

HEBREWS 13:5 & 6 these very strong words of encouragement: *Let your conversation be without covetousness; and be content with such things as ye have: for he hath said, I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee.* 6 So that we may boldly say, *The Lord is my helper, and I will not fear what man shall do unto me.* After all of these experiences we have looked at in the life of Saul of Tarsus, the Apostle Paul, he wrote these words: 2 CORINTHIANS 4:5 *For we preach not ourselves, but Christ Jesus the Lord; and ourselves your servants for Jesus' sake.* 6 *For God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined in our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ.* 7 *But we have this treasure in earthen vessels, that the excellency of the power may be of God, and not of us.* 8 *We are troubled on every side, yet not distressed; we are perplexed, but not in despair;* 9 *Persecuted, but not forsaken;* cast down, but not destroyed; 10 *Always bearing about in the body the dying of the Lord Jesus, that the life also of Jesus might be made manifest in our body.* 11 *For we which live are always delivered unto death for Jesus' sake, that the life also of Jesus might be made manifest in our mortal flesh.* Our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ will not forsake us and leave us alone on this race course of life he individually designed for each one of us to walk upon. Three times the Apostle Paul writes us to "walk worthy." EPHESIANS 4:1 *I therefore, the prisoner of the Lord, beseech you that ye walk worthy of the vocation wherewith ye are called,...* . COLOSSIANS 1:10 *That ye might walk worthy of the Lord unto all pleasing, being fruitful in every good work, and increasing in the knowledge of God;...* . 1 THESSALONIANS 2:12 *That ye would walk worthy of God, who hath called you unto his kingdom and glory.*

## Antioch, Syria

Having now shown that Saul of Tarsus wasn't really silent during these so called silent years between ACTS 9:30 and ACTS 11:25, let's next read the account in scripture, and see how Saul of Tarsus was introduced back upon the scene. We will read ACTS 11:19-26. ACTS 11:19-26, which reads: *Now they which were scattered abroad upon the persecution that arose about Stephen travelled as far as Phenice, {the distance from Jerusalem to Phenice is about 700 miles} and Cyprus, {the distance from Jerusalem to Cyprus is about 270 miles} and Antioch, {the distance from Jerusalem to Antioch, Syria is about 320 miles} preaching the word to none but unto the Jews only.* 20 *And some of them were men of Cyprus {like Barnabas} and Cyrene {like Lucius mentioned in ACTS 13:1}, which, when they were come to Antioch, spake unto the Grecians, {Grecians are Jews foreign from Palestine who speak Greek rather than Hebrew.} preaching the Lord Jesus.* 21 *And the hand of the Lord was with them: and a great number believed, and turned unto the Lord.* 22 *Then tidings of these things came unto the ears of the church which was in Jerusalem: and they sent forth Barnabas, that he should go as far as Antioch.* 23 *Who, when he came, and had seen the grace of God, was glad, and exhorted them all, that with purpose of heart they would cleave unto the Lord.* 24 *For he was a good man, and full of the Holy Ghost and of faith: and much people was added unto the Lord.* 25 *Then departed Barnabas to Tarsus, for to seek Saul: 26 And when he had found him, he brought him unto Antioch. And it came to pass, that a whole year they assembled themselves with the church, and taught much people. And the disciples were called Christians first in Antioch.*

There is a tremendous amount of real good background information found in just this portion of scripture. We need to understand first of all that there are two Antioch's mentioned in ACTS. Where they were first called Christians in Antioch speaks of Antioch, Syria. Antioch, Syria was at the time of ACTS the third largest city of the Roman Empire with a population at that of 500,000. Two cities had larger populations, Rome and Alexandria, Egypt. Antioch, Syria was a link between the trade routes of the Mediterranean and the routes that lead east unto China. It was a sort of melting pot of cultures, as are most large cities. No doubt Antioch attracted numerous Jewish businesses, and businessmen also, including those disciples mentioned above who were scattered abroad after the persecution of Stephen and called Christians first there at Antioch. Antioch had everything that Roman wealth, Greek culture, and Oriental luxury could produce. The citizens of Antioch were some what unique in that they were given

