias of Damascus takes the instructions given him of the Lord Jesus Christ in a vision, and makes them his own. Thus when Ananias went his way, being in tune with the will of the Lord like he was, he knew he was walking in the way of the Lord, and he was happy to do so. When Ananias of Damascus went his way, he followed the instructions given him of the Lord, which were found in ACTS 9:11 & 12 *...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.* These were very specific instructions, so there was no doubt in Ananias' mind where to go, who to look for, and what to do when he got there. Thus we read in ACTS 9:17 that *...Ananias went his way, and entered into the house; and putting his hands on him said, Brother Saul,...*

This salutation "Brother Saul" or "Brother" (so and so) is one Christians are familiar with, for it refers to brethren in Christ. It is a term of respect used of fellow



Christians in addressing one another, and acknowledging the fact that each has been born again. Of course along these same lines, a Christian woman is addressed as Sister. When Ananias addresses Saul of Tarsus as "*Brother Saul*," Ananias was acknowledging the fact revealed unto him by the Lord Jesus Christ Himself that Saul of Tarsus was indeed a born again believer. This was probably the first time Saul of Tarsus had been addressed like this: "*...Brother Saul,...* ." However we know from ACTS 9:12 that Saul of Tarsus also was expecting Ananias of Damascus to find him in the house of Judas praying. ACTS 9:12 again reads: *And hath seen in a vision a man named Ananias coming in, and putting his hand on him, that he might receive his sight.* And so the two men meet, Saul of Tarsus the feared former Christian persecutor, and Ananias of Damascus, the devout man of God with the good report. You can imagine that there was an air of excitement in Ananias' voice when he addressed Saul of Tarsus, for after all it was the Lord Jesus Christ Himself who sent Ananias on this very important mission, and when Ananias found Saul of Tarsus to be right where he was told he would be, no doubt some exciting emotions came over him, and quickly Ananias lays his hands on Saul of Tarsus and expounds: *...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.* These words of Ananias spoken unto Saul of Tarsus were Holy Ghost inspired words; words that echoed the love of God; powerful words full of testimony; words from the Lord, spoken by a man with a tender soothing voice expressing much compassion for a fellow Saint; and were probably the most comforting human voiced words that Saul of Tarsus had heard since being blinded on the road to Damascus. Words with this much power in them had been heard by Saul of Tarsus before when spoken by Stephen in ACTS chapter 7, however now Saul of Tarsus was hearing these powerful Holy Ghost inspired words with a believing tender heart of a new born Saint, and they brought much comfort to him. This salutation of Ananias of Damascus also stuck with Saul of Tarsus for years, for the Apostle Paul himself states in ACTS 22:12 & 13 how Ananias of Damascus came and said unto him at this time: *...Brother Saul, receive thy sight.*

After reading these two portions of scripture, do you think Saul of Tarsus missed his eyesight? Oh yes, more than we can imagine. Years later Paul remember how Ananias said unto him: *...Brother Saul, receive thy sight.* (ACTS 22:13). There is a double meaning here. His eyesight was extremely important to him. While in his blinded condition the Lord used this short time of physical blindness to reveal some important things of Himself unto Saul of Tarsus. For one thing when Saul of Tarsus was in this physical blind condition his focus was totally upon the Lord, and not upon the things of this world. We talked earlier about some of the things the Lord revealed unto Saul of Tarsus concerning his future while he was in this physically blind condition, which is recorded 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.* We also noted in studying this portion of scripture how that Saul of Tarsus' spiritual eyes were being enlightened during this time of his physical blindness. In other words the same Light that blinded the eyes of Saul also enlightened his spiritual heart to see things he had never seen before, and to think differently about Jesus, and Christians. This spiritual enlightenment was just a preview of great and marvelous things to come in his life. Again we think of how comforting then were these Holy Ghost inspired words of Ananias of Damascus to the ears of Saul of Tarsus: *...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 9:18 *And immediately there fell from his eyes as it had been scales: and he received sight forthwith, and arose, and was baptized.* When the power of the Holy Ghost came upon believing Paul in ACTS 9:18 *...immediately there fell from his eyes as it had been scales...* . The scales that fell from Saul's eyes were given to him of the Lord to protect his eyes from that blinding light that Paul saw in the way on the road to Damascus a few days earlier. In one sense its show us of God's great love and

