

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*

me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judaea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth. The power of the Holy Ghost is given unto all who receive Him. Power means the strength power, the ability power, the influential power, and the essential power necessary to do the things that our high calling in Christ Jesus demands of us. This power is beyond our strength, but equipped with this kind of power we can do anything Christ Jesus wants us to do. Here in ACTS 1:8 Jesus was telling that the power of the Holy Ghost was necessary in order to be witnesses even unto the uttermost part of the earth.

Second of all recall that the Holy Ghost is also the Comforter. This is part of His power, to comfort the believer. The Holy Ghost is the Comforter who comforted my Mother in the middle of the night as her house was burning down a few years ago. The Holy Ghost is the Comforter who comforted Sue and I recently when we had our bad car wreck. The Holy Ghost is the Comforter to all you who have received Him in our times of tests and trials.

Part of the duties of the Holy Ghost as Comforter is our guide and teacher. 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 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.*

Equipped with the power of the Holy Ghost, Peter, who some fifty days before denied that he even knew Jesus, preached a sermon on the day of Pentecost where about three thousand souls were saved! This was a powerful demonstration of the power of the Holy Ghost. It also shows the fact that a preacher now lived within Peter. Peter became preacher and an Apostle by the power of the Holy Ghost. All who have been filled with the Holy Ghost have this same preacher living in them! Sue and I once met a song writer in New Mexico, a Christian man who had been filled with the Holy Ghost, and he wrote a song entitled "I am not a preacher, but there is a preacher living inside of me." I recently shared that story with Rocky before he "preached" at a funeral.

The point of all of this discussion is to show that Saul of Tarsus was now equipped to embark on his new career that Jesus had given him. But really what did he know as a new born Christian? He knew that Jesus was indeed the Son of God, but that was about it. He hadn't received as of this point in time the gospel message that was his to preach to us of this church age, so in that regard he was not ready to fully embark on the mission Jesus had given him to do. A transition time was necessary in his life. He had some things to learn. The Lord had to reveal things to Saul of Tarsus, and He would reveal these things in the next few years. So we continue the account of Saul of Tarsus being transformed into the Apostle Paul in ACTS 9.

ACTS 9:19 *And when he had received meat, he was strengthened. Then was Saul certain days with the disciples which were at Damascus. 20 And straightway he preached Christ in the synagogues, that he is the Son of God.* ACTS 26:20 further tells us in Paul's own words that he *...shewed first unto them of Damascus, ...that they should repent and turn to God, and do works meet for repentance.* Let's examine these verses a little closer.

In ACTS 9:19 we find that Saul of Tarsus remained in Damascus, having been taken in by the disciples which were at Damascus. The only disciple we have a record of in scripture being in Damascus was Ananias, who was Saul's first Christian teacher after he got saved. Recall that Ananias told Saul certain things revealed to him by the Lord Jesus Christ, and that is how he became Saul's first Christian teacher. Ananias may have taken Saul in to live with him for a while, but we don't know for the scripture doesn't tell us. No doubt Ananias introduced Saul of Tarsus to the other disciples who lived in Damascus. Saul of Tarsus stayed with some of them. These disciples were also Jews, for the gospel had not yet spread extensively unto the Gentiles, for that was the calling Saul of Tarsus was really called unto, but hadn't started at this time. Being a Pharisee, Saul of Tarsus would have the respect of fellow Jews, so no doubt they would be glad to have him stay with any of them.

This word "strengthened" found in ACTS 9:19 is a Greek word only used twice in scripture. The other time we find this verb is in LUKE 22:43 when Jesus was strengthened in the mount of Olives by an angel as He prayed the night He was betrayed by Judas Iscariot. No doubt Saul of Tarsus was also receiving heavenly strength, as well

as natural strength when he received meat there at Damascus. No doubt he was also feeding on spiritual meat.