by the Roman Empire the privilege of worship in their own way without fear of repercussion or persecution. No doubt this is why so many of the formerly persecuted Jews of Jerusalem ended up here, and why Christianity proliferated here. Antioch, Syria was called the "Queen of the East," and "Antioch the Beautiful," and was a fairly modern city at the time of ACTS 11. The church at Antioch, Syria became an important and prominent center of Christian activity. It was from this meeting that the Apostle Paul was sent on his three missionary journeys, and obviously those of the church at Antioch financed these journeys. Furthermore the man called by Luke "most excellent Theophilus" in LUKE 1:4 was, according to tradition, a prominent man in the church at Antioch. Thus we should see, and appreciate, the importance of the church where they were first called Christians in Antioch. It is from this church that will revolve the center of the Apostle Paul's activity.

Let's consider for a moment the importance of this church at Antioch, Syria because I don't think we truly appreciate it's importance in the beginning of this grace age. Some of these points we are about to go over, I will cover again later in this study also. Antioch is found 19 times in scripture. Nineteen is the number of FAITH. Certainly the church at Antioch, Syria was a church of FAITH, and thus it is no wonder that we read in ACTS 11:26 that *...the disciples were called Christians first in Antioch.* Of the nineteen times we find "Antioch" in scripture, fifteen of these times reference the church of Antioch, Syria. Fifteen is the number of REST, and those of Antioch, Syria found REST and comfort in the gospel of Paul, a fact that will become evident as we study a little more about them. There is another Antioch mentioned in ACTS 13 and 14 and this is the Antioch in Pisidia, where we read of Paul's first recorded sermon. When Paul writes Timothy of the *...Persecutions, afflictions, which came unto me at Antioch...* in 2 TIMOTHY 3:11, he is referring to Antioch in Pisidia.

The first mention referencing Antioch, Syria is found in ACTS 6:5, where mention is made of "*Nicolas a proselyte of Antioch.*" He probably was a Grecian convert to Christianity from Antioch. In ACTS 11 we read of Antioch, Syria six more times. The essence of ACTS 11:19-22 tells us that after the believers were scattered from Jerusalem because of the persecution that surrounded Stephen, a large congregation of believers was established at Antioch, Syria. The congregation at Antioch, Syria had ties to the church at Jerusalem, which became apparent in time after that those in Jerusalem found out this is where many of their former disciples ended up. Barnabas being a prominent associate of the kingdom Apostles, and a man well traveled, and well respected in Jerusalem, was then sent as a sort of ambassador from the assembly at Jerusalem unto the assembly of Antioch, Syria. ACTS 11:23 & 24 further explains this concerning Barnabas on his visit to Antioch, Syria: *Who, when he came, and had seen the grace of God, was glad, and exhorted them all, that with purpose of heart they would cleave unto the Lord. 24 For he was a good man, and full of the Holy Ghost and of faith: and much people was added unto the Lord.*

Twice now in ACTS 11 we find much people being added unto the Lord here at Antioch, Syria. Verse 21 told us: *...a great number believed, and turned unto the Lord.* And verse 24 stated: *...and much people was added unto the Lord.* Implied in this statement from verse 24 is the part that Barnabas had in the growth of this Christian church at Antioch, Syria. Barnabas being the seasoned Christian that he was, and the well traveled ambassador of Jesus Christ, no doubt was allowed to teach and maybe even preach here at Antioch, Syria upon his arrival from Jerusalem. This was how Barnabas *...exhorted them all.* At some point in his teaching here at Antioch, Syria the name of Saul of Tarsus came up. Possibly Barnabas brought it up himself. No one at Antioch, Syria had heard Saul teach, or preach, but Barnabas had, and Barnabas realized that the situation at Antioch allowed for a perfect setting to introduce Saul of Tarsus to the Christian assembly there. Thus we read in ACTS 11:25 & 26 -- *Then departed Barnabas to Tarsus, for to seek Saul: 26 And when he had found him, he brought him unto Antioch. And it came to pass, that a whole year they assembled themselves with the church, and taught much people. And the disciples were called Christians first in Antioch.*

A whole year Barnabas and Saul of Tarsus assembled themselves with the church at Antioch, Syria, and there they taught much people. Notice a real big change here in verse 26 in the life of Saul of Tarsus. Somehow by the leading and guidance of the Holy