thoughtfulness towards us in every aspect of our lives. Had the Lord not given Saul "scales" to protect his eyes, he may very well have been physically blind the rest of his life. The scales falling off are also representative of the truth that can only be revealed by the Holy Spirit. Those who haven't been filled with the Holy Ghost have "scales" over their spiritual eyes, which keep them from seeing all the things God would like them to see. That's why being filled with the Holy Ghost is such an eye opening experience. Jesus told his disciples in JOHN 16:12-15: *I have yet many things to say unto you, but ye cannot bear them now. 13 Howbeit when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth: for he shall not speak of himself; but whatsoever he shall hear, that shall he speak: and he will shew you things to come. 14 He shall glorify me: for he shall receive of mine, and shall shew it unto you. 15 All things that the Father hath are mine: therefore said I, that he shall take of mine, and shall shew it unto you.* How can you be guided into all the truth without the Holy Ghost? You can't. Further how can you see all the truth without the guidance of the Holy Ghost? You can't. If you haven't received the Holy Ghost since ye believed (see ACTS 19:2-6) then there are "scales" over your spiritual eyes, which keep you from seeing all of the truth.

In our discussion of Ananias of Damascus we have found that he was a man full of faith, and full of the Holy Ghost much like the seven men listed in ACTS 6:5. He probably was one of the many who were scattered abroad after the stoning of Stephen, a fact which is noted in ACTS 8:1. We have seen that Ananias of Damascus was willing to follow the instructions of the Lord, and that the Lord revealed unto Ananias many things concerning the future of Saul of Tarsus. Ananias was Saul of Tarsus' first Christian friend after he got saved. Ananias no doubt taught Saul of Tarsus many facts concerning Jesus and the Holy Ghost. Some of our greatest lessons are learned by actions, and not by words. We have all heard the old saying: "Actions speak louder than words." Ananias spoke these words to Saul of Tarsus in ACTS 9:17 *...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.* Accompanying these words were actions learned of Ananias by his teachers, which may have been the Apostles, or even Jesus Himself. Let's examine these actions a little closer, and see where they came from.

The actions I am referring too concerns the laying on of hands for the purpose of receiving healing. The Lord Jesus had specifically told Ananias to lay hands on Saul of Tarsus in ACTS 9:12 *And hath seen in a vision a man named Ananias coming in, and putting his hand on him, that he might receive his sight.* Jesus by His actions and words taught His disciples some things about healing. Let's read about some of His actions. In MATTHEW 8:2 & 3 we read of Jesus healing a leper by the touch of His hand. MATTHEW 8:2 *And, behold, there came a leper and worshipped him, saying, Lord, if thou wilt, thou canst make me clean. 3 And Jesus put forth his hand, and touched him, saying, I will; be thou clean. And immediately his leprosy was cleansed.* A few verses later in MATTHEW 8:14-17 we read: 14 *And when Jesus was come into Peter's house, he saw his wife's mother laid, and sick of a fever. 15 And he touched her hand, and the fever left her: and she arose, and ministered unto them. 16 When the even was come, they brought unto him many that were possessed with devils: and he cast out the spirits with his word, and healed all that were sick: 17 That it might be fulfilled which was spoken by Esaias the prophet, saying, Himself took our infirmities, and bare our sicknesses.* In MATTHEW 9:18-26 we read of two more miracles performed by Jesus with His healing touch. MATTHEW 9:18 *While he spake these things unto them, behold, there came a certain ruler, and worshipped him, saying, My daughter is even now dead: but come and lay thy hand upon her, and she shall live. 19 And Jesus arose, and followed him, and so did his disciples. 20 And, behold, a woman, which was diseased with an issue of blood twelve years, came behind him, and touched the hem of his garment: 21 For she said within herself, If I may but touch his garment, I shall be whole. 22 But Jesus turned him about, and when he saw her, he said, Daughter, be of good comfort; thy faith hath made thee whole. And the woman was made whole from that hour. 23 And when Jesus came into the ruler's house, and saw the minstrels and the people making a noise, 24 He said unto them, Give place: for the maid is not dead, but sleepeth. And they laughed him to scorn.*

25 But when the people were put forth, he went in, and took her by the hand, and the maid arose. 26 And the fame hereof went abroad into all that land.