Knowing that he was called to a preacher, and an apostle, and a teacher we find this statement in ACTS 9:20 -- *And straightway he preached Christ in the synagogues, that he is the Son of God.* What else did he know? Nothing, for his gospel hadn't been revealed unto him at this point in time. But he did preach Christ, that he is the Son of God, and he preached this fact to the Jews first, for they assembled in synagogues. Saul of Tarsus was then fulfilling the part of the statement made concerning him in ACTS 26:16 when Jesus told him *...I have appeared unto thee for this purpose, to make thee a minister and a witness both of these things which thou hast seen...* So Saul preached what he had seen, that Jesus Christ is indeed the Son of God.

Here we find the foundation for Paul's preaching, that is Jesus Christ the Son of God. Later in life Paul writes: 1 CORINTHIANS 3:11 *For other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ.* As he started his ministry here in Damascus Saul of Tarsus, who later became the Apostle Paul, began his preaching by noting that Jesus Christ is the Son of God.

Forty-eight times in scripture we find the phrase "Son of God." Eight of these scriptures are penned by the Apostle Paul. Recall again that the number eight has several important meanings: NEW CREATION; NEW BIRTH; NEW BEGINNING; RESURRECTION, and BRIDE. All of these different meanings are incorporated in the preaching of Paul's gospel. For Saul of Tarsus his NEW CREATION life was just beginning, and his NEW BEGINNING included preaching what he knew, having personally met on the road to Damascus the RESURRECTION, who is Jesus Christ the Son of God. Having believed on Jesus Christ the Son of God gave Saul of Tarsus NEW BIRTH, and so he preached what he knew as fact, that Jesus Christ is the Son of God. After growing in knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ the Son of God, Jesus Himself revealed unto Paul facts concerning the BRIDE of Christ. What a strong foundation we find in knowing that Jesus Christ is the Son of God. {The eight scriptures where the Apostle Paul uses the phrase "Son of God" are: ROMANS 1:4; 2 CORINTHIANS 1:19; GALATIANS 2:20; EPHESIANS 4:13; HEBREWS 4:14; 6:6; 7:3; and 10:29}.

Of the forty-eight times in scripture that we find the phrase "Son of God," the majority were written by the Apostle John. In our HEARING study we noted several of these same scriptures when we went over facts concerning the church of Thyatira to whom Jesus spoke of Himself as the Son of God. Note in the following scriptures how we find a strong foundation in knowing that Jesus Christ is the Son of God. JOHN 3:16 *For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.* 17 *For God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world; but that the world through him might be saved.* 18 *He that believeth on him is not condemned: but he that believeth not is condemned already, because he hath not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God.* 19 *And this is the condemnation, that light is come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil.* 20 *For every one that doeth evil hateth the light, neither cometh to the light, lest his deeds should be reproved.* How many over the centuries have believed that Jesus Christ is indeed the Son of God after reading or hearing this portion of scripture?

In JOHN 5:24 & 25 we read: *Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that heareth my word, and believeth on him that sent me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation; but is passed from death unto life.* 25 *Verily, verily, I say unto you, The hour is coming, and now is, when the dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God: and they that hear shall live.*

In JOHN 9 Jesus heals a blind man. The Jews of that chapter called the blind man who was healed in question, and his parents, and when he confessed that Jesus had healed him, he was cast out of the assembly. Then we read these words of Jesus starting in verse 35 -- *Jesus heard that they had cast him out; and when he had found him, he said unto him, Dost thou believe on the Son of God?* 36 *He answered and said, Who is he, Lord, that I might believe on him?* 37 *And Jesus said unto him, Thou hast both seen him, and it is he that talketh with thee.* 38 *And he said, Lord, I believe. And he worshipped him.*

Then in JOHN 20 we read John's concluding thoughts in that book concerning the Son of God. JOHN 20:31 *But these are written, that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing ye might have life through his name.*