Ghost Barnabas was able to find Saul of Tarsus again after sending him away in ACTS 9:30. Then we read that Barnabas brought Saul down to Antioch, Syria, where a whole year Barnabas and Saul were able to assemble themselves with the church at Antioch. Realize a couple of things here. Concerning Saul of Tarsus, he was able to assemble himself here without being run out of town! Both Saul of Tarsus and Barnabas were able to assemble themselves here at Antioch, Syria a whole year, and further more they were allowed to teach in this assembly. This is a point of emphasis, that is Saul and Barnabas were teachers at Antioch. Implied in this statement is the fact that the people of Antioch, Syria received the teaching of both Barnabas and Saul of Tarsus. In fact we know from scripture that the people of Antioch, Syria gladly received the teaching of both Barnabas and Saul of Tarsus, and accepted them as the leaders they were. The fact that Saul and Barnabas were leaders in this assembly becomes apparent by reading ACTS 11:27-30, and ACTS 13:1, which we will get to a little later in this study.

Now I am going to make a shocking statement concerning Barnabas and Saul of Tarsus at this particular time in history; they were not yet Apostles! Why do I say this? Two reasons. First scripture doesn't call them Apostles until ACTS 14:4 & 14. Secondly recall our definition of an Apostle. An Apostle is a delegate, messenger, he that is sent, one sent forth with orders. Apostle comes from a root word meaning to send, to send forth, to send away, or to send out. Technically speaking Saul of Tarsus was sent unto the Gentiles on the day he got saved according to ACTS 26:17, but he was not yet equipped to be the Apostle Paul at that time. First of all on that day he wasn't yet filled with the Holy Ghost. Secondly he hadn't yet received his gospel message. However by the time frame when Barnabas and Saul got to Antioch in ACTS 11:26, Saul of Tarsus was about ready to become the Apostle Paul, and Barnabas was about ready to become the Apostle Barnabas. Their orders sending them forth as Apostles will come from the Holy Ghost. This will happen in ACTS 13:2, but we are not there yet. In order for Barnabas to become one of the church Apostles, he will have to know Paul's gospel. The training grounds for Barnabas to learn Paul's gospel was Antioch, Syria, and his teachers were the Holy Ghost, and Saul of Tarsus. We are now just beginning to see the important place Antioch, Syria had in the ministry of the Apostle Paul.

Antioch in Syria became the real Christian home, and the base of operation for the Apostle Paul. Note that *...the disciples were called Christians first in Antioch...*, ACTS 11:26. Three times in scripture we find the Greek word translated into our English "Christian." The first time is here in ACTS 11:26. The second is in ACTS 26:28 where we find the Apostle Paul before King Agrippa: *Then Agrippa said unto Paul, Almost thou persuadest me to be a Christian.* We see here that Paul's influence on those first at Antioch, and everywhere else he traveled, spread the fame of those who were first called Christians at Antioch, to the point where the term Christian became part of the everyday language of even King Agrippa. King Agrippa knew that the word "Christian" meant a follower of Christ. By the time King Agrippa made this statement to Paul there were many thousands of Christians throughout the world. The third time we find the word "Christian" in scripture is in 1 PETER 4:16, where Peter states: *Yet if any man suffer as a Christian, let him not be ashamed; but let him glorify God on this behalf.* The term Christian was first used in Antioch, Syria: *...the disciples were called Christians first in Antioch...*, ACTS 11:26.

Think about the fact that Saul of Tarsus was allowed to teach for a whole year at one place, and the first place was here at Antioch, Syria! What would he teach? Paul's gospel of course. Like we mentioned above, Antioch, Syria is where Barnabas really got to learn first hand Paul's gospel! Not only that, we also find Antioch, Syria was the first place Paul's gospel was gladly received. Keep in mind that Saul of Tarsus could teach and preach in Hebrew, his native tongue, and in Greek, the language of Tarsus where he grew up, and in Latin, the language of the Roman Empire. No wonder then that we find in ACTS 11:26 the fact that Barnabas and especially Saul "taught much people" here in Antioch, Syria. Few places Paul ever visited and was allowed to stay very long, but Antioch, Syria gladly received him, and allowed him to stay as long as he could. And those remarkable Saints from that melting pot of cultures in Antioch, Syria allowed Paul to preach and teach in their assembly as much and as often as he could. We will find that after teaching here for a whole year, Barnabas and Saul were sent on a journey to Jerusalem, and after their return again to Antioch, Syria they again taught and

ministered there for another prolonged period of time. {Study ACTS 12:25 & 13:1-4}. Conybeare and Howson have Saul and Barnabas back in Antioch, Syria for about two years on this visit.