In MATTHEW 9:27-31 we read the first account of many, where blind men received their sight by the healing touch of Jesus. MATTHEW 9:27 And when Jesus departed thence, two blind men followed him, crying, and saying, Thou Son of David, have mercy on us. 28 And when he was come into the house, the blind men came to him: and Jesus saith unto them, Believe ye that I am able to do this? They said unto him, Yea, Lord. 29 Then touched he their eyes, saying, According to your faith be it unto you. 30 And their eyes were opened; and Jesus straitly charged them, saying, See that no man know it. 31 But they, when they were departed, spread abroad his fame in all that country.

The fame of Jesus by this time had spread throughout all of the country to the point where John the Baptist heard of these miracles even though he was in prison. We read this in MATTHEW 11. MATTHEW 11:2 Now when John had heard in the prison the works of Christ, he sent two of his disciples, 3 And said unto him, Art thou he that should come, or do we look for another? 4 Jesus answered and said unto them, Go and shew John again those things which ye do hear and see: 5 The blind receive their sight, and the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed, and the deaf hear, the dead are raised up, and the poor have the gospel preached to them.

MATTHEW 12:22 Then was brought unto him one possessed with a devil, blind, and dumb: and he healed him, insomuch that the blind and dumb both spake and saw. The fame of Jesus further spread, and many more miracles were done by the healing touch of Jesus. But I will only focus now on some of the blind that were healed by Jesus. We read the following in MATTHEW 15:30 And great multitudes came unto him, having with them those that were lame, blind, dumb, maimed, and many others, and cast them down at Jesus' feet; and he healed them: 31 Insomuch that the multitude wondered, when they saw the dumb to speak, the maimed to be whole, the lame to walk, and the blind to see: and they glorified the God of Israel.

MATTHEW 20:29-34 reads like this: And as they departed from Jericho, a great multitude followed him. 30 And, behold, two blind men sitting by the way side, when they heard that Jesus passed by, cried out, saying, Have mercy on us, O Lord, thou Son of David. 31 And the multitude rebuked them, because they should hold their peace: but they cried the more, saying, Have mercy on us, O Lord, thou Son of David. 32 And Jesus stood still, and called them, and said, What will ye that I shall do unto you? 33 They say unto him, Lord, that our eyes may be opened. 34 So Jesus had compassion on them, and touched their eyes: and immediately their eyes received sight, and they followed him. This same account is recorded a little differently in MARK 10. MARK 10:46 And they came to Jericho: and as he went out of Jericho with his disciples and a great number of people, blind Bartimaeus, the son of Timaeus, sat by the highway side begging. 47 And when he heard that it was Jesus of Nazareth, he began to cry out, and say, Jesus, thou Son of David, have mercy on me. 48 And many charged him that he should hold his peace: but he cried the more a great deal, Thou Son of David, have mercy on me. 49 And Jesus stood still, and commanded him to be called. And they call the blind man, saying unto him, Be of good comfort, rise; he calleth thee. 50 And he, casting away his garment, rose, and came to Jesus. 51 And Jesus answered and said unto him, What wilt thou that I should do unto thee? The blind man said unto him, Lord, that I might receive my sight. 52 And Jesus said unto him, Go thy way; thy faith hath made thee whole. And immediately he received his sight, and followed Jesus in the way.

In MATTHEW 21 we find Jesus in Jerusalem at the temple. Verse 14 reads like this: And the blind and the lame came to him in the temple; and he healed them.

We read the following account of a blind man healed in MARK 8. MARK 8:22 And he cometh to Bethsaida; and they bring a blind man unto him, and besought him to touch him. 23 And he took the blind man by the hand, and led him out of the town; and when he had spit on his eyes, and put his hands upon him, he asked him if he saw ought. 24 And he looked up, and said, I see men as trees, walking. 25 After that he put his hands again upon his eyes, and made him look up: and he was restored, and saw every man clearly.

There are many more accounts in scripture where Jesus healed the sick, the blind, the lame, and the afflicted. Jesus disciples learned from Him, and after they too

were filled with the Holy Ghost the miracles multiplied. A lame man was healed in ACTS 3 by the prayer of Peter in the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth. Peter and John were persecuted for this action, but the end result was that they became even more famous. This is how ACTS 5 records the story. ACTS 5:12 *And by the hands of the apostles were many signs and wonders wrought among the people; (and they were all with one accord in Solomon's porch. 13 And of the rest durst no man join himself to them: but the people magnified them. 14 And believers were the more added to the Lord, multitudes both of men and women.) 15 Insomuch that they brought forth the sick into the streets, and laid them on beds and couches, that at the least the shadow of Peter passing by might overshadow some of them.*