In 1 JOHN we read some more facts concerning the Son of God, our strong foundation. 1 JOHN 3:8 *He that committeth sin is of the devil; for the devil sinneth from the beginning. For this purpose the Son of God was manifested, that he might destroy the works of the devil.* 1 JOHN 4:15 *Whosoever shall confess that Jesus is the Son of God, God dwelleth in him, and he in God.* 1 JOHN 5:5 *Who is he that overcometh the world, but he that believeth that Jesus is the Son of God? ...10 He that believeth on the Son of God hath the witness in himself: he that believeth not God hath made him a liar; because he believeth not the record that God gave of his Son.* 11 *And this is the record, that God hath given to us eternal life, and this life is in his Son.* 12 *He that hath the Son hath life; and he that hath not the Son of God hath not life.* 13 *These things have I written unto you that believe on the name of the Son of God; that ye may know that ye have eternal life, and that ye may believe on the name of the Son of God.* ...1 JOHN 5:20 *And we know that the Son of God is come, and hath given us an understanding, that we may know him that is true, and we are in him that is true, even in his Son Jesus Christ. This is the true God, and eternal life.*

The Apostle Paul in his writing and teaching and preaching also taught about the strong foundation that we find in Jesus Christ the Son of God. ROMANS 1:1 *Paul, a servant of Jesus Christ, called to be an apostle, separated unto the gospel of God,* 2 *(Which he had promised afore by his prophets in the holy scriptures,)* 3 *Concerning his Son Jesus Christ our Lord, which was made of the seed of David according to the flesh;* 4 *And declared to be the Son of God with power, according to the spirit of holiness, by the resurrection from the dead:* 5 *By whom we have received grace and apostleship, for obedience to the faith among all nations, for his name:* 6 *Among whom are ye also the called of Jesus Christ:...* 2 CORINTHIANS 1:19 *For the Son of God, Jesus Christ, who was preached among you by us, even by me and Silvanus and Timotheus, was not yea and nay, but in him was yea.* GALATIANS 2:20 *I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me.*

Now we have learned how that Saul of Tarsus, the future Apostle Paul, began his ministry, which was by laying the strong foundation we find recorded in his first sermon of ACTS 9:20 -- *And straightway he preached Christ in the synagogues, that he is the Son of God.* The result of this kind of preaching got the people of Damascus to thinking. So we read their thoughts of him in ACTS 9:21. ACTS 9:21 *But all that heard him were amazed, and said; Is not this he that destroyed them which called on this name in Jerusalem, and came hither for that intent, that he might bring them bound unto the chief priests?* This kind of questioning and amazement was often recorded in scripture after a miracle was performed. What greater miracle is there than being delivered from sin? Saul of Tarsus on the road to Damascus passed from death unto life, and as we read above in JOHN 5:24 & 25 -- *Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that heareth my word, and believeth on him that sent me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation; but is passed from death unto life.* 25 *Verily, verily, I say unto you, The hour is coming, and now is, when the dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God: and they that hear shall live.* Saul of Tarsus had heard the voice of the Son of God on the road to Damascus, and instantly passed from death unto life. When he preached that Jesus is the Son of God, ...*all that heard him were amazed...*

They were amazed because they knew Saul of Tarsus' reputation, which went before him, that previously he destroyed them that called on Jesus the Son of God in Jerusalem. This word "destroyed" in the Greek is a verb used only three times in scripture, all in connection with Saul of Tarsus. "Destroyed" means: to treat one as an enemy, and to spoil him of his goods; to lead away captive; to imprison; to slay; and to overthrow. We see here a picture of the terrorist that Saul of Tarsus was to the Christians before he got saved. They of Damascus only knew that Saul of Tarsus ...*destroyed them which called on this name in Jerusalem,*... so no wonder then that they were all amazed to hear him speak of Jesus as really and truly being the Son of God. Paul writes about himself being this destroyer, and uses this same Greek word translated here

"destroyed" twice in GALATIANS 1. GALATIANS 1:13 *For ye have heard of my conversation (manner of life) in time past in the Jews' religion, how that beyond measure I persecuted the church of God, and wasted (same word translated destroyed in our text) it....* GALATIANS 1:23 *But they had heard only, That he which persecuted us in times past now preacheth the faith which once he destroyed.*