After this visit Barnabas and Saul were sent by those of Antioch, Syria on a missionary journey, a journey financed by the gracious Saints of Antioch, Syria. Another two years pass before Barnabas and Saul return again to Antioch, Syria. Scripture records it like this: ACTS 14:26 *And thence sailed to Antioch, from whence they had been recommended to the grace of God for the work which they fulfilled.* 27 *And when they were come, and had gathered the church together, (the assembly at Antioch, Syria) they rehearsed all that God had done with them, and how he had opened the door of faith unto the Gentiles.* 28 *And there they abode long time with the disciples.* Again we see Paul and Barnabas, now Apostles, spending a long time with the disciples there at Antioch, Syria.

In our quick history lesson concerning Antioch, Syria we come to the 15th chapter of ACTS. Those of you familiar with ACTS 15 know that these events of ACTS 15 coincides with the events of GALATIANS 2. In ACTS 15, and GALATIANS 2 we find some names of prominent Christians casually dropped to garnish our study as we will see shortly. While Paul and Barnabas were abiding a long time with the disciples of Antioch, Syria after their first missionary journey we read this in ACTS 15: ACTS 15:1 *And certain men which came down from Judaea (to Antioch, Syria) taught the brethren, and said, Except ye be circumcised after the manner of Moses, ye cannot be saved.* 2 *When therefore Paul and Barnabas had no small dissension and disputation with them, they determined that Paul and Barnabas, and certain other of them, should go up to Jerusalem unto the apostles and elders about this question.* 3 *And being brought on their way by the church, (of Antioch, Syria) they passed through Phenice and Samaria, declaring the conversion of the Gentiles: and they caused great joy unto all the brethren.* GALATIANS 2:1-4 tells us that one of the certain other Saints from Antioch, Syria that went with them to Jerusalem was Titus. This was the third time Paul went to Jerusalem after being saved. The non-circumcision of Titus was the main subject of the conference at Jerusalem that took place in ACTS 15. Titus is not mentioned by name in the book of ACTS, yet we know from scripture that he was a traveling companion with Paul on his later missionary journeys from Antioch, Syria. Titus was one of the ones from the church at Antioch, Syria, and a convert of the Apostle Paul as noted in TITUS 1:4. After this conference in ACTS 15, Paul and Barnabas were sent back to Antioch, Syria with Judas Barsabas, and Silas prominent men from the Jerusalem assembly, along with a letter written by the church at Jerusalem, which read like this: ACTS 15:23 *...The apostles and elders and brethren send greeting unto the brethren which are of the Gentiles in Antioch and Syria and Cilicia:* 24 *Forasmuch as we have heard, that certain which went out from us have troubled you with words, subverting your souls, saying, Ye must be circumcised, and keep the law: to whom we gave no such commandment:* 25 *It seemed good unto us, being assembled with one accord, to send chosen men unto you with our beloved Barnabas and Paul,* 26 *Men that have hazarded their lives for the name of our Lord Jesus Christ.* 27 *We have sent therefore Judas and Silas, who shall also tell you the same things by mouth.* 28 *For it seemed good to the Holy Ghost, and to us, to lay upon you no greater burden than these necessary things;* 29 *That ye abstain from meats offered to idols, and from blood, and from things strangled, and from fornication: from which if ye keep yourselves, ye shall do well. Fare ye well.*

ACTS 15:35 tells us that after a space of time there at Antioch, Syria *...Paul also and Barnabas continued in Antioch, teaching and preaching the word of the Lord, with many others also.* During this prolonged stay at Antioch, Syria, Paul's Christian home church, we read in GALATIANS 2:11 that Peter came up from Jerusalem to visit with the Saints there at Antioch, Syria. Paul then got to expound his gospel of the grace of God to Peter, as you can see by studying out for yourself GALATIANS 2. So once again in scripture we find the importance of Antioch, Syria hidden somewhat in scripture.