The followers of the Apostles learned from them of the wonderful healing power of Jesus. Seven of these followers are talked about in ACTS 6. The most famous of these seven is Stephen, of whom we read in ACTS 6:8 *And Stephen, full of faith and power, did great wonders and miracles among the people.* Somewhere along the line Ananias of Damascus witnessed the healing power of Jesus, and became familiar with the power and manifestation of the Holy Ghost, and what can happen when hands are laid upon the sick. Jesus Himself after His resurrection told his disciples these words recorded in MARK 16. MARK 16:17 *And these signs shall follow them that believe; In my name shall they cast out devils; they shall speak with new tongues; 18 They shall take up serpents; and if they drink any deadly thing, it shall not hurt them; they shall lay hands on the sick, and they shall recover.* Ananias of Damascus too had learned this lesson.

On your own read the 9th chapter of JOHN for another account of a blind man being healed by Jesus. We read in both JOHN 8:12 and JOHN 9:5 that Jesus is the light of the world. Saul of Tarsus saw that bright Light of the glorified Jesus on the road to Damascus, and became a believer, but was left physically blind in the process. While blinded, Saul of Tarsus prayed like he had never prayed in his life, during which time the Lord Himself revealed certain things to him. One of the many things revealed unto Saul of Tarsus while blind was the fact we read in ACTS 9:12, where we find that Saul *...hath seen in a vision a man named Ananias coming in, and putting his hand on him, that he might receive his sight.* So Saul of Tarsus knows he won't be left blind the rest of his life. Ananias of Damascus too has learned from the examples of his teachers, whoever they were, the power of healing that is in Jesus name as manifest by the Holy Ghost. Thus we read in ACTS 9:17 & 18 what happened when Ananias of Damascus met Saul of Tarsus face to face. ACTS 9:17 *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. 18 And immediately there fell from his eyes as it had been scales: and he received sight forthwith, and arose, and was baptized.*

On this day Saul of Tarsus too learned an important lesson taught by Ananias of Damascus about the power of healing that is in Jesus name as manifest by the Holy Ghost. Years later we read of Paul in Ephesus practicing some of what he first learned from Ananias, and ACTS 19:11 & 12 tells it like this: *And God wrought special miracles by the hands of Paul: 12 So that from his body were brought unto the sick handkerchiefs or aprons, and the diseases departed from them, and the evil spirits went out of them.* No little wonder then that the Apostle Paul was also known as the one "that have turned the world upside down" as recorded in ACTS 17:6.

Back to our text. ACTS 9:17 *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. 18 And immediately there fell from his eyes as it had been scales: and he received sight forthwith, and arose, and was baptized.* These words "immediately" and "forthwith" both mean: right now, instantly, of the present time. In MATTHEW 8:3 which we read above, we find that when Jesus touched him *...immediately* (right now, instantly, of the present time) *his leprosy was cleansed.* The blind men of MATTHEW 20:34 received sight *...immediately* (right now, instantly, of the present time) when Jesus touched their eyes. When Peter took the lame man by the hand in ACTS 3:7 *...immediately* (right now, instantly, of the present time) *his feet and ankle bones received strength.* And now here in ACTS 9:17 & 18 we find Ananias of Damascus laying

hands on Saul of Tarsus as he was instructed of the Lord in a vision to do, and ...immediately (right now, instantly, of the present time) *there fell from his eyes as it had been scales:...* . These scales were the protection that Jesus gave the eyes of Saul of Tarsus on the road to Damascus. Even before Saul of Tarsus became a believer, Jesus had His mighty hand upon him. Go look in the mirror and realize that it was God the Father *...who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ: According as he hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before him in love: Having predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to himself, according to the good pleasure of his will, To the praise of the glory of his grace, wherein he hath made us accepted in the beloved.* {EPHESIANS 1:3-6}. Like Saul of Tarsus, God has His mighty hand upon all believers. So here in ACTS 9:18 we read again: ...immediately *there fell from his eyes as it had been scales: and he received sight forthwith,*... and Paul recalls this fact in ACTS 22:13 when he states this concerning Ananias: *And the same hour I looked up upon him.*

Ananias then spoke some words to Saul of Tarsus, which are not recorded for us in ACTS 9, but are found in ACTS 22. The Apostle Paul gives a little more detail, and fills in the blanks about what Ananias had to say in the following verses of ACTS 22. ACTS 22:13 *...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.* These words of Ananias were Holy Ghost inspired words, as we will note in the following discussion.