This amazement surrounding Saul of Tarsus' preaching Christ in the synagogues had a positive effect on the spreading of the gospel. Everyone seemed to know Saul of Tarsus reputation as a "destroyer," but now his reputation was spreading abroad about his preaching that Jesus Christ is the Son of God. We have pointed out early in this study the kind of over achiever Saul of Tarsus was. He was raised to be the best at what he did, and now we see this same enthusiasm channeled towards his preaching the gospel. Note in ACTS 9:20 that right away he preached Christ in the synagogues, (plural), not synagogue (singular), meaning he preached often at the different synagogues in Damascus. Right away we see that Saul of Tarsus was not afraid or ashamed to preach the gospel of Christ. We see this same enthusiasm for preaching the gospel of Christ in his letters written at various times years later. Note this in his own words found in the following scriptures. ROMANS 1:15 *So, as much as in me is, I am ready to preach the gospel to you that are at Rome also.* 16 *For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek.* 17 *For therein is the righteousness of God revealed from faith to faith: as it is written, The just shall live by faith.* ROMANS 15:16 *That I should be the minister of Jesus Christ to the Gentiles, ministering the gospel of God,...* ROMANS 15:19 *Through mighty signs and wonders, by the power of the Spirit of God; so that from Jerusalem, and round about unto Illyricum, I have fully preached the gospel of Christ.* ROMANS 15:20 *Yea, so have I strived to preach the gospel, not where Christ was named, lest I should build upon another man's foundation:....* 1 CORINTHIANS 1:17 *For Christ sent me not to baptize, but to preach the gospel: not with wisdom of words, lest the cross of Christ should be made of none effect.* 1 CORINTHIANS 9:14 *Even so hath the Lord ordained that they which preach the gospel should live of the gospel.* 1 CORINTHIANS 9:16 *For though I preach the gospel, I have nothing to glory of: for necessity is laid upon me; yea, woe is unto me, if I preach not the gospel!* 1 CORINTHIANS 9:18 *What is my reward then? Verily that, when I preach the gospel, I may make the gospel of Christ without charge, that I abuse not my power in the gospel.* 1 CORINTHIANS 9:23 *And this I do for the gospel's sake, that I might be partaker thereof with you.* 1 CORINTHIANS 15:1 *Moreover, brethren, I declare unto you the gospel which I preached unto you, which also ye have received, and wherein ye stand;....* 1 CORINTHIANS 15:2 *By which also ye are saved, if ye keep in memory what I preached unto you, unless ye have believed in vain.* 2 CORINTHIANS 2:12 *Furthermore, when I came to Troas to preach Christ's gospel, and a door was opened unto me of the Lord,...* GALATIANS 1:8 *But though we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel unto you than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed.* 9 *As we said before, so say I now again, If any man preach any other gospel unto you than that ye have received, let him be accursed.* ...11 *But I certify you, brethren, that the gospel which was preached of me is not after man.* EPHESIANS 6:18 *Praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, and watching thereunto with all perseverance and supplication for all saints;* 19 *And for me, that utterance may be given unto me, that I may open my mouth boldly, to make known the mystery of the gospel,* 20 *For which I am an ambassador in bonds: that therein I may speak boldly, as I ought to speak.* PHILIPPIANS 1:12 *But I would ye should understand, brethren, that the things which happened unto me have fallen out rather unto the furtherance of the gospel;* 13 *So that my bonds in Christ are manifest in all the palace, and in all other places;* 14 *And many of the brethren in the Lord, waxing confident by my bonds, are much more bold to speak the word without fear.* 15 *Some indeed preach Christ even of envy and strife; and some also of good will:* 16 *The one preach Christ of contention, not sincerely, supposing to add affliction to my bonds:* 17 *But the other of love, knowing that I am set for the defence of the gospel.* 1 THESSALONIANS 1:5 *For our gospel came not unto you in word only, but also in power, and in the Holy Ghost, and in much assurance; as ye know what manner of men we were among you for your sake.* 1 THESSALONIANS 2:2 *But even after that we had suffered before, and were shamefully entreated, as ye know, at Philippi, we were bold in our God to speak unto you the gospel of God with much contention.* 1 THESSALONIANS 2:4

But as we were allowed of God to be put in trust with the gospel, even so we speak; not as pleasing men, but God, which trieth our hearts. 1 THESSALONIANS 2:8 So being affectionately desirous of you, we were willing to have imparted unto you, not the gospel of God only, but also our own souls, because ye were dear unto us. 9 For ye remember, brethren, our labour and travail: for labouring night and day, because we would not be chargeable unto any of you, we preached unto you the gospel of God. 2 TIMOTHY 1:8 Be not thou therefore ashamed of the testimony of our Lord, nor of me his prisoner: but be thou partaker of the afflictions of the gospel according to the power of God; 9 Who hath saved us, and called us with an holy calling, not according to our works, but according to his own purpose and grace, which was given us in Christ Jesus before the world began, 10 But is now made manifest by the appearing of our Saviour Jesus Christ, who hath abolished death, and hath brought life and immortality to light through the gospel: 11 Whereunto I am appointed a preacher, and an apostle, and a teacher of the Gentiles.

In this study we have witnessed a marvelous change in Saul of Tarsus. This change can be summed up by reconciling truth. Truth is reality. EPHESIANS 4:21 tells us: *...the truth is in Jesus...*. The Apostle Paul wrote this statement: *...the truth is in Jesus...*. The fact that *...the truth is in Jesus...* didn't come to him easy, nor does reconciling truth come to any of us easy. The reason for this is that the prince of the power of the air is Satan himself. {See EPHESIANS 2:2}. Jesus informed us in JOHN 8:44 that Satan *...was a murderer from the beginning, and abode not in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he speaketh a lie, he speaketh of his own: for he is a liar, and the father of it.* This then is the atmosphere we all live in, an atmosphere influenced so strongly by Satan that it is full of lies and deception. The air waves that so strongly influence us today are brought to us by such means as television, movies and computers. Computers are even used in movies and television today to make things look so real, but in reality a lot of these things are only the wicked imaginations of men. Recently I was in Vancouver. They were filming a movie right outside my hotel at midnight with bright lights on and everything. I could watch all of this from the window of my room. They had placed a bus up on the sidewalk, and had a wrecked police car upside down in the intersection. The police car said New York City Police on the side. The next day on the way to the airport the van driver points out to me that the movie was being filmed in Vancouver because it was cheaper to film in Canada than in the United States. He then pointed out that the buildings were supposed to represent New York City. False street signs were put up in Vancouver depicting streets in New York City. Fake subway entrances and exits were also put up to further make it look like New York City. So when the movie finally comes out people will be deceived into thinking they are looking at a scene in New York City, when in reality the movie was shot in Vancouver. This is but one example of the deception in our world today. Today we have so called reality TV, which isn't reality at all. Reality TV is just another lie or deception of the devil. To me reality TV is the weather channel, for it gives the facts on what the weather is doing right now. Truth is reality. Movies, sports, and television for the most part are all forms of entertainment or amusement. Muse means to think, and amuse means not to think. Satan loves it when we don't think, because when we don't think a lie is easier to receive, and when we don't think, we don't think about Jesus either. If you think about it for a minute you will realize that we are surrounded by an atmosphere strongly influenced by Satan. It has always been this way since Satan first deceived Eve.

Again EPHESIANS 4:21 reads: *...the truth is in Jesus...*. Jesus Himself said in JOHN 8:32 *And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free.* Jesus told Thomas in JOHN 14:6 *...I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me.* Jesus preached reality and truth for the space of about three years. JOHN 1:10 and 11 tells us this about Jesus: *He was in the world, and the world was made by him, and the world knew him not. 11 He came unto his own, and his own received him not.* In JOHN 18 we find that Jesus was brought before Pilate before they crucified Him *...the truth, and the life,* and here is the conversation they had: JOHN 18:33 *Then Pilate entered into the judgment hall again, and called Jesus, and said unto him, Art thou the King of the Jews? 34 Jesus answered him, Sayest thou this thing of thyself, or did others tell it thee of me? 35 Pilate answered, Am I a Jew? Thine own nation and the chief priests have delivered thee unto me: what hast thou done? 36 Jesus answered, My*

kingdom is not of this world: if my kingdom were of this world, then would my servants fight, that I should not be delivered to the Jews: but now is my kingdom not from hence. 37 Pilate therefore said unto him, Art thou a king then? Jesus answered, Thou sayest that I am a king. To this end was I born, and for this cause came I into the world, that I should bear witness unto the truth. Every one that is of the truth heareth my voice. 38 Pilate saith unto him, What is truth? This question asked of Pilate "What is truth?" is a basic fundamental question each and everyone of us must also ask ourselves: What is truth?

We find the word "truth" 235 times in scripture. The very first time we read the word "truth" in scripture is in GENESIS 24:27 in the story about a bride for Isaac. The bride of Christ will also know the truth, and in fact be intimate with the truth. EPHESIANS 4:21 *...the truth is in Jesus...*. We noted in our study of GENESIS 24 that mercy and truth are trademarks of God. The following scriptures further point this fact out: PSALMS 86:15 *But thou, O Lord, art a God full of compassion, and gracious, longsuffering, and plenteous in mercy and truth.* Again in PSALMS 89:14 the psalmist writes: *Justice and judgment are the habitation of thy throne: mercy and truth shall go before thy face.*

Jesus before he departed this world told his disciples that they would need the Spirit of truth in their lives after that He (Jesus) was gone. He then witnessed unto them that the Holy Ghost is this Spirit of Truth. Let's review again some of these verses found in JOHN. JOHN 14:16 *And I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you for ever; 17 Even the Spirit of truth; whom the world cannot receive, because it seeth him not, neither knoweth him: but ye know him; for he dwelleth with you, and shall be in you.* JOHN 15:26 *But when the Comforter is come, whom I will send unto you from the Father, even the Spirit of truth, which proceedeth from the Father, he shall testify of me: JOHN 16:7 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. ...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.* The full overcomer will too have received the Spirit of Truth into their lives, and will allow this same Holy Ghost to guide them into all truth.

Now back to thinking of Saul of Tarsus. We have covered the fact that he was a Pharisee, and the son of a Pharisee. As a Pharisee he was taught about God from his youth. Furthermore as a Pharisee he was taught the Old Testament, and learned well the law of Moses. Saul of Tarsus knew his old Pharisee daddy wouldn't lie to him, so he received all of this Pharisee teaching as "the truth." Again we are reminded of the statement found in EPHESIANS 4:21 *...the truth is in Jesus...*. Pharisee teaching didn't recognize Jesus as the Messiah. Pharisee teaching didn't teach that Jesus was the Son of God. Pharisee teaching taught that one was justified by the works of the law. That is why the Pharisees followed so close the law. Pharisee teaching didn't teach ROMANS 10:4 *For Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth.* Pharisee teaching didn't teach GALATIANS 2:16 *Knowing that a man is not justified by the works of the law, but by the faith of Jesus Christ, even we have believed in Jesus Christ, that we might be justified by the faith of Christ, and not by the works of the law: for by the works of the law shall no flesh be justified.* Following the works of the law was the Pharisee perception of "truth." But their perception of truth didn't match up with reality. And once again we state that truth is reality. So the Pharisee perception of "truth" was really a lie. This then was the life, and the lie that Saul of Tarsus was caught up in before he personally met the risen Saviour Jesus Christ on the road to Damascus. When Jesus arrested Saul of Tarsus on the road to Damascus, almost instantly Saul of Tarsus recognized that his perception of truth which he had been taught from his infancy was wrong, for he had now met The Truth face to face. Though physically blinded his spiritual eyes were opened to receive The Truth, Jesus Christ as his personal Saviour. From that point on Saul of Tarsus knew the truth, the reality of Jesus Christ, that He is the Son of God, that He is the risen Saviour. As a Pharisee Saul of Tarsus pursued the truth as he was taught it. As a Christian Saul of Tarsus channeled all of his efforts towards pursuing the true truth, and began preaching *...the truth is in Jesus...*. In his writings we find that the Apostle Paul mentions "truth" 51 times.

So anxious was Saul of Tarsus to get out this message of truth, that we find in ACTS 9:20 *And straightway he preached Christ in the synagogues, that he is the Son of God.*

We noted earlier in this study that this was the strong foundation upon which Paul's gospel is founded, that Jesus Christ is the Son of God, *For other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ.* {1 CORINTHIANS 3:11}. But how was it that this novice Christian was allowed to preach in the synagogues in the first place?

Recall that Jesus Himself had many confrontations with the Pharisee's. One of these times was in MATTHEW 23. In MATTHEW 23:7 and 8 we find that Jesus makes mention to the Pharisee's how they like to be called of men Rabbi, Rabbi. Another name for Rabbi is teacher. In other words we find in Jewish society that the Pharisee's were looked upon as teachers. In a Jewish synagogue the Pharisee's were also teachers. So enters Saul of Tarsus into a synagogue in Damascus dressed in his Pharisee clothing, and naturally soon they would ask him to speak. Rather than teach along the traditional lines of teaching that he was taught as a Pharisee, Saul of Tarsus would now teach the truth, laying first the foundation, which is Jesus Christ is the Son of God.

So this is how Saul of Tarsus began preaching in the synagogues of Damascus, and his theme message was that Jesus is the Son of God. This became the foundation upon which his gospel was preached. Earlier in this study we also noted how he wasn't ashamed of the gospel of Christ, but rather freely preached the gospel, laying the foundation upon which to build upon. Beyond Damascus however Saul of Tarsus and his ministry was only heard of, for he had not yet began his travels, nor had the gospel of Christ Jesus been fully revealed unto him.

ACTS 9:22 tells us: *But Saul increased the more in strength, and confounded the Jews which dwelt at Damascus, proving that this is very Christ.* The key word in this verse is "confounded," which means: to bewilder, or to stir up, or disturb the mind of one. In Damascus Saul of Tarsus had his first Christian friends, Ananias of Damascus being one of them. They heard him preach, and they taught him things concerning Christ which they knew. This is part of the reason Saul increased the more in strength, and another part of the reason he increased the more in strength was because the Holy Ghost was daily revealing things about Jesus unto him. These newly learned facts about Jesus were incorporated in his continual preaching and his weekly confrontations with the Jews of these various synagogues. The Jews were not able to resist the wisdom of the Holy Ghost, thus Saul of Tarsus confounded the Jews which dwelt at Damascus, proving that Jesus is Christ. Yet still there was a gospel that Saul of Tarsus was to preach that only Jesus could reveal unto him. We said a little about this fact earlier in this study. {See page 28 of these notes}. There we looked at GALATIANS 1:11 & 12 where we read: *But I certify you, brethren, that the gospel which was preached of me is not after man. 12 For I neither received it of man, neither was I taught it, but by the revelation of Jesus Christ.* Let me paraphrase what Paul wrote here like this again in my own words: *I Paul have a certificate of the Lord stating that the gospel which I preach is not something that I learned from man, even though I had some wonderful teachers. Rather the gospel which I preach came to me directly by Jesus Christ Himself, who appeared unto me several different times at several different places, and revealed this gospel unto me.*

GALATIANS 1:15-17 tells fills in some gaps that the 9th chapter of ACTS leaves out. GALATIANS 1:15 *But when it pleased God, who separated me from my mother's womb, and called me by his grace, 16 To reveal his Son in me, that I might preach him among the heathen; immediately I conferred not with flesh and blood: 17 Neither went I up to Jerusalem to them which were apostles before me; but I went into Arabia, and returned again unto Damascus.* This portion of Paul's life takes place between ACTS 9:22 and ACTS 9:23.

What we see here in part is that Saul of Tarsus was a man without a home since being saved. Before he got saved he lived comfortably at Jerusalem. He was a leader of the Jews at Jerusalem, and many people there looked up to him. After accepting Jesus into his life on the road to Damascus, Saul of Tarsus was a fugitive from Jews, who as time went on, were taking counsel to kill him. {See ACTS 9:23}. So he went to Arabia, and returned again unto Damascus. Now he had no real friends in Jerusalem, and the only real friends he had since being saved were found in Damascus, Ananias of Damascus being one of them. It is important to keep this fact in the back of your mind as we continue our study of Saul of Tarsus. Ananias of Damascus must have introduced Saul of

Tarsus to the fellow believers in Damascus. Believers in Damascus who heard Saul of Tarsus preach that Jesus was indeed the Son of God also became his acquaintances. GALATIANS 1:18 indicates that Saul of Tarsus was in and out of Damascus the better part of three years. Somewhere during this three year time frame Barnabas became acquainted with Saul of Tarsus. Ananias may have introduced Barnabas to Saul of Tarsus, or Barnabas may have been passing through Damascus one day when Saul of Tarsus spoke in one of the synagogues of Damascus. At any rate at some point in time during Saul of Tarsus' stay in Damascus, Barnabas got well acquainted with him. We will see this in more detail when we get to ACTS 9:27.

For now, equipped with some of these facts, let's turn to ACTS 9:23-25 and read what is said there. ACTS 9:23 *And after that many days were fulfilled, the Jews took counsel to kill him: 24 But their laying await was known of Saul. And they watched the gates day and night to kill him. 25 Then the disciples took him by night, and let him down by the wall in a basket.* The "many days" of ACTS 9:23 are the "three years" of GALATIANS 1:18, which reads in part: *Then after three years I went up to Jerusalem...*

What so upset the Jews of Damascus against Saul of Tarsus that they set out to kill him? It was his preaching. Saul of Tarsus' preaching the truth didn't line up with their perception of the truth. ACTS 9:20 tells us that he preached Christ in the synagogues, that he is the Son of God. The Apostle Paul wrote in 1 CORINTHIANS 1:21-24 these words: *For after that in the wisdom of God the world by wisdom knew not God, it pleased God by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe. 22 For the Jews require a sign, and the Greeks seek after wisdom: 23 But we preach Christ crucified, unto the Jews a stumblingblock, and unto the Greeks foolishness; 24 But unto them which are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God, and the wisdom of God.* The unbelieving Jews of Damascus didn't receive Saul of Tarsus preaching as the truth, because this kind of preaching to them was a stumblingblock to them, for they were the very ones who had Jesus crucified. They didn't want to hear, or receive as fact Jesus the Son of God. They didn't want to listen to someone as high profile as Saul of Tarsus telling them that they were wrong in their unbelief of Jesus. So we read in ACTS 9:23 *And after that many days were fulfilled, the Jews took counsel to kill him.* 2 CORINTHIANS 11:32 & 33 expounds upon this fact: *In Damascus the governor under Aretas the king kept the city of the Damascenes with a garrison, desirous to apprehend me: 33 And through a window in a basket was I let down by the wall, and escaped his hands.* Obviously the Jews of Damascus had great influence over the governor which was under king Aretas, and talked him into having troops look for Saul of Tarsus, with the sole purpose of arresting and killing him. ACTS 9:24 tells us: *But their laying await was known of Saul. And they watched the gates day and night to kill him.* It was Saul of Tarsus only friends, these disciples of the Lord in Damascus, who aided his escape. ACTS 9:25 tells us: *Then the disciples took him by night, and let him down by the wall in a basket.* 2 CORINTHIANS 11:33 told us: *And through a window in a basket was I let down by the wall, and escaped his hands.*

Never more do we read of Saul of Tarsus, or the Apostle Paul in Damascus. I imagine the night he escaped Damascus was the last time he ever saw his good friend Ananias of Damascus. Saul of Tarsus never set out from Jerusalem to make Damascus his home. Yet after being saved Damascus became Saul of Tarsus' first Christian home, so to speak. But now he has had to escape because the Jews took council to kill him. This was just the beginning of the many great things he was to suffer for Jesus name's sake that the Lord had spoken unto Ananias about in ACTS 9:16.

Paul's first visit back to Jerusalem after being Saved

So where was Saul of Tarsus to go now? We read in ACTS 9:26 and GALATIANS 1:18 that he went back to Jerusalem, which he had left some three years earlier with the blessings of the high priests. Now these same high priests too were his enemies, for Saul of Tarsus had become a believer. So Saul of Tarsus really had no friends in Jerusalem now to return too, and those who were his former so called friends would be looking also to arrest him. ACTS 9:26 tells us: *And when Saul was come to Jerusalem, he assayed to join himself to the disciples: but they were all afraid of him, and believed not that he was a*