After Peter's visit to Antioch, Syria Paul and Barnabas parted ways. ACTS 15:36-41 tells us how this came about: *And some days after Paul said unto Barnabas, Let us go again and visit our brethren in every city where we have preached the word of the Lord, and see how they do.* 37 *And Barnabas determined to take with them John, whose*

surname was Mark. 38 But Paul thought not good to take him with them, who departed from them from Pamphylia, and went not with them to the work. 39 And the contention was so sharp between them, that they departed asunder one from the other: and so Barnabas took Mark, and sailed unto Cyprus; 40 And Paul chose Silas, and departed, being recommended by the brethren unto the grace of God. 41 And he went through Syria and Cilicia, confirming the churches. Lord willing we will study this portion of scripture later in this study, but for now note that the church at Antioch, Syria was the brethren that recommended Paul and Silas to go on this second missionary journey of Paul's, and how they of Antioch knew and had latched on to the teaching of Paul's of the grace of God.

So far we have talked about four prolonged visits by Paul to Antioch, Syria. The first was when Barnabas initially took him to Antioch, Syria in ACTS 11:26. The second was after Barnabas and Paul, (then called Saul), returned from the relief journey to Jerusalem in ACTS 12:25-13:3. The third was after Paul and Barnabas, now full fledged Apostles, return from their first missionary journey in ACTS 14:26-28. The fourth was at the end of ACTS 15 where Paul and Barnabas return from the conference at Jerusalem, and continued preaching the word there at Antioch, Syria. Paul and Silas have now been sent on a missionary journey by the church at Antioch, Syria. In the background we have found Saints like Titus from Antioch, Syria, to whom Paul later wrote an epistle. Another Saint from Antioch, Syria is Luke the author of the gospel of LUKE, and the book of ACTS. Study LUKE 1:1-4 and ACTS 1:1&2 and you will find "O Theophilus" who according to tradition, was a prominent man in the church at Antioch, Syria. It becomes obvious that the church of Antioch, Syria so loved the gospel of Paul that they preserved his memory, and cherished his writings, to the point that they may be the very ones who are responsible for Paul's gospel being preserved for us today. To preserve such writings takes money, and as we have noted the Saints of the assembly at Antioch, Syria were willing to finance Paul's missionary journeys, and were also willing to send financial relief to fellow Saints at Jerusalem.

Paul after his second missionary journey returned again to Antioch, Syria, a fact that is briefly passed over in ACTS 18:22 & 23. ACTS 18:22 *And when he had landed at Caesarea, and gone up, and saluted the church, he went down to Antioch. 23 And after he had spent some time there, he departed, and went over all the country of Galatia and Phrygia in order, strengthening all the disciples.* Note that Paul once again spent some time at Antioch, Syria, howbeit this time without Barnabas. This was Paul's fifth prolonged stay at Antioch, Syria. Five is the number of GRACE, and the Saints at Antioch, Syria had learned real well the first hand teachings of the grace of God by the Apostle Paul. No doubt the Saints of Antioch, Syria sent Paul now the seasoned Apostle away on his third missionary journey in the same way they had sent him off on his first two missionary journeys, however there was a big difference this time, for never again would Paul return to his Christian home church of Antioch, Syria. Perhaps that is why men like OTheophilus so treasured the writings of Paul. Men of their own company, like Luke, could fill them in on what had happened to him.

This brings us to one final point concerning the assembly at Antioch, Syria. They embraced the teaching of Paul, and Paul spent as much time at Antioch, Syria as at any other one place, and maybe more than he spent at Ephesus. These Saints at Antioch, Syria were unique in that they never really gave Paul a hard time, though he had many trials and hard times every other place he went, some of which we noted in 2 CORINTHIANS 11. It seems that they of Antioch, Syria were like the Berean Saints of ACTS 17:11 who treasured the scriptures, and searched the scriptures daily whether those things spoken by Paul were really true. In the end they were found to be the ones who received with all readiness of mind the gospel of Paul. The Saints of Berea had Paul as their personal instructor for only a short period of time, maybe only six weeks to three months, and yet to these Saints was written also the first epistles of Paul, known to us as 1 & 2 THESSALONIANS. 1 THESSALONIANS 5:27 gives Paul's instructions concerning this epistle: *I charge you by the Lord that this epistle be read unto all the holy brethren.* Each chapter of 1 THESSALONIANS ends with the coming of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. Brother Hill has often pointed out how in such a short period of time the Saints of Berea were put on a race course and taught to prepare to be in that company known as the Bride of Christ. Don't you also now know that those precious Saints of Antioch,



Syria, most whom we know little or nothing about, were like-minded with the Apostle Paul, and were race course runners, and many of that church will be found in the Bride of Christ; people who were from every kindred, and tongue, and people and nation. {See REVELATION 5:9}.

Was the church in Antioch, Syria the perfect church then? As we answer this question let's consider what we have just learned about this church at Antioch, Syria. Who was their pastor? As you ponder this question you will realize that we are not really told in scripture who their pastor was. It may have been "O Theophilus" mentioned in LUKE 1:3 and ACTS 1:1, but if he was the pastor of the church at Antioch, Syria the scripture doesn't so state. This seems to be an important point to note, for a church is not composed of just a pastor. A church is an assembly of people who usually congregate in a particular building for the purpose of worship. A church should become known by what is preached there, rather than who is the pastor, or who goes there. A reflection of what the pastor preaches will be manifest in the lives of those who attend his assembly. Obviously the church at Antioch, Syria emphasized Jesus Christ, for the disciples were called Christians for the first time at Antioch, Syria, this according to ACTS 11:26. In other words the outside world knew by the lives of those who attended the church in Antioch, Syria that they were followers of Christ, because Jesus was whom they talked about, and Jesus was whom they followed. Today so often, way too often in fact, the focus is on the pastor of a church, and not on Jesus Christ. Ask the question, "what does your church teach?" and the answers will vary, like: "well we have over 8000 people who go there." Or, "they have a great music program that caters to the youth, and 10 big screen TV's to watch the service with, along with a great coffee bar in the basement." Or "our pastor is so and so, perhaps you have seen him on TV, or have read one of his books." A true pastor will not draw attention to himself, but rather will emphasize Jesus. Obviously the pastor of the church at Antioch, Syria was such a man.

We have learned that this assembly at Antioch, Syria had some wonderful teachers, five who are listed by name in ACTS 13:1. One of these teachers was Saul of Tarsus, the young Apostle Paul. Those at Antioch, Syria were among the first to get to hear and learn first hand Paul's gospel message. How many churches today preach and emphasize Paul's gospel? There are not that many. So we have now discussed two key elements of a perfect church, if there is such a thing: (1) their pastor preaches and draws attention to Jesus Christ, and (2) their pastor also emphasizes Paul's gospel. Paul's gospel itself emphasizes Jesus Christ, and expounds on the fact that Jesus Christ is indeed the Son of God.

Obviously a key element of this kind of preaching and teaching is the Holy Ghost. Being filled with the Holy Ghost is critical in the life of a believer if he or she will ever become a full overcomer. Jesus Himself emphasized to His disciples the importance of receiving the Holy Ghost. After His resurrection, but before the day of Pentecost, we read in JOHN 20:22 that Jesus appeared unto His disciples *...and saith unto them, Receive ye the Holy Ghost*. No doubt the church at Antioch, Syria was established after Pentecost by those scattered Spirit filled believers who trusted God and went by the leading and the guiding power of the Holy Ghost.

We now have mentioned three key elements found in a perfect church, if there is such a thing: (1) their pastor preaches and draws attention to Jesus Christ, and (2) their pastor also emphasizes Paul's gospel, and (3) their assembly is full of Holy Ghost filled believers. All of these things were found in the church at Antioch, Syria. Does this mean that they were a trouble and trial free church? No, not at all, nor is being free from trials and trouble a key element of a perfect church either. PSALMS 34:19 states: *Many are the afflictions of the righteous: but the LORD delivereth him out of them all*. Study ACTS 15 and GALATIANS 2 and you will see that there was plenty of trouble found in the assembly in Antioch, Syria. However these problems were also addressed specifically by the Apostle Paul, and correct Biblical teaching was emphasized and used to correct the errors these troubles created. False doctrine was specifically addressed in these two chapters, and not allowed to continue at Antioch, Syria. Here again we see our second point of a perfect church emphasized, that Paul's gospel is taught and allowed to be taught.

The Apostle Paul also knew and emphasized the importance of receiving the Holy Ghost. In ACTS 19 came again to Ephesus, and in verse 2 he came upon certain disciples.

ACTS 19:2 tells us: *He said unto them, Have ye received the Holy Ghost since ye believed? And they said unto him, We have not so much as heard whether there be any Holy Ghost.* Paul then expounded unto them about the Holy Ghost, and verse 6 tells us: *And when Paul had laid his hands upon them, the Holy Ghost came on them; and they spake with tongues, and prophesied.* The Apostle Paul knew the importance of the Holy Ghost being in the life of a believer, as he emphasized unto those disciples in Ephesus noted in ACTS 19:2, which we just read. The Apostle Paul is the only writer to reference the “God of peace” in scripture, which is also a reference to the Holy Ghost. Paul uses “God of peace” in the following five scriptures: ROMANS 15:33; ROMANS 16:20; PHILIPPIANS 4:9; 1 THESSALONIANS 5:23; and HEBREWS 13:20. Study these five scriptures out and you will see for yourself that the “God of peace” references the Holy Ghost. Let me get you started with this study just a little bit. These five texts once again manifest the fact that the number five points us to GRACE. It is the grace of God that we have been sent the Holy Spirit to teach us (JOHN 14:26), and to guide us (JOHN 16:13) into all truth. We need the Power of the Holy Ghost in our lives. No wonder then that the Apostle Paul writes in ROMANS 15:33 *Now the God of peace be with you all. Amen.* And in PHILIPPIANS 4:9 *Those things, which ye have both learned, and received, and heard, and seen in me, do; and the God of peace shall be with you.* 1 THESSALONIANS 5:23 states: *And the very God of peace sanctify you wholly; and I pray God your whole spirit and soul and body be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.* This whole thought of ...*your whole spirit and soul and body be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ...* may seem impossible until we realize the facts of another prayer of the Apostle Paul found in EPHESIANS 3:20. EPHESIANS 3:20 *Now unto him (God the Father) that is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power (The Holy Spirit) that worketh in us, 21 Unto him be glory in the church by Christ Jesus (our Lord and Saviour) throughout all ages, world without end. Amen.* Brother Copley in his study book on EPHESIANS gives several reasons why the first 20 verses of ROMANS 16 belong properly with epistle to the EPHESIANS rather than in ROMANS. One of the evidences that Brother Copley used was ROMANS 16:20, which reads: *And the God of peace shall bruise Satan under your feet shortly. The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you. Amen.* To these Ephesian Saints Paul wrote concerning the warfare of the believer in EPHESIANS 6:10-18, and mentioned the battle that is waged ...*against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places.* (EPHESIANS 6:12). It is to these Ephesian Saints after explaining this heavenly conflict that Paul appropriately addresses these concluding words recorded for us in ROMANS 16:20 *And the God of peace shall bruise Satan under your feet shortly...* for the Ephesian Saints were now properly equipped by the power of the Holy Spirit ...*to stand against the wiles of the devil.* (EPHESIANS 6:11). And then in HEBREWS 13:20 & 21 we read how believers, like those of the church in Antioch, Syria, and believers like you and me can too become perfect in every good work. HEBREWS 13:20 *Now the God of peace, that brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus, that great shepherd of the sheep, through the blood of the everlasting covenant, 21 Make you perfect in every good work to do his will, working in you that which is wellpleasing in his sight, through Jesus Christ; to whom be glory for ever and ever. Amen.*

Now one last thought concerning Antioch, Syria. Antioch means “driven against,” which by itself doesn’t seem to make much sense. After much research I found another interpretation of the word Antioch meaning: “speedy as a chariot.” Putting the two meanings together you get the picture of a driven speedy chariot faster than any mode of transportation of that day. Elisha in 2 KINGS 2:11 & 12 witnessed the fastest transportation that anyone has ever witnessed: 2 KINGS 2:11 *And it came to pass, as they still went on, and talked, that, behold, there appeared a chariot of fire, and horses of fire, and parted them both asunder; and Elijah went up by a whirlwind into heaven. 12 And Elisha saw it, and he cried, My father, my father, the chariot of Israel, and the horsemen thereof. And he saw him no more: and he took hold of his own clothes, and rent them in two pieces.* Obviously this is the time when Elijah was translated. The “driven speedy chariot” then is a symbol of translation. The Apostle Paul in his gospel has taught us about another soon coming translation in a portion of scripture alluded to above found in 1 THESSALONIANS 4:16-18: *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. The rapid speed of this translation is expressed in Paul's gospel record of 1 CORINTHIANS 15:52, which reads: *In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump: for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed.* Do you want to have God's best and be an overcomer found in the highest heavenly company called the Bride of Christ? If so then follow the Apostle Paul, and learn his gospel like those of Antioch, Syria did. Paul's gospel will take you higher and higher and draw you close to Jesus! This then is how we remember the Saints of Antioch, Syria. Thank God for their prayers for Paul, for their acceptance of his gospel, and there concern for those beyond their borders, and yes that included even you and me!

## Paul's second visit back to Jerusalem after being Saved

*ACTS 11:25 Then departed Barnabas to Tarsus, for to seek Saul: 26 And when he had found him, he brought him unto Antioch. And it came to pass, that a whole year they assembled themselves with the church, and taught much people. And the disciples were called Christians first in Antioch. So we have noted that the disciples were first called Christians here at Antioch, and two of their teachers were Barnabas and Saul of Tarsus, who were allowed at this time of ACTS 11 to assemble themselves here a whole year without any sort of negative repercussions. In time other disciples from Jerusalem came up to Antioch, Syria to visit old acquaintances, and ACTS 11:27-30 records: And in these days came prophets from Jerusalem unto Antioch. 28 And there stood up one of them named Agabus, and signified by the Spirit that there should be great dearth throughout all the world: which came to pass in the days of Claudius Caesar. 29 Then the disciples, every man according to his ability, determined to send relief unto the brethren which dwelt in Judaea: 30 Which also they did, and sent it to the elders by the hands of Barnabas and Saul.*

Of the prophets mentioned in ACTS 11:27 only Agabus is mentioned by name. He is mentioned twice in scripture, once here in ACTS 11:28, and once in ACTS 21:10 & 11 when he warned the Apostle Paul not to go up to Jerusalem. Obviously from reading these two portions of scripture we see the great respect that Agabus had for Paul, known here in ACTS 11 still as Saul. After Agabus prophesied here at Antioch of a famine in all the world, the Christian assembly at Antioch took a collection for the poorer assembly there at Jerusalem, and found it appropriate to send Barnabas and Saul with this kind of relief. Thus we get a clearer picture of the important place both Barnabas and Saul had with this assembly of Christians at Antioch. Both Barnabas and Saul of Tarsus were accepted as devout Christian leaders, and were entrusted with a great deal of money to be given unto those of Jerusalem. Furthermore the Saints of Antioch prayed for this good will to be accepted from the hands of both Barnabas and Saul by the elders of Jerusalem.

Brother Copley in his study book of ACTS also gives a typical lesson found in this portion of scripture, which I will now quote. "The great famine over all the world" (verses 27-30) was due to the fact that Israel as a nation had rejected the Son of God and the Gift of the Holy Spirit. The phrase, "all the world," means all the inhabited earth. That too was typical of the sore trial, world-wide, from which the full overcomers shall be delivered at the close of this age --REVELATION 3:10. Thank God, after Jesus comes and Israel receive Him, there will be no more dearth, but abounding plenty, see JOEL; 2:19 to 27. (End of quote from Brother Copley).

This was the second time Saul of Tarsus would be back in Jerusalem after his conversion. The first time ended after the shortest of visits in ACTS 9:28-30. This second visit was different however. First of all several years had passed since Saul of Tarsus was last seen at Jerusalem. Those of Jerusalem had forgotten some of the terror that the old Saul of Tarsus had caused them, and no doubt there were many new believers in the church at Jerusalem who never knew Saul of Tarsus before he got saved. Secondly, during this same time at Jerusalem there was another source of terror known as Herod the king. Any damage that old Saul of Tarsus had done was now a subdued memory.