Let's look at these words a little closer. ACTS 22:14 *...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.* These words were essentially what the Lord had revealed unto Ananias in ACTS 9:15 & 16, which again reads: *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.* Note again in ACTS 9:16 that it was the Lord who was to reveal unto Saul of Tarsus the *...great things he must suffer for my name's sake.* Knowing it was the Lord's business to reveal certain things unto Saul of Tarsus, Ananias tells him in ACTS 22:14 & 15 *...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.*

Ananias of Damascus was impressed by Jesus Himself when the Lord revealed to him that Saul of Tarsus was a "chosen vessel" in ACTS 9:15. Ananias tells Saul of Tarsus this very same fact when he states: *...The God of our fathers hath chosen thee...* . Furthermore the Holy Ghost inspired Ananias at this time to tell Saul of Tarsus *...that thou shouldest know his will, and see that Just One, and shouldest hear the voice of his mouth.* No doubt the words "Just One" echoed loud and clear in the ears of Saul of Tarsus. The words "Just One" are found in two scriptures in the Bible, two being the number of SUFFICIENT WITNESS, or SUFFICIENT TESTIMONY. These two scriptures are both found in the book of ACTS. Both of these scriptures record Holy Ghost inspired words that were physically heard by Saul of Tarsus. The first time these Holy Ghost inspired words "Just One" were heard by Saul of Tarsus was when they were spoken by Stephen in ACTS 7:52. ACTS 7:52 *Which of the prophets have not your fathers persecuted? and they have slain them which shewed before of the coming of the Just One; of whom ye have been now the betrayers and murderers:...* . Recall that these words "cut to the heart" of those that heard them, Saul of Tarsus being one of them. Of course the "Just One" refers to Jesus. No one accepted the "Just One" as their personal Saviour in ACTS 7, but the words of Stephen in that chapter pricked the heart of Saul of Tarsus every day there after. The "Just One" Himself appeared unto Saul of Tarsus on the road to Damascus, at which point in time Saul of Tarsus became a believer. The brightness of the glory of the "Just One" blinded Saul of Tarsus for a season, but now upon being visited by Ananias of Damascus, Saul of Tarsus has once again received his sight. Ananias of Damascus has Saul of Tarsus' full attention when the Holy Ghost inspires Ananias to say: *...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 22:14}. These Holy Ghost inspired words spoken by Ananias about the "Just One" didn't "cut to the heart" of Saul of Tarsus in quite the same way as these same words spoken by Stephen. Saul of Tarsus was on the opposite side of believing here in ACTS 9 & 22. These were words of encouragement and comfort that the ears of Saul of Tarsus was hearing: *...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.* These also were words of confirmation that Saul of Tarsus was hearing from Ananias, for the "Just One" had appeared unto Saul of Tarsus on the road to Damascus and told him the facts we studied found 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.*

Saul of Tarsus knew already before meeting Ananias that the "Just One" would appear unto him again, and earlier in this study we went over some of the times this happened in the life of the Apostle Paul. Here again is some scriptures to review that further confirm the fact that the "Just One," Jesus Christ Himself, in person revealed unto Saul of Tarsus, facts concerning Himself. 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.* In 2 CORINTHIANS 12:7 Paul writes of "the abundance of the revelations" that were given him of Jesus Christ, the "Just One." In EPHESIANS 3:3 Paul writes "How that by revelation he (Jesus Christ the "Just One") made known unto me the mystery;... ." And it was Jesus Christ the "Just One" who revealed these many mysteries unto Paul that he was able to write about. Also on your own study again ACTS 23:11; ACTS 27:20-26 and 2 TIMOTHY 4:16 & 17, and see for yourself the "Just One" revealing Himself unto the former Saul of Tarsus.

We read again these words of Ananias of Damascus that he spoke to Saul of Tarsus on the day they first met. ACTS 22:14 *...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.* The phrase "hear the voice" is found in eight scriptures. By now we all should know that the number eight has several meanings, and that being: NEW CREATION; NEW BIRTH; NEW BEGINNING; RESURRECTION, and BRIDE. Saul of Tarsus has just entered into this NEW CREATION life; he has received the NEW BIRTH; he has met "the Just One," who is the RESURRECTION, and is now reached the point in his life where a NEW BEGINNING is taking place. Obviously he needs to "hear the voice" of the Lord in order to accomplish all of the things that the "Just One" has set before him to do. Saul of Tarsus needs to "hear the voice" of the Holy Ghost speaking unto his heart, and guiding him into all of the truth. Saul of Tarsus needs to "hear the voice" of the Lord, receive what He has to say, so that he can fully preach the gospel message given unto him for this church age; so that we too can "hear the voice" of the Lord Himself descending from heaven with a shout and the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God, calling us home to forever be with the Lord Himself by His side as His BRIDE.

Next we find after receiving his sight, and being told certain things by Ananias, that Saul of Tarsus was baptized. ACTS 9:18 records: *...and he received sight forthwith, and arose, and was baptized.* ACTS 22:16 tells these words of Ananias spoken unto Saul of Tarsus: *And now why tarriest thou? arise, and be baptized, and wash away thy sins, calling on the name of the Lord.* Brother Copley uses two pages of notes to explain this verse. The reason Brother Copley spends so much time on this verse is because of the way this verse reads in our King James version. A better wording of this verse would read: *And now why tarriest thou? arise, and be baptized, and wash away thy sins, having called on the name of the Lord.* The word "calling" in our King James version is in the past perfect tense. It means that Saul of Tarsus had called fully on the name of the Lord before he was exhorted to be baptized by Ananias of Damascus. This means in short that Saul of Tarsus became a believer, and got saved while traveling on that road to Damascus.

Before Ananias ever met Saul of Tarsus he knew that he was a believer, for the Lord had told Ananias of how Saul was a chosen vessel unto Him. Ananias addressed Saul of Tarsus as Brother Saul because Ananias knew Saul was a believer. Brother Copley points out that "salvation is by faith in the blood of Christ apart from any works, even wholly apart from the beautiful symbol of baptism in water." The Apostle Paul in his preaching never emphasized water baptism. In fact he writes in 1 CORINTHIANS 1:17 & 18 his point of emphasis: *For Christ sent me not to baptize, but to preach the gospel: not with wisdom of words, lest the cross of Christ should be made of none effect. 18 For the preaching of the cross is to them that perish foolishness; but unto us which are saved it is the power of God.*

Recall that the Apostle Paul, the former Saul of Tarsus, was chosen of God to be the Apostle to the Gentiles. In his first sermon that we have a record of in scripture, found in ACTS 13, we find these words of Paul. ACTS 13:38 *Be it known unto you therefore, men and brethren, that through this man is preached unto you the forgiveness of sins: 39 And by him all that believe are justified from all things, from which ye could not be justified by the law of Moses.* A week after this sermon Paul again preached a sermon in the very same synagogue. However this week saw almost the whole city of both Jews and Gentiles gathered together to hear Paul's words. The Jews rejected the words spoken by Paul and Barnabas this week, but the Gentiles received their words. ACTS 13:46-49 records it like this: *Then Paul and Barnabas waxed bold, and said, It was necessary that the word of God should first have been spoken to you: but seeing ye put it from you, and judge yourselves unworthy of everlasting life, lo, we turn to the Gentiles. 47 For so hath the Lord commanded us, saying, I have set thee to be a light of the Gentiles, that thou shouldest be for salvation unto the ends of the earth. 48 And when the Gentiles heard this, they were glad, and glorified the word of the Lord: and as many as were ordained to eternal life believed. 49 And the word of the Lord was published throughout all the region.* Note that the emphasis of Paul's preaching was to preach the gospel, starting with the subject of salvation. Water baptism was not emphasized by Paul.

Before Paul came on the scene, and even before Jesus came on the scene, the Jews were sent by God one John the Baptist, whose message was ...*To give knowledge of salvation unto his people by the remission of their sins.* {See LUKE 1:77}. John the Baptist didn't come to preach before the Gentiles like the apostle Paul did. John the Baptist preached ...*the baptism of repentance to all the people of Israel.* {See ACTS 13:24}. John the Baptist preached before the time of Jesus ministry. In ACTS 19:4 Paul states: ...*John verily baptized with the baptism of repentance, saying unto the people, that they should believe on him which should come after him, that is, on Christ Jesus.* In John the Baptist's day water baptism was an outward expression of an inward belief in the soon coming Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, and His forgiveness of sins. After the resurrection of Jesus water baptism to a Jew was an outward expression of an inward belief that they had accepted Jesus as their own personal Saviour, His forgiveness of their sins, and that they had died unto the law of Moses and were to be counted among those who believed in the resurrected Jesus Christ. Brother Copley points out that a fellow Jew will not believe that a Jew is saved if they are not willing to be baptized in water, thus when a Jew is baptized in water the unbelieving Jews denounce the baptized Jew from Judaism, and even from their family. They are referred to by other Jews as "the blotted out," having denounced Judaism and accepted the message of the Saviour. Recall also in 1 CORINTHIANS 1:22 that Paul writes: *For the Jews require a sign,...* Water baptism was a definite sign unto the Jews that one had accepted Jesus Christ as their personal Saviour.

When we read the words of our text in ACTS 22, keep in mind that Paul was speaking unto the Jews of Jerusalem after being arrested there. These words of ACTS 22:16 would convey a special message to them, which seems to be somewhat confounding to we Gentile believers. ACTS 22:16 *And now why tarriest thou? arise, and be baptized, and wash away thy sins, calling on the name of the Lord.* Baptism in water was the one bold and convincing expression to a Jew of real repentance. An unwillingness by a Jew to be baptized in water was the equivalent to saying, "I do not believe in Jesus Christ; I will not have Him to be my Messiah and King." Note here in ACTS 22:16 that Ananias gets after Saul of Tarsus a little bit when he asks: *And now why tarriest thou?* Saul of Tarsus must have hesitated to be baptized, not because he had not yet believed in Jesus, but

because he knew what persecution would follow him because of his being baptized in water. Saul of Tarsus had come to Damascus to persecute those Jews who had outwardly expressed their inward belief in Jesus Christ by submitting to water baptism. Now he had become one of them. This is why we read later in ACTS 9:23 that *...the Jews took counsel to kill him.*

## Saul of Tarsus begins Preaching

Up to this point in our study we have examined the background of Saul of Tarsus, whom we know as the Apostle Paul, up to the place where he is now saved and filled with the Holy Ghost. We have learned of his educated past, how that he was taught by the best teachers of his day things concerning the law of Moses, and how to be the best Pharisee. Few if any ever attained to the high place Saul of Tarsus had. His career that his parents put him on took him far, and he had the respect of all who knew him. Someday it seemed he would be a chief ruler of the Jewish Sanhedrin.

Then Jesus came. Saul of Tarsus became a new man in Christ Jesus. Many changes then took place in life of Saul of Tarsus. He wrote about this change in 2 CORINTHIANS 5:17 where he states: *Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new.* Because of this change Saul of Tarsus lost his old friends, and he had to make new friends. Because of this change Saul of Tarsus had no place to live, no place to call home. Because of this change Saul of Tarsus had to change careers, for he could no longer persecute Christians. Because of this change Saul of Tarsus went from being the pursuer to the pursued. Because of this change in the heart of Saul of Tarsus old things passed away from him, and all things became new.

The Apostle Paul used the word "new" fifteen times in his writings; fifteen being the number of REST. Twice we read the word "new" in 2 CORINTHIANS 5:17 -- *Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new.* Literally all things were now becoming new to Saul of Tarsus. Jesus Christ our Lord and Saviour had appointed him unto the ministry. This was new, and a career change to Saul of Tarsus. We read this in both ACTS 22 and ACTS 26 where we are given accounts on what the Lord Jesus Christ said to Saul of Tarsus when He first appeared unto him on the road to Damascus. ACTS 22:10 tells us: *...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 26:16-18 gives a broader statement from the Lord unto Saul of Tarsus at that time, saying: *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.* Because Saul of Tarsus was appointed to become the Apostle Paul, we read this statement in 2 TIMOTHY 1:11 -- *Whereunto I am appointed a preacher, and an apostle, and a teacher of the Gentiles.*

Saul of Tarsus knew all about this new career Jesus had given him. In a vision Jesus had also revealed this unto Ananias of Damascus. We studied how Jesus told Ananias of Damascus that Saul of Tarsus was *...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. {ACTS 9:15 & 16}.* And how in ACTS 22:14 & 15 Ananias told Saul *....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.* Does this all mean that Saul of Tarsus was equipped and ready to embark on this new career that Jesus had given him? The answer is both yes, and no.

Saul of Tarsus was equipped to embark on this new career that Jesus had given him, for now he was filled with the Holy Ghost. Again let's review some facts concerning the Holy Ghost. First in ACTS 1:8 we read these words of Jesus: *But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto*