

In ACTS 18:9 there are three instructions spoken by the Lord to Paul in this vision: (1) *Be not afraid*, (2) *but speak*, and (3) *hold not thy peace*. This also is the perfect order that Paul was to heed these instructions. Paul's gospel message would not have been the powerful message it was without following the order of these three instructions as given: (1) *Be not afraid*, (2) *but speak*, and (3) *hold not thy peace*.

We find the words "*Be not afraid*" twenty eight times in our English King James translation of scripture. Twenty-eight is the number that has to do with ETERNAL LIFE. In other words we can look at it like this; the Lord instructed Paul to "*Be not afraid*" to speak the words of ETERNAL LIFE unto these Corinthians. Twenty six scriptures contain the phrase "*be not afraid*;" twenty six is the number having to do with THE GOSPEL, or GOOD NEWS. Another way of looking at this is to note that the Lord was really saying to Paul "*Be not afraid*" to preach THE GOSPEL, and to spread the GOOD NEWS.

Also with equal emphasis, and with equal meaning, we find in our English King James translation of scripture the words "*fear not*" 63 times. Both the Hebrew and Greek words that translate into "*be not afraid*" also translate into "*fear not*." In other words these phrases are totally interchangeable. So when the Lord spoke to Paul by night in a vision to "*Be not afraid*," He was also really telling Paul to "*fear not*." Later in ACTS 27:24 in another "midnight" time of severe testing we will find the angel of the Lord once again telling Paul to "*fear not*."

Both of these phrases "*be not afraid*" and "*fear not*" are really the backbone of faith. Both of these phrases "*be not afraid*" and "*fear not*" urge the listener to put his or her confidence in the Lord. Both of these phrases "*be not afraid*" and "*fear not*" urge the hearer to move forward and become a full overcomer! The full overcomer learns in his walk with the Lord to "*be not afraid*" and "*fear not*," not seeing the otherwise impossible obstacles before him, but with faith diligently seeks God's guidance to direct his footsteps, having his eyes always focused upon the Lord. Let's consider some scripture which helps emphasize this very fact.

In studying ROMANS 4 we find that Abraham is noted to be the father of those who also walk in the steps of faith. {See ROMANS 4:12.} In ROMANS 4:3 we also are told that ...*Abraham believed God, and it was counted unto him for righteousness*. {See also GENESIS 15:6.} The faith of Abraham is talked about more than anyone else's in HEBREWS 11. {See HEBREWS 11:8-19 quoted below.} Having noted all of these facts, it is no wonder then that the first time we find the words "*fear not*" (which is equivalent to "*be not afraid*") in scripture is when God speaks these words to Abraham (then called Abram) in GENESIS 15:1 *After these things the word of the LORD came unto Abram in a vision, saying, Fear not, Abram: I am thy shield, and thy exceeding great reward. Abraham grasped on to this concept of "fear not" (which is equivalent to "be not afraid") by faith, and here is what HEBREWS 11 notes of Abraham, and his faith.*

HEBREWS 11:8 *By faith Abraham, when he was called to go out into a place which he should after receive for an inheritance, obeyed; and he went out, not knowing whither he went. 9 By faith he sojourned in the land of promise, as in a strange country, dwelling in tabernacles with Isaac and Jacob, the heirs with him of the same promise: 10 For he looked for a city which hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God. 11 Through faith also Sara herself received strength to conceive seed, and was delivered of a child when she was past age, because she judged him faithful who had promised. 12 Therefore sprang there even of one, and him as good as dead, so many as the stars of the sky in multitude, and as the sand which is by the sea shore innumerable. 13 These all died in faith, not having received the promises, but having seen them afar off, and were persuaded of them, and embraced them, and confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth. 14 For they that say such things declare plainly that they seek a country. 15 And truly, if they had been mindful of that country from whence they came out, they might have had opportunity to have returned. 16 But now they desire a better country, that is, an heavenly: wherefore God is not ashamed to be called their God: for he hath prepared for them a city. 17 By faith Abraham, when he was tried, offered up Isaac: and he that had received the promises offered up his only begotten son, 18 Of whom it was said, That in Isaac shall thy seed be called: 19 Accounting that God was able to raise him up, even from the dead; from whence also he received him in a figure.*

Let's here note some of these times in scripture where we find the words "*be not afraid*," and "*fear not*," and perhaps we have even heard a sermon or two preached from these very same verses. To Isaac, the promised son of Abraham, we find this statement made in GENESIS 26:24 *And the LORD appeared unto him the same night, and said, I am the God of Abraham thy father: fear not, for I am with thee, and will bless thee, and multiply thy seed for my servant Abraham's sake.* (Note the company we find the Apostle Paul associated with so far in ACTS 18:9 that were also told to "*be not afraid*," and "*fear not*;" Abraham and Isaac, Old Testament worthies of faith of HEBREWS 11 fame.)

The faith of Moses is also mentioned also several times in HEBREWS 11. The words "*be not afraid*," and "*fear not*" are frequently found in the mouth of Moses. Words he learned first hand by totally putting his complete faith in God. Moses parents we able to first install these concepts into his heart, for they too were parents who had learned the overcoming principles of "*be not afraid*," and "*fear not*." Moses parents were not afraid of the Pharaoh's commandments, for we read in HEBREWS 11:23 *By faith Moses, when he was born, was hid three months of his parents, because they saw he was a proper child; and they were not afraid of the king's commandment.* Then we read this of the faith of Moses starting in HEBREWS 11:24 *By faith Moses, when he was come to years, refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter;* 25 *Choosing rather to suffer affliction with the people of God, than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season;* 26 *Esteeming the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures in Egypt: for he had respect unto the recompence of the reward.* 27 *By faith he forsook Egypt, not fearing the wrath of the king: for he endured, as seeing him who is invisible.* 28 *Through faith he kept the passover, and the sprinkling of blood, lest he that destroyed the firstborn should touch them.* 29 *By faith they passed through the Red sea as by dry land: which the Egyptians assaying to do were drowned.* Let's now note some of the Old Testament portions of scripture where we find the words "*be not afraid*," and "*fear not*" coming from the mouth of Moses, that man of full overcoming faith. EXODUS 20:20 *And Moses said unto the people, Fear not: for God is come to prove you, and that his fear may be before your faces, that ye sin not.* (The following portions of scripture come from DEUTERONOMY. Recall that the words recorded in DEUTERONOMY are the final counsels of Moses delivered unto the children of Israel before they went on to cross the Jordan River and began to possess the promise land.) DEUTERONOMY 1:21 *Behold, the LORD thy God hath set the land before thee: go up and possess it, as the LORD God of thy fathers hath said unto thee; fear not, neither be discouraged.* DEUTERONOMY 20:1 *When thou goest out to battle against thine enemies, and seest horses, and chariots, and a people more than thou, be not afraid of them: for the LORD thy God is with thee, which brought thee up out of the land of Egypt.* 2 *And it shall be, when ye are come nigh unto the battle, that the priest shall approach and speak unto the people,* 3 *And shall say unto them, Hear, O Israel, ye approach this day unto battle against your enemies: let not your hearts faint, fear not, and do not tremble, neither be ye terrified because of them;* 4 *For the LORD your God is he that goeth with you, to fight for you against your enemies, to save you.* DEUTERONOMY 31:1 *And Moses went and spake these words unto all Israel.* 2 *And he said unto them, I am an hundred and twenty years old this day; I can no more go out and come in: also the LORD hath said unto me, Thou shalt not go over this Jordan.* 3 *The LORD thy God, he will go over before thee, and he will destroy these nations from before thee, and thou shalt possess them: and Joshua, he shall go over before thee, as the LORD hath said.* 4 *And the LORD shall do unto them as he did to Sihon and to Og, kings of the Amorites, and unto the land of them, whom he destroyed.* 5 *And the LORD shall give them up before your face, that ye may do unto them according unto all the commandments which I have commanded you.* 6 *Be strong and of a good courage, fear not, nor be afraid of them: for the LORD thy God, he it is that doth go with thee; he will not fail thee, nor forsake thee.* 7 *And Moses called unto Joshua, and said unto him in the sight of all Israel, Be strong and of a good courage: for thou must go with this people unto the land which the LORD hath sworn unto their fathers to give them; and thou shalt cause them to inherit it.* 8 *And the LORD, he it is that doth go before thee; he will be with thee, he will not fail thee, neither forsake thee: fear not, neither be dismayed.* These words of Moses, and especially the words found in verses 6 through 8 did not fall on deaf

ears, and in fact, the Apostle Paul, after much more experience with the Lord than he had up to this point in time of ACTS 18, and with great confidence in the Lord repeated this theme of Moses in HEBREWS 13:5 & 6 where we read: *...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 Moses came Joshua. Though Joshua is not mentioned by name in HEBREWS 11, one of his stories of faith is remembered in HEBREWS 11:30. HEBREWS 11:30 *By faith the walls of Jericho fell down, after they were compassed about seven days.* Let's note some of the words the Lord Himself spoke unto Joshua at the time he began to lead Israel after the death of Moses, and realize that this too was a "midnight" time in the life of Joshua; a dark "midnight" hour after the death of his close friend, and spiritual leader Moses. JOSHUA 1:1 *Now after the death of Moses the servant of the LORD it came to pass, that the LORD spake unto Joshua the son of Nun, Moses' minister, saying, 2 Moses my servant is dead; now therefore arise, go over this Jordan, thou, and all this people, unto the land which I do give to them, even to the children of Israel. 3 Every place that the sole of your foot shall tread upon, that have I given unto you, as I said unto Moses. 4 From the wilderness and this Lebanon even unto the great river, the river Euphrates, all the land of the Hittites, and unto the great sea toward the going down of the sun, shall be your coast. 5 There shall not any man be able to stand before thee all the days of thy life: as I was with Moses, so I will be with thee: I will not fail thee, nor forsake thee. 6 Be strong and of a good courage: for unto this people shalt thou divide for an inheritance the land, which I swear unto their fathers to give them. 7 Only be thou strong and very courageous, that thou mayest observe to do according to all the law, which Moses my servant commanded thee: turn not from it to the right hand or to the left, that thou mayest prosper whithersoever thou goest. 8 This book of the law shall not depart out of thy mouth; but thou shalt meditate therein day and night, that thou mayest observe to do according to all that is written therein: for then thou shalt make thy way prosperous, and then thou shalt have good success. 9 Have not I commanded thee? Be strong and of a good courage; be not afraid, neither be thou dismayed: for the LORD thy God is with thee whithersoever thou goest.*

There are a lot more scriptures that we could cover that would further emphasize this same point; that the full overcomer is not to be afraid, but rather with full assurance of faith and total confidence in the Lord we are to always be looking forward and upward, for the Lord our God is always with us whithersoever we go, no matter how dark the darkest mile may be, nor how black the darkest "midnight" may be. I think the Apostle Paul realized that the Lord Himself was encouraging him to go on and be a full overcomer when He appeared to him in that vision in ACTS 18, and said: *Be not afraid, but speak, and hold not thy peace: For I am with thee, and no man shall set on thee to hurt thee: for I have much people in this city.* {ACTS 18:9 & 10.}

Moving on to the second instruction given Paul by the Lord in the vision of ACTS 18:9 was *...but speak*. Recall that Paul was called of the Lord to be an Apostle unto the gentiles on the day he got saved on the road to Damascus. Thus Paul knew he was to speak and preach, for this was his calling. I am sure he didn't argue with the Lord about this like Moses did.

We just referenced some scripture from DEUTERONOMY where we noted that DEUTERONOMY was the final speech given Israel by Moses. Having given such a speech, and having given the children of Israel the commandments, and having led them through the wilderness for forty years, we get the impression that Moses must have been quite a speaker to convince such a large number of people to follow him through such impossible country. But EXODUS 3 & 4 tell another story of how God had to convince Moses to *...but speak*. In EXODUS 3 God appears unto Moses in the backside of the desert in a burning bush. Here is some of what God revealed unto Moses that day.

EXODUS 3:9 *Now therefore, behold, the cry of the children of Israel is come unto me: and I have also seen the oppression wherewith the Egyptians oppress them. 10 Come now therefore, and I will send thee unto Pharaoh, that thou mayest bring forth my people the children of Israel out of Egypt. 11 And Moses said unto God, Who am I, that I should go unto Pharaoh, and that I should bring forth the children of Israel out of Egypt? 12 And he said, Certainly I will be with thee; and this shall be a token unto thee,*

that I have sent thee: When thou hast brought forth the people out of Egypt, ye shall serve God upon this mountain. 13 And Moses said unto God, Behold, when I come unto the children of Israel, and shall say unto them, The God of your fathers hath sent me unto you; and they shall say to me, What is his name? what shall I say unto them? 14 And God said unto Moses, I AM THAT I AM: and he said, Thus shalt thou say unto the children of Israel, I AM hath sent me unto you. 15 And God said moreover unto Moses, Thus shalt thou say unto the children of Israel, The LORD God of your fathers, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob, hath sent me unto you: this is my name for ever, and this is my memorial unto all generations. 16 Go, and gather the elders of Israel together, and say unto them, The LORD God of your fathers, the God of Abraham, of Isaac, and of Jacob, appeared unto me, saying, I have surely visited you, and seen that which is done to you in Egypt: 17 And I have said, I will bring you up out of the affliction of Egypt unto the land of the Canaanites, and the Hittites, and the Amorites, and the Perizzites, and the Hivites, and the Jebusites, unto a land flowing with milk and honey. 18 And they shall hearken to thy voice: and thou shalt come, thou and the elders of Israel, unto the king of Egypt, and ye shall say unto him, The LORD God of the Hebrews hath met with us: and now let us go, we beseech thee, three days' journey into the wilderness, that we may sacrifice to the LORD our God. 19 And I am sure that the king of Egypt will not let you go, no, not by a mighty hand.

Note in the above verses several references as to what Moses was to ...**but speak**, and in verse 18 the Lord plainly tells Moses that ...they shall hearken to thy voice. Moses had an objection to this, thus Moses and God had the following conversation found in EXODUS 4.

EXODUS 4:1 And Moses answered and said, But, behold, they will not believe me, nor hearken unto my voice: for they will say, The LORD hath not appeared unto thee. 2 And the LORD said unto him, What is that in thine hand? And he said, A rod. 3 And he said, Cast it on the ground. And he cast it on the ground, and it became a serpent; and Moses fled from before it. 4 And the LORD said unto Moses, Put forth thine hand, and take it by the tail. And he put forth his hand, and caught it, and it became a rod in his hand: 5 That they may believe that the LORD God of their fathers, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob, hath appeared unto thee. 6 And the LORD said furthermore unto him, Put now thine hand into thy bosom. And he put his hand into his bosom: and when he took it out, behold, his hand was leprous as snow. 7 And he said, Put thine hand into thy bosom again. And he put his hand into his bosom again; and plucked it out of his bosom, and, behold, it was turned again as his other flesh. 8 And it shall come to pass, if they will not believe thee, neither hearken to the voice of the first sign, that they will believe the voice of the latter sign. 9 And it shall come to pass, if they will not believe also these two signs, neither hearken unto thy voice, that thou shalt take of the water of the river, and pour it upon the dry land: and the water which thou takest out of the river shall become blood upon the dry land. 10 And Moses said unto the LORD, O my Lord, I am not eloquent, neither heretofore, nor since thou hast spoken unto thy servant: but I am slow of speech, and of a slow tongue. 11 And the LORD said unto him, Who hath made man's mouth? or who maketh the dumb, or deaf, or the seeing, or the blind? have not I the LORD? 12 Now therefore go, and I will be with thy mouth, and teach thee what thou shalt say.

In essence God was giving Moses the same instructions that the Apostle Paul was given in ACTS 18:9 ...**Be not afraid, but speak**, and hold not thy peace. We all know the great leader that Moses went on to be, and the Old Testament hero of faith that he was. I am sure Paul was very aware of these very same facts.

Five times in New Testament scripture we find the phrase "**but speak**" in the following portions of scripture. MATTHEW 8:5 And when Jesus was entered into Capernaum, there came unto him a centurion, beseeching him, 6 And saying, Lord, my servant lieth at home sick of the palsy, grievously tormented. 7 And Jesus saith unto him, I will come and heal him. 8 The centurion answered and said, Lord, I am not worthy that thou shouldest come under my roof: **but speak** the word only, and my servant shall be healed. 9 For I am a man under authority, having soldiers under me: and I say to this man, Go, and he goeth; and to another, Come, and he cometh; and to my servant, Do this,

and he doeth it. 10 When Jesus heard it, he marvelled, and said to them that followed, Verily I say unto you, I have not found so great faith, no, not in Israel. ...13 And Jesus said unto the centurion, Go thy way; and as thou hast believed, so be it done unto thee. And his servant was healed in the selfsame hour.

The second time we find the phrase "**but speak**" in the New Testament is in ACTS 4. Peter had in the previous verses just spoke these words unto the lame man at the gate of the temple called Beautiful in ACTS 3:6: "*Then Peter said, Silver and gold have I none; but such as I have give I thee: In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth rise up and walk.*" Then Peter full of the Holy Ghost, and not being afraid to "**but speak**" the Word of God, preached his second sermon unto the witnesses of this miracle. Peter and John were then arrested by the Sanhedrin in ACTS 4. The next day Peter and John were brought before the Sanhedrin, and the following conversation took place: ACTS 4:7 *And when they had set them in the midst, they asked, By what power, or by what name, have ye done this?* 8 *Then Peter, filled with the Holy Ghost, said unto them, Ye rulers of the people, and elders of Israel,* 9 *If we this day be examined of the good deed done to the impotent man, by what means he is made whole;* 10 *Be it known unto you all, and to all the people of Israel, that by the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, whom ye crucified, whom God raised from the dead, even by him doth this man stand here before you whole.* 11 *This is the stone which was set at nought of you builders, which is become the head of the corner.* 12 *Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved.* 13 *Now when they saw the boldness of Peter and John, and perceived that they were unlearned and ignorant men, they marvelled; and they took knowledge of them, that they had been with Jesus.* 14 *And beholding the man which was healed standing with them, they could say nothing against it.* 15 *But when they had commanded them to go aside out of the council, they conferred among themselves,* 16 *Saying, What shall we do to these men? for that indeed a notable miracle hath been done by them is manifest to all them that dwell in Jerusalem; and we cannot deny it.* 17 *But that it spread no further among the people, let us straitly threaten them, that they speak henceforth to no man in this name.* 18 *And they called them, and commanded them not to speak at all nor teach in the name of Jesus.* 19 *But Peter and John answered and said unto them, Whether it be right in the sight of God to hearken unto you more than unto God, judge ye.* 20 *For we cannot but speak the things which we have seen and heard.*

By now we should have a better picture of how powerful it is to "**but speak**" the Word of God. Paul knew this when we find the third time in the New Testament the phrase "**but speak**" in our text of ACTS 18:9, which again reads: *Then spake the Lord to Paul in the night by a vision, Be not afraid, but speak, and hold not thy peace:...*

The fourth and fifth time we find the phrase "**but speak**" in the New Testament is when Paul uses this phrase himself. In ACTS 26 Paul is brought before King Agrippa because Paul had appealed his case before the governor Porcius Festus, and Festus was with the king when we read this account after Paul had gave his testimony before the governor and the king: ACTS 26:24 *And as he thus spake for himself, Festus said with a loud voice, Paul, thou art beside thyself; much learning doth make thee mad.* 25 *But he said, I am not mad, most noble Festus; but speak forth the words of truth and soberness.* Obviously by this time in his life the Apostle Paul had heeded the advice of the Lord found in ACTS 18:9 to ...*Be not afraid, but speak, and hold not thy peace:* for Paul was now speaking before governors and kings!

The fifth time we find the phrase "**but speak**" in the New Testament is when Paul writes an encouraging letter to his close follower, and fellow church Apostle Titus. Paul wrote a similar couple of letters unto Timothy also, another fellow church Apostle, and to both of these men Paul made statements concerning "sound doctrine." Specifically unto Titus Paul wrote in TITUS 2:1 *But speak thou the things which become sound doctrine:...* 1 & 2 TIMOTHY and TITUS are full of instructions to both of these Apostles concerning how to *But speak thou the things which become sound doctrine:...* The Apostle Paul wrote these instructions after having many years of experience himself speaking the things which become sound doctrine.

The Greek word translated "speak" in both ACTS 18:9, and TITUS 2:1 is number 2980 in the Strong's Concordance meaning: to use words in order to declare one's mind and

disclose one's thoughts. Paul uses this same Greek word 44 times in his two epistles unto the Corinthians. obviously the Apostle Paul heeded the instructions of the Lord given him in the vision of ACTS 18:9 to *...Be not afraid, but speak, and hold not thy peace:...*

The third instruction of the Lord given Paul found in ACTS 18:9 was to *...hold not thy peace*. In simplest terms this phrase *...hold not thy peace...* means: be not afraid to speak, and make sure that you do speak the words I have given you to speak. Different translations of this phrase *...hold not thy peace...* read: *...refuse to be silenced;... ..speak on and never stop;... ..go on with your preaching;... ..and do not give up*. If you look up the Greek word translated "peace" here you will find it is number 4623 in the Strong's Concordance, (siopao {see-o-pah'-o}), and it is double emphasized in this phrase *...hold not thy peace...* for the word "hold" here is also number 4623 in the Strong's Concordance. Jesus used this same word in MARK 4 while in a ship on a storm tossed sea, and MARK 4:39 reads: *And he arose, and rebuked the wind, and said unto the sea, Peace, be still. And the wind ceased, and there was a great calm*. So we see that this word "peace" and this word "hold" mean: to be silent, hold one's peace, like the wind and the waves that Jesus silenced here in MARK 4:39. However please note that the Lord's instructions to the Apostle Paul here in ACTS 18:9 were to not be silent, and to *...hold not thy peace...*

Once again here we get a little glimpse into the heart of Paul, and see that he must have been facing internal discouragement at this point in time in his life, so the Lord appears unto him in a vision and encourages the discouraged Apostle Paul with these words: *...Be not afraid, but speak, and hold not thy peace:...* . The Lord also well knew the heart of Paul, and knew that he had been studying the PSALMS. The reason I say this is because the phrase *...hold not thy peace...* is found in four scriptures, and three of them are in the PSALMS, the other is in our text of ACTS 18:9. (We know Paul often quoted scripture from the PSALMS, study ACTS 13:33 and 13:35 again, for starters. When Paul writes in HEBREWS 13:6 *...The Lord is my helper, and I will not fear what man shall do unto me...* he is quoting portions of PSALMS 30:10, 56:4, and 118:6. So we note the PSALMS were so much a part of the Apostle Paul that portions of them just flowed out of his mouth.) The three PSALMS where we find the phrase *...hold not thy peace...* are PSALMS 39:12; PSALMS 83:1; and PSALMS 109:1. Let's read a portion of PSALMS 109, and see if we can note how the Apostle Paul may have had these same feelings at this point in time in his life.

PSALMS 109:1 *Hold not thy peace, O God of my praise; 2 For the mouth of the wicked and the mouth of the deceitful are opened against me: they have spoken against me with a lying tongue. 3 They compassed me about also with words of hatred; and fought against me without a cause. 4 For my love they are my adversaries: but I give myself unto prayer. 5 And they have rewarded me evil for good, and hatred for my love.* This PSALM ends like this: *...29 Let mine adversaries be clothed with shame, and let them cover themselves with their own confusion, as with a mantle. 30 I will greatly praise the LORD with my mouth; yea, I will praise him among the multitude. 31 For he shall stand at the right hand of the poor, to save him from those that condemn his soul.*

Perhaps Paul had been musing also about what David wrote in PSALMS 39. PSALMS 39:1 *I said, I will take heed to my ways, that I sin not with my tongue: I will keep my mouth with a bridle, while the wicked is before me. 2 I was dumb with silence, I held my peace, even from good; and my sorrow was stirred. 3 My heart was hot within me, while I was musing the fire burned: then spake I with my tongue, 4 LORD, make me to know mine end, and the measure of my days, what it is; that I may know how frail I am. 5 Behold, thou hast made my days as an handbreadth; and mine age is as nothing before thee: verily every man at his best state is altogether vanity. Selah. 6 Surely every man walketh in a vain shew: surely they are disquieted in vain: he heapeth up riches, and knoweth not who shall gather them. 7 And now, Lord, what wait I for? my hope is in thee. 8 Deliver me from all my transgressions: make me not the reproach of the foolish. 9 I was dumb, I opened not my mouth; because thou didst it. 10 Remove thy stroke away from me: I am consumed by the blow of thine hand. 11 When thou with rebukes dost correct man for iniquity, thou makest his beauty to consume away like a moth: surely every man is vanity. Selah. 12 Hear my prayer, O LORD, and give ear unto my cry; hold not thy peace at my tears: for I am a stranger with thee, and a sojourner, as all my*

fathers were. 13 *C* spare me, that I may recover strength, before I go hence, and be no more.

Having now considered the three instructions given of the Lord to Paul in ACTS 18:9; to (1) *Be not afraid*, to (2) *but speak*, and to (3) *hold not thy peace*, we now move on to consider some powerful statements found in the words of the Lord in ACTS 18:10. ACTS 18:10 *For I am with thee, and no man shall set on thee to hurt thee: for I have much people in this city.* Essentially three promises are made to Paul here in verse 10. Promise number one: *I am with thee*; promise number two: *...no man shall set on thee to hurt thee...* while here at Corinth; and promise number three: *...I have much people in this city.*

The phrase "I am with thee" is one of those high water mark phrases of scripture, as we will now see. The phrase "I am with thee" is found in total eleven times in scripture, and in ten of these times we find the Lord God Himself speaking these words. Closely akin to this statement "I am with thee" is another promise of God made even before we read the words "I am with thee," and this promise is "I will be with thee." We find the phrase "I will be with thee" nine times in scripture. Recall from our study on the meaning of Bible numbers that the number nine has to do with FINALITY or DIVINE COMPLETENESS, and the number ten has to do with RESPONSIBILITY ACCORDING TO ABILITY. The Lord God is the only One who can say with FINALITY "I will be with thee." By faith full overcomers believe this, and in their darkest hours indeed feel their Lord and Saviour living up to His divine RESPONSIBILITY ACCORDING TO His infinite ABILITY, and with full assurance of faith they truly find the Lord right there with them speaking to their heart, and saying: "I am with thee."

Thus we note the phrase "I am with thee" is one of those high water mark phrases of scripture. What makes this phrase "I am with thee" a high water mark phrase of scripture is the fact that all full overcomers have grown in their relationship with the Lord to the point that they know for a fact that even in the darkest of times they feel His presence, and know from Him these calming words: "I am with thee." This phrase "I am with thee" is a high water mark phrase of scripture, and as such can be thought of as a high water mark of faith. A little below this high water mark of faith can be found another water mark (so to speak) found in the phrase "I will be with thee." Stated another way "I will be with thee" is the foundation upon which "I am with thee" is built. The caissons below that foundation are the everlasting "I AM." Let's look at these concepts further.

Before Abraham became the father of the faithful as noted in ROMANS 4; before Abraham became that great Old Testament worthy of faith himself; before Abraham was even called Abraham, God told him this: "I AM." In GENESIS 15:1 we read: *After these things the word of the LORD came unto Abram in a vision, saying, Fear not, Abram: I am thy shield, and thy exceeding great reward. ...7 And he said unto him, I am the LORD that brought thee out of Ur of the Chaldees, to give thee this land to inherit it.* GENESIS 17:1 *And when Abram was ninety years old and nine, the LORD appeared to Abram, and said unto him, I am the Almighty God; walk before me, and be thou perfect.* Abraham believed God the great "I AM," and learned from God with steps of faith the concepts of "I will be with thee," and then "I am with thee." In the end Abraham goes on to become an Old Testament full overcomer found listed in HEBREWS 11.

Abraham's son Isaac, himself an Old Testament worthy of faith also found mentioned in HEBREWS 11, learns these very same lessons from the Lord. In GENESIS 26:24 the Lord appears unto Isaac in the night and tells him: *...I am the God of Abraham thy father...* Earlier in GENESIS 26:3 the Lord had once again appeared unto Isaac and told him: *...Sojourn in this land, and I will be with thee, and will bless thee; for unto thee, and unto thy seed, I will give all these countries, and I will perform the oath which I swore unto Abraham thy father; 4 And I will make thy seed to multiply as the stars of heaven, and will give unto thy seed all these countries; and in thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed; 5 Because that Abraham obeyed my voice, and kept my charge, my commandments, my statutes, and my laws.* Again back in GENESIS 26:24 we read this: *And the LORD appeared unto him the same night, and said, I am the God of Abraham thy father: fear not, for I am with thee, and will bless thee, and multiply thy seed for my servant Abraham's sake.*

Isaac's son Jacob, who goes on to be renamed Israel by God in GENESIS 32:28, whose name is also found mentioned among the Old Testament worthies of faith in HEBREWS 11, is himself taught by the Lord the very same lessons his father Isaac, and grandfather Abraham had been taught by the Lord. In GENESIS 28:12-14 we read a little about a dream Jacob had. GENESIS 28:12 *And he dreamed, and behold a ladder set up on the earth, and the top of it reached to heaven: and behold the angels of God ascending and descending on it. 13 And, behold, the LORD stood above it, and said, I am the LORD God of Abraham thy father, and the God of Isaac: the land whereon thou liest, to thee will I give it, and to thy seed; 14 And thy seed shall be as the dust of the earth, and thou shalt spread abroad to the west, and to the east, and to the north, and to the south: and in thee and in thy seed shall all the families of the earth be blessed.* Later in GENESIS 31:3 we read: *And the LORD said unto Jacob, Return unto the land of thy fathers, and to thy kindred; and I will be with thee.* And then again back in GENESIS 28:15 we read the Lord telling Jacob: *And, behold, I am with thee, and will keep thee in all places whither thou goest, and will bring thee again into this land; for I will not leave thee, until I have done that which I have spoken to thee of.*

Move ahead in time four hundred plus years to the time of Moses. Before Moses could be found listed as one of the Old Testament worthies of faith; before Moses could be the great leader of the children of Israel; before all of this Moses had to learn that God is the great "I AM." We read God telling Moses this in the following verse from EXODUS 3. EXODUS 3:6 *Moreover he said, I am the God of thy father, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob. And Moses hid his face; for he was afraid to look upon God. 7 And the LORD said, I have surely seen the affliction of my people which are in Egypt, and have heard their cry by reason of their taskmasters; for I know their sorrows; 8 And I am come down to deliver them out of the hand of the Egyptians, and to bring them up out of that land unto a good land and a large, unto a land flowing with milk and honey; unto the place of the Canaanites, and the Hittites, and the Amorites, and the Perizzites, and the Hivites, and the Jebusites. ...14 And God said unto Moses, I AM THAT I AM: and he said, Thus shalt thou say unto the children of Israel, I AM hath sent me unto you.* During this talk God was having with Moses, God told Moses in EXODUS 3:12 *...Certainly I will be with thee; and this shall be a token unto thee, that I have sent thee: When thou hast brought forth the people out of Egypt, ye shall serve God upon this mountain.* Read the account of the life of Moses, and there is no doubt that Moses knew from that day forward these words of God: *I am with thee.*

In DEUTERONOMY 20:1 Moses, that great man of faith who knew from God *...I am with thee*, spoke these encouraging words unto the children of Israel: *When thou goest out to battle against thine enemies, and seest horses, and chariots, and a people more than thou, be not afraid of them: for the LORD thy God is with thee, which brought thee up out of the land of Egypt.* Later in DEUTERONOMY 31:23 we read Moses saying to Joshua: *And he gave Joshua the son of Nun a charge, and said, Be strong and of a good courage: for thou shalt bring the children of Israel into the land which I swore unto them: and I will be with thee.* Then in JOSHUA 1:5 we read the Lord Himself speaking these words unto Joshua: *There shall not any man be able to stand before thee all the days of thy life: as I was with Moses, so I will be with thee: I will not fail thee, nor forsake thee.* Again in JOSHUA 3:7 we read: *And the LORD said unto Joshua, This day will I begin to magnify thee in the sight of all Israel, that they may know that, as I was with Moses, so I will be with thee.* Read the account of Joshua, and you will see that Joshua with out a doubt knew these words of God: *I am with thee.* Again Joshua is one of those Old Testament worthies of faith alluded to in HEBREWS 11:30.

The prophets too are mentioned in HEBREWS 11:32. The following scriptures are words of the Lord spoken to, and written down by the prophets Isaiah, and Jeremiah. And keep in mind as we read the following verses that the Apostle Paul was very familiar with the writings of these two men also, having studied them from his youth, thus when the Lord speaks to Paul these very same words *...I am with thee,...* Paul realizes he is in good company, walking on the same grounds of faith as did Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Moses, Joshua, Isaiah, and Jeremiah. Note these verses: ISAIAH 41:10 *Fear thou not; for I am with thee: be not dismayed; for I am thy God: I will strengthen thee; yea, I will help thee; yea, I will uphold thee with the right hand of my righteousness.* ISAIAH 43:5 *Fear not: for I am with thee: I will bring thy seed from the east, and*

gather thee from the west; JEREMIAH 1:8 Be not afraid of their faces: for I am with thee to deliver thee, saith the LORD. JEREMIAH 1:19 And they shall fight against thee; but they shall not prevail against thee; for I am with thee, saith the LORD, to deliver thee. JEREMIAH 15:20 And I will make thee unto this people a fenced brasen wall: and they shall fight against thee, but they shall not prevail against thee: for I am with thee to save thee and to deliver thee, saith the LORD. JEREMIAH 30:11 For I am with thee, saith the LORD, to save thee: though I make a full end of all nations whither I have scattered thee, yet will I not make a full end of thee: but I will correct thee in measure, and will not leave thee altogether unpunished. JEREMIAH 46:28 Fear thou not, O Jacob my servant, saith the LORD: for I am with thee; for I will make a full end of all the nations whither I have driven thee: but I will not make a full end of thee, but correct thee in measure; yet will I not leave thee wholly unpunished.

What we should take away from this portion of this study for ourselves is this. First we must learn that God is the great "I AM." When we accept Jesus as our personal Saviour we are acknowledging in our heart that God is the great "I AM," which is a fact noted by Paul in ACTS 26:15 -- *And I said, Who art thou, Lord? And he said, I am Jesus whom thou persecutest.* Paul believed right then and there, and asked Jesus what He would have him to do. The second thing we must learn in our walking on with the Lord is the fact that He has stated to each of us: *...I will be with thee.* Again the Apostle Paul learned this lesson on the road to Damascus, after accepting Jesus as his personal Saviour, 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, and of those things in the which I will appear unto thee;* in other words *...I will be with thee.* Not all believers truly accept the fact that our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ has said to each of us *...I will be with thee.* However the Apostle Paul writes nearly these very same words when he writes in HEBREWS 13:5 *...for he hath said, I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee....* in other words *...I will be with thee.* The third thing we should realize from this portion of our study is this; it takes the faith of a full overcomer to latch on to the fact for themselves that it is our Lord who has said: *I am with thee, and will bless thee,...* *...I am with thee, and will keep thee in all places whither thou goest,...* *...Fear thou not; for I am with thee: be not dismayed; for I am thy God: I will strengthen thee; yea, I will help thee; yea, I will uphold thee with the right hand of my righteousness. Fear not: for I am with thee....* *...for I am with thee to save thee and to deliver thee, saith the LORD.* The full overcomer realizes that it is indeed the Lord who has ordered our steps, for PSALMS 37:23 tells us: *The steps of a good man are ordered by the LORD: and he delighteth in his way.* The full overcomer realizes that it is indeed the Lord Jesus who is *...the author and finisher of our faith... .* {HEBREWS 12:2}. The full overcomer also realizes that *...If God be for us, who can be against us?* {ROMANS 8:31}. The full overcomer knows the Lord well enough to know that each step of the way, in everything, and all of the time it is the Lord who whispers in their ever open ear: *I am with thee.* Once again we read this very same thought expressed in Paul own words in HEBREWS 13:5 & 6: *...for he hath said, I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee. 6 So that we may boldly say, The Lord is my helper, and I will not fear what man shall do unto me.* Let's read this HEBREWS 13:5 & 6 again like the full overcomer reads this very same passage: *I am with thee....* *...for he hath said, I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee. ...I am with thee... So that we may boldly say, The Lord is my helper, ...I am with thee... ..and I will not fear what man shall do unto me.* Further more the full overcomer acknowledges that the Lord has said: *...I am with thee, and will bless thee,...* *...I am with thee, and will keep thee in all places whither thou goest,...* *...Fear thou not; for I am with thee: be not dismayed; for I am thy God: I will strengthen thee; yea, I will help thee; yea, I will uphold thee with the right hand of my righteousness. Fear not: for I am with thee....* *...for I am with thee to deliver thee, saith the LORD.*

All Christians should know this fact from the Lord: "I am with thee." The full overcomers do.

Talk about a shot of Spiritual adrenaline! Imagine how the Apostle Paul must have felt after the Lord Himself spoke these three promises to him in ACTS 18:10 *For I am with thee, and no man shall set on thee to hurt thee: for I have much people in this city.* Promise number one in this verse all Christians can latch on to: *For I am with*

thee... . As we noted above the full overcomers are keenly aware of this very fact. Promise two and three in this verse were addressed specifically unto the Apostle Paul. Promise number two that the Lord made unto Paul here at Corinth was this: ...and no man shall set on thee to hurt thee.... . Promise number three notes this fact to Paul from the Lord: ...for I have much people in this city.

Let's examine promise number two in this verse addressed specifically unto Paul. The Lord tells Paul *...and no man shall set on thee to hurt thee...* and implied in this promise was the fact that *...and no man shall set on thee to hurt thee...* here at Corinth... *...for I have much people in this city.* We know from JEREMIAH 17:10 and REVELATION 2:23 that it is the very same Lord who spoke to Paul by night is a vision here in ACTS 18:9 & 10, who also searches the heart of every man. 1 SAMUEL 16:7 tells us in part: *...for the LORD seeth not as man seeth; for man looketh on the outward appearance, but the LORD looketh on the heart.* PSALMS 44:21 further tells us that God *...knoweth the secrets of the heart.* Now consider the heart of the Apostle Paul here at Corinth. What were the secrets of his heart? What was troubling the heart of the Apostle Paul at this time of his life? Was it the cares of this life? Yes to a certain extent, perhaps in a way known only to the Apostle of the Gentiles, for one of the cares of this life to the Apostle Paul was the care of all the churches as he later noted in 2 CORINTHIANS 11:28. Other things that may have been weighing hard on the heart of the Apostle Paul at this time were the weariness and painfulness of his labours, the manifold perils discussed in 2 CORINTHIANS 11:26 {review pages 79-85 of these notes}, and the mental and physical pressures that cause him to have some fear, and some trembling mentioned in 1 CORINTHIANS 2:3. Note that the Lord promised Paul here in ACTS 18:10 that *...no man shall set on thee to hurt thee...* here at Corinth. The Lord knew the pain Paul had faced in the past, and that the fear of being hurt again here at Corinth weighed on the heart and mind of the Apostle Paul. So the Lord makes Paul promise: *...no man shall set on thee to hurt thee.... .*

As we examine a little concerning the heart of the Apostle Paul at this time, consider the following also. In the immediate past there were those at Corinth who were opposed to the persuading and preaching of the Apostle Paul, thus he began preaching at the house of Justus. Prior to that very few at Athens had readily received Paul's gospel message. Even prior to that he had been run out of the following towns: Berea, Thessalonica, and Philippi after being once again beaten and put in jail. Collectively these were all recent memories in the life of the Apostle Paul, how men had done various thing to hurt him. In the phrase the Lord used in ACTS 18:10 *....no man shall set on thee to hurt thee...* the Greek word translated "hurt" here is only used seven times in New Testament scripture. {2559 in the Strong's Greek Concordance, kakoo [kak-o'-o]}. It is translated "entreat evil," "make evil affected," "vex," "hurt," and "harm" in our King James version. This same Greek word is used twice in ACTS 14:2 *But the unbelieving Jews stirred up the Gentiles, and made <2559> their minds evil affected <2559> against the brethren.* One of the "brethren" mentioned in this verse is the Apostle Paul himself. Later in ACTS 14:19 we read that Paul was stoned at Lystra and left him for dead. ACTS 14:19 *And there came thither certain Jews from Antioch and Iconium, who persuaded the people, and, having stoned Paul, drew him out of the city, supposing he had been dead.* Obviously evil men had set themselves on Paul at Lystra to "hurt" him, and in fact had done so. All of these past events brought memories to the mind of the Apostle Paul of his prior treatment, and those at Corinth were, it seemed to Paul, set to "hurt" him once again in some fashion or another. Thus these were calming words spoken to Paul by the Lord: *....no man shall set on thee to hurt thee.... .*

In considering all of these past "hurt" full events in the life of the Apostle Paul, who is now in the midst of his second missionary journey, do you recall any mention of him griping and complaining, moaning or groaning, while recounting his past anguish, troubles and tribulations, or outwardly displaying any personal dissatisfaction and discouragement with the way God has directed his steps? The answer to this question should be an emphatic NO! Let's look at some examples in Paul's life as to if he griped or complained on the race course he was given to run. We just mentioned the fact again how Paul was stoned and left for dead on the out skirts of Lystra in ACTS 14:19. The very next verse reads: ACTS 14:20 *Howbeit, as the disciples stood round about him, he rose up,*

and came into the city... Without gripping or complaining the Apostle Paul after being miraculously healed here rose up and went right back into the very city who had him stoned! After leaving Lystra for a time, ACTS 14:21 tells us that Paul once again returned unto Lystra from whence he had been stoned, and preached unto them this gospel message recorded in ACTS 14:22 *Confirming the souls of the disciples, and exhorting them to continue in the faith, and that we must through much tribulation enter into the kingdom of God.* This does not sound like gripping and complaining to me. Perhaps by now the Apostle Paul had heard the words of Jesus recorded in LUKE 11:49, which reads: *Therefore also said the wisdom of God, I will send them prophets and apostles, and some of them they shall slay and persecute:...* Certainly the Apostle Paul knew that his being called as an Apostle included this kind of treatment. Ananias of Damascus no doubt told Paul this same thing as he related the story of the Lord appearing unto him in a vision, and saying in ACTS 9:16 *...I will shew him how great things he must suffer for my name's sake.* We do not find the Apostle Paul gripping or complaining at this message either. Perhaps as he went on with the Lord he rehearsed some of the PSALMS that Old Testament worthy of faith David penned, and quoted the following verses: PSALMS 68:19 *Blessed be the Lord, who daily loadeth us with benefits, even the God of our salvation. Selah.* PSALMS 142:7 *Bring my soul out of prison, that I may praise thy name: the righteous shall compass me about; for thou shalt deal bountifully with me.*

The one letter the Apostle Paul has written up to this point in time was 1 THESSALONIANS, where Paul mentions in a positive tone the trials he has faced as an Apostle unto the Gentiles. Notice how Paul writes this in the following passages found in 1 THESSALONIANS. 1 THESSALONIANS 2:1 *For yourselves, brethren, know our entrance in unto you, that it was not in vain: 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. ...3:3 That no man should be moved by these afflictions: for yourselves know that we are appointed thereunto. 4 For verily, when we were with you, we told you before that we should suffer tribulation; even as it came to pass, and ye know. ...3:7 Therefore, brethren, we were comforted over you in all our affliction and distress by your faith: 8 For now we live, if ye stand fast in the Lord. ...5:14 Now we exhort you, brethren, warn them that are unruly, comfort the feebleminded, support the weak, be patient toward all men. 15 See that none render evil for evil unto any man; but ever follow that which is good, both among yourselves, and to all men.* We don't see any gripping or complaining in these verses either, do we? What we do see is the heart attitude of a race course runner who went on to be a full overcomer, having faced many varied trials, troubles, and test along his God ordained race course. Note what the Apostle Paul wrote in the very next verses of 1 THESSALONIANS 5. 1 THESSALONIANS 5:16 *Rejoice evermore. 17 Pray without ceasing. 18 In every thing give thanks: for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus concerning you.* I guarantee you that each and every full overcomer from this church age will take these words to heart!

One more example from an Old Testament on the negativity of gripping or complaining. There is another word for gripping or complaining in scripture, and it is the word murmur, {number 03885 in the Strong's Hebrew Concordance pronounced luwn [loon] or liyn [leen]}. In EXODUS 14 we find the children of Israel being redeemed from the land of bondage by the mighty hand of the Lord God, who lead them through the Red Sea on dry land. Three days later in EXODUS 15:24 we find the children of Israel gripping and complaining against Moses when they couldn't find water to drink. EXODUS 15:24 *And the people murmured <03885> against Moses, saying, What shall we drink? The Lord then gave them water to drink.*

Within two months we again find the children of Israel gripping and complaining against Moses in EXODUS 16. EXODUS 16:2 *And the whole congregation of the children of Israel murmured <03885> against Moses and Aaron in the wilderness: 3 And the children of Israel said unto them, Would to God we had died by the hand of the LORD in the land of Egypt, when we sat by the flesh pots, and when we did eat bread to the full; for ye have brought us forth into this wilderness, to kill this whole assembly with hunger. 4 Then said the LORD unto Moses, Behold, I will rain bread from heaven for you; and the people shall go out and gather a certain rate every day, that I may prove them, whether they will walk in my law, or no. 5 And it shall come to pass, that on the sixth*

day they shall prepare that which they bring in; and it shall be twice as much as they gather daily. 6 And Moses and Aaron said unto all the children of Israel, At even, then ye shall know that the LORD hath brought you out from the land of Egypt: 7 And in the morning, then ye shall see the glory of the LORD; for that he heareth your murmurings against the LORD: and what are we, that ye murmur ~~<03885>~~ ~~<03885>~~ against us? 8 And Moses said, This shall be, when the LORD shall give you in the evening flesh to eat, and in the morning bread to the full; for that the LORD heareth your murmurings which ye murmur ~~<03885>~~ against him: and what are we? your murmurings are not against us, but against the LORD. 9 And Moses spake unto Aaron, Say unto all the congregation of the children of Israel, Come near before the LORD: for he hath heard your murmurings. 10 And it came to pass, as Aaron spake unto the whole congregation of the children of Israel, that they looked toward the wilderness, and, behold, the glory of the LORD appeared in the cloud. 11 And the LORD spake unto Moses, saying, 12 I have heard the murmurings of the children of Israel: speak unto them, saying, At even ye shall eat flesh, and in the morning ye shall be filled with bread; and ye shall know that I am the LORD your God.

A short time after this we again read this in EXODUS 17. EXODUS 17:1 And all the congregation of the children of Israel journeyed from the wilderness of Sin, after their journeys, according to the commandment of the LORD, and pitched in Rephidim: and there was no water for the people to drink. 2 Wherefore the people did chide with Moses, and said, Give us water that we may drink. And Moses said unto them, Why chide ye with me? wherefore do ye tempt the LORD? 3 And the people thirsted there for water; and the people murmured ~~<03885>~~ against Moses, and said, Wherefore is this that thou hast brought us up out of Egypt, to kill us and our children and our cattle with thirst? 4 And Moses cried unto the LORD, saying, What shall I do unto this people? they be almost ready to stone me. 5 And the LORD said unto Moses, Go on before the people, and take with thee of the elders of Israel; and thy rod, wherewith thou smotest the river, take in thine hand, and go. 6 Behold, I will stand before thee there upon the rock in Horeb; and thou shalt smite the rock, and there shall come water out of it, that the people may drink. And Moses did so in the sight of the elders of Israel. 7 And he called the name of the place Massah, and Meribah, ("temptation" and "strife" or "contention") because of the chiding of the children of Israel, and because they tempted the LORD, saying, Is the LORD among us, or not?

A little more time passes, and Moses sends spies out into the promised land of Canaan. Here is their report: NUMBERS 13:25 And they returned from searching of the land after forty days. 26 And they went and came to Moses, and to Aaron, and to all the congregation of the children of Israel, unto the wilderness of Paran, to Kadesh; and brought back word unto them, and unto all the congregation, and shewed them the fruit of the land. 27 And they told him, and said, We came unto the land whither thou sentest us, and surely it floweth with milk and honey; and this is the fruit of it. 28 Nevertheless the people be strong that dwell in the land, and the cities are walled, and very great: and moreover we saw the children of Anak there. 29 The Amalekites dwell in the land of the south: and the Hittites, and the Jebusites, and the Amorites, dwell in the mountains: and the Canaanites dwell by the sea, and by the coast of Jordan. 30 And Caleb stilled the people before Moses, and said, Let us go up at once, and possess it; for we are well able to overcome it. (We will find that Caleb is one of those Old Testament full overcomers not mentioned by name in HEBREWS 11, who through faith in God truly overcame the giants in the land of Canaan, and actually went on to possess the land.) 31 But the men that went up with him said, We be not able to go up against the people; for they are stronger than we. 32 And they brought up an evil report of the land which they had searched unto the children of Israel, saying, The land, through which we have gone to search it, is a land that eateth up the inhabitants thereof; and all the people that we saw in it are men of a great stature. 33 And there we saw the giants, the sons of Anak, which come of the giants: and we were in our own sight as grasshoppers, and so we were in their sight. NUMBERS 14:1 And all the congregation lifted up their voice, and cried; and the people wept that night. 2 And all the children of Israel murmured ~~<03885>~~ against Moses and against Aaron: and the whole congregation said unto them, Would God that we had died in the land of Egypt! or would God we had died in this wilderness! 3 And wherefore hath the LORD brought us unto this land, to fall by the sword, that our wives and our children

should be a prey? were it not better for us to return into Egypt? 4 And they said one to another, Let us make a captain, and let us return into Egypt.26 And the LORD spake unto Moses and unto Aaron, saying, 27 How long shall I bear with this evil congregation, which murmur <03885> against me? I have heard the murmurings of the children of Israel, which they murmur <03885> against me. 28 Say unto them, As truly as I live, saith the LORD, as ye have spoken in mine ears, so will I do to you: 29 Your carcasses shall fall in this wilderness; and all that were numbered of you, according to your whole number, from twenty years old and upward, which have murmured <03885> against me, 30 Doubtless ye shall not come into the land, concerning which I sware to make you dwell therein, save Caleb the son of Jephunneh, and Joshua the son of Nun. 31 But your little ones, which ye said should be a prey, them will I bring in, and they shall know the land which ye have despised. 32 But as for you, your carcasses, they shall fall in this wilderness. 33 And your children shall wander in the wilderness forty years, and bear your whoredoms, until your carcasses be wasted in the wilderness. 34 After the number of the days in which ye searched the land, even forty days, each day for a year, shall ye bear your iniquities, even forty years, and ye shall know my breach of promise. 35 I the LORD have said, I will surely do it unto all this evil congregation, that are gathered together against me: in this wilderness they shall be consumed, and there they shall die.

The end result of all this gripping and complaining, this murmuring was that the children of Israel who did this complaining got to die in the wilderness, and never did get to go in and possess the land of Canaan, with two exceptions; Joshua and Caleb. Joshua goes on to lead the children of Israel after Moses, and Caleb gets Hebron for an inheritance. Hebron means "seat of association," or "communion." Hebron was the first place Abram dwelt after being told by the Lord to ...walk through the land in the length of it and in the breadth of it; for I will give it unto thee... in GENESIS 13:17 & 18. Study JOSHUA 14:6-14 and see how Caleb knew that God was the great "I AM," and that certainly the Lord showed him ...I will be with thee,... in fact Caleb knew these words of God: I am with thee; and we will take it one step further, Caleb also believed God for the fact that ...no man shall set on thee to hurt thee! By faith Caleb possessed the land, because he believed God is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him.

Let's look at little further into what we know of Caleb, and see the full overcomer that he was. JOSHUA 14:6 Then the children of Judah came unto Joshua in Gilgal: and Caleb the son of Jephunneh the Kenezite said unto him, Thou knowest the thing that the LORD said unto Moses the man of God concerning me and thee in Kadeshbarnea.

Let's review highlights from scripture to see exactly what it was that the Lord said unto Moses concerning Joshua and Caleb. NUMBERS 14:11 And the LORD said unto Moses, How long will this people provoke me? and how long will it be ere they believe me, for all the signs which I have shewed among them? ...24 But my servant Caleb, because he had another spirit with him, and hath followed me fully, him will I bring into the land whereinto he went; and his seed shall possess it. ...26 And the LORD spake unto Moses and unto Aaron, saying, 27 How long shall I bear with this evil congregation, which murmur against me? I have heard the murmurings of the children of Israel, which they murmur against me. 28 Say unto them, As truly as I live, saith the LORD, as ye have spoken in mine ears, so will I do to you: 29 Your carcasses shall fall in this wilderness; and all that were numbered of you, according to your whole number, from twenty years old and upward, which have murmured against me, 30 Doubtless ye shall not come into the land, concerning which I sware to make you dwell therein, save Caleb the son of Jephunneh, and Joshua the son of Nun. ...NUMBERS 26:65 For the LORD had said of them, They shall surely die in the wilderness. And there was not left a man of them, save Caleb the son of Jephunneh, and Joshua the son of Nun.NUMBERS 32:10 And the LORD'S anger was kindled the same time, and he sware, saying, 11 Surely none of the men that came up out of Egypt, from twenty years old and upward, shall see the land which I sware unto Abraham, unto Isaac, and unto Jacob; because they have not wholly followed me: 12 Save Caleb the son of Jephunneh the Kenezite, and Joshua the son of Nun: for they have wholly followed the LORD. 13 And the LORD'S anger was kindled against Israel, and he made them wander in the wilderness forty years, until all the generation,

that had done evil in the sight of the LORD, was consumed.DEUTERONOMY 1:30 The LORD your God which goeth before you, he shall fight for you, according to all that he did for you in Egypt before your eyes; 31 And in the wilderness, where thou hast seen how that the LORD thy God bare thee, as a man doth bear his son, in all the way that ye went, until ye came into this place. 32 Yet in this thing ye did not believe the LORD your God, 33 Who went in the way before you, to search you out a place to pitch your tents in, in fire by night, to shew you by what way ye should go, and in a cloud by day. 34 And the LORD heard the voice of your words, and was wroth, and sware, saying, 35 Surely there shall not one of these men of this evil generation see that good land, which I sware to give unto your fathers, 36 Save Caleb the son of Jephunneh; he shall see it, and to him will I give the land that he hath trodden upon, and to his children, because he hath wholly followed the LORD. 37 Also the LORD was angry with me for your sakes, saying, Thou also shalt not go in thither. 38 But Joshua the son of Nun, which standeth before thee, he shall go in thither: encourage him: for he shall cause Israel to inherit it.

JOSHUA 14:6 Then the children of Judah came unto Joshua in Gilgal: and Caleb the son of Jephunneh the Kenazite said unto him, Thou knowest the thing that the LORD said unto Moses the man of God concerning me and thee in Kadeshbarnea. 7 Forty years old was I when Moses the servant of the LORD sent me from Kadeshbarnea to espy out the land; and I brought him word again as it was in mine heart.

Consider this from verse 7. Forty is the number of PERFECT TESTING, and the heart of Caleb was perfectly tested at this time. And when it came time for Caleb to speak out of his heart both here in verse 7 and back in NUMBERS 14, we find that Caleb "wholly followed the Lord," and that Caleb followed the Lord fully! If this doesn't speak of the faith of a full overcomer, then what does? We didn't look at what Caleb and Joshua said unto the congregation of Israel above back in NUMBERS 14, so we will look at those verses now, and notice here what was in Caleb's and Joshua's heart at this time as we read these words: NUMBERS 14:6 And Joshua the son of Nun, and Caleb the son of Jephunneh, which were of them that searched the land, rent their clothes: 7 And they spake unto all the company of the children of Israel, saying, The land, which we passed through to search it, is an exceeding good land. 8 If the LORD delight in us, then he will bring us into this land, and give it us; a land which floweth with milk and honey. 9 Only rebel not ye against the LORD, neither fear ye the people of the land; for they are bread for us: their defence is departed from them, and the LORD is with us: fear them not. 10 But all the congregation bade stone them with stones.

Now back to JOSHUA 14 some forty five years later and read how the heart attitude of Caleb had not changed during this time span. JOSHUA 14:8 Nevertheless my brethren that went up with me made the heart of the people melt: but I wholly followed the LORD my God. 9 And Moses sware on that day, saying, Surely the land whereon thy feet have trodden shall be thine inheritance, and thy children's for ever, because thou hast wholly followed the LORD my God. 10 And now, behold, the LORD hath kept me alive, as he said, these forty and five years, even since the LORD spake this word unto Moses, while the children of Israel wandered in the wilderness: and now, lo, I am this day fourscore and five years old. 11 As yet I am as strong this day as I was in the day that Moses sent me: as my strength was then, even so is my strength now, for war, both to go out, and to come in.

Now let me ask you this: we have all know forty year old men, and eighty-five year old men: Who is stronger? Obviously the forty year old man, by far. So are these the words of a senile old man when Caleb states in verse 11: As yet I am as strong this day as I was in the day that Moses sent me: as my strength was then, even so is my strength now, for war, both to go out, and to come in....? The answer to this question is no. When Caleb states: As yet I am as strong this day as I was in the day that Moses sent me: as my strength was then, even so is my strength now, for war, both to go out, and to come in,.... he is really saying: Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, and to day, and forever, {HEBREWS 13:8}, and just as He was able to do forty-five years ago, He is still able to do today. Forty-five years ago I believed that the Lord was with us, and could very well have given us this land, and I still believe that today. Physically I am still trusting the Lord today, just like I was forty-five years ago. I am as strong in my faith in the Lord this day as I was forty-five years ago; as my strength was in the Lord forty-five years ago, even so is my

strength in the Lord today, for to war, and both to go out, and to come in. I am not trusting in Caleb today, nor was I trusting in Caleb forty-five years ago. I am still wholly heartedly, and fully trusting in the Lord my God. No these are not the words of a senile eighty-five year old man, but rather these are the words that come from the heart of a full overcomer; someone who has wholly heartedly believed in his heart that God can do anything but fail. No gripping and complaining was found in this full overcomers heart.

JOSHUA 14:12 Now therefore give me this mountain, whereof the LORD spake in that day; for thou heardest in that day how the Anakims were there, and that the cities were great and fenced: if so be the LORD will be with me, then I shall be able to drive them out, as the LORD said. 13 And Joshua blessed him, and gave unto Caleb the son of Jephunneh Hebron for an inheritance. 14 Hebron therefore became the inheritance of Caleb the son of Jephunneh the Kenezite unto this day, because that he wholly followed the LORD God of Israel.

Brother Hill wrote the following note in his Bible concerning Caleb, and those of us who knew Brother Hill can certainly see that these thoughts were his thoughts as he too reached into his eighties and even nineties. "The Dodgers and Giants world series,... Thompson last inning, last out, and Thompson hit a home run. What a thrill for your team. But more if we see a fellow make the last chapter of life, last inning, last out, and go out with banners flying, and trumpets pealing, like Paul who said: "that I might finish my course with joy,..." and we know he did. So Caleb after 85 rugged years might have been excused, had he retired, but this rugged old soldier had no intention of just fading away, the mountains he loved lay in possession of giants, where even young warriors might have balked. ...So Caleb comes to bat in the 9th inning and struck a home run. This should encourage all old soldiers. What a lesson to those who would step aside and leave it to the young. Often youth has fire without light; ...age light without fire."

(We that knew Brother Hill knew that he always encouraged us to trust the Lord, Just like old Caleb did. Both men are now examples to us of worthies of faith; men that went on to achieve God's best in their own lives, encouraging the rest of us to do the same.)

The Apostle Paul also wrote concerning the gripping and complaining and murmuring of Israel in his first epistle to those at Corinth. 1 CORINTHIANS 10:1 *Moreover, brethren, I would not that ye should be ignorant, how that all our fathers were under the cloud, and all passed through the sea; 2 And were all baptized unto Moses in the cloud and in the sea; 3 And did all eat the same spiritual meat; 4 And did all drink the same spiritual drink: for they drank of that spiritual Rock that followed them: and that Rock was Christ. 5 But with many of them God was not well pleased: for they were overthrown in the wilderness. 6 Now these things were our examples, to the intent we should not lust after evil things, as they also lusted. 7 Neither be ye idolaters, as were some of them; as it is written, The people sat down to eat and drink, and rose up to play. 8 Neither let us commit fornication, as some of them committed, and fell in one day three and twenty thousand. 9 Neither let us tempt Christ, as some of them also tempted, and were destroyed of serpents. 10 Neither murmur ye, as some of them also murmured, and were destroyed of the destroyer. 11 Now all these things happened unto them for ensamples: and they are written for our admonition, upon whom the ends of the world are come.*

Let's read again our text of ACTS 18:9 & 10: *Then spake the Lord to Paul in the night by a vision, Be not afraid, but speak, and hold not thy peace: 10 For I am with thee, and no man shall set on thee to hurt thee: for I have much people in this city.* We have been examining the second promise made by the Lord to Paul in verse 10: *...and no man shall set on thee to hurt thee:...* . Let's now look at this promise the Lord made unto the Apostle Paul here at Corinth like this: in essence the Lord was saying to Paul; Paul *Be not afraid,...*no man shall set on thee to hurt thee:.... . Furthermore Paul *...Be not afraid, but speak,...*no man shall set on thee to hurt thee:.... *...and hold not thy peace: For I am with thee, and no man shall set on thee to hurt thee: for I have much people in*

this city. {ACTS 18:9 & 10.} Again these words of the Lord spoken to Paul were a shot of Spiritual adrenaline to him. These kinds of events also inspired the Apostle Paul to start preaching words like he later penned in the book of ROMANS. Perhaps these very words of the Lord spoken to Paul by night in a vision here in ACTS 18:9 & 10 inspired some of the following words. ROMANS 8:26 *Likewise the Spirit also helpeth our infirmities: for we know not what we should pray for as we ought: but the Spirit itself maketh intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered.* 27 And he that searcheth the hearts knoweth what is the mind of the Spirit, because he maketh intercession for the saints according to the will of God. 28 *And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose.* 29 *For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brethren.* 30 *Moreover whom he did predestinate, them he also called: and whom he called, them he also justified: and whom he justified, them he also glorified.* 31 *What shall we then say to these things? If God be for us, who can be against us?* 32 *He that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not with him also freely give us all things?* 33 *Who shall lay any thing to the charge of God's elect? It is God that justifieth.* 34 *Who is he that condemneth? It is Christ that died, yea rather, that is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us.* 35 Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? 36 *As it is written, For thy sake we are killed all the day long; we are accounted as sheep for the slaughter.* 37 *Nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him that loved us.* 38 *For I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.*

ACTS 18:10 *For I am with thee, and no man shall set on thee to hurt thee: for I have much people in this city.* The third promise made unto Paul in this verse is a statement of fact known only unto the Lord at this point in time, which was: *...I have much people in this city.* We know from scripture some of the names of some of the people from Corinth, some of whom we have already talked about. But the Lord here notes that there were *...much people in this city...* of Corinth. We just read in ROMANS 8 these words: 29 *For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brethren.* 30 *Moreover whom he did predestinate, them he also called: and whom he called, them he also justified: and whom he justified, them he also glorified.* Jesus knew, fore knew those that were in Corinth that would accept Him as their Lord and Saviour. It was now the Apostle Paul's job to reach them. But how was he to reach them? ACTS 18:9 & 10 answer this question, so let's look at these verses again like this: *Then spake the Lord to Paul in the night by a vision,...* Paul *...I have much people in this city,...* and I want you to know this for a fact that *...I am with thee,...* so *...Be not afraid, but speak, and hold not thy peace:...* *...and no man shall set on thee to hurt thee:...* The essence of these words of the Lord to Paul is this: it caused the Apostle Paul to settle down in one place for a good long while, which will be a change of pace for this well travelled Apostle. The Lord here at Corinth has just given the Apostle Paul the confidence and assurance he needs to have an extended stay here. We will see later that one of the things that came out of this extended stay was the establishment of Aquila and Priscilla in Paul's gospel, and what a blessing they were to the body of Christ!

ACTS 18:11 *And he continued there a year and six months, teaching the word of God among them.* Two important points are woven together in this verse. Let's note first that the Apostle Paul was found here at Corinth *...teaching the word of God among them.* What would be the value of such teaching? To some here at Corinth who heard the teaching of the Apostle Paul, there was no value to his *...teaching the word of God among them.* To others here at Corinth who also heard the very same teaching of the Apostle Paul there was priceless eternal value, and endless eternal riches to his *...teaching the word of God among them.* The difference between these two groups of people boils down to open hearts of faith. Those who had open hearts of faith received Paul's *...teaching the word of God among them...* and became a part of that group whom the Lord Jesus

Christ Himself called *...I have much people in this city*. The Greek word translated teaching in this verse {1321 in the Strong's Greek Concordance, *didasko* {did-as'-ko}} is used 97 times in new Testament scripture. The Apostle Paul uses this same Greek word nineteen times in his epistles. Nineteen again is the number having to do with FAITH. Some of those at Corinth who had open hearts to receive Paul's gospel message; Paul's *...teaching the word of God among them...* went on to become a part of that group of Saints that we will see in heaven known as the New Testament full overcomers. What did Paul teach these Corinthians? Our text here in ACTS 18:11 tells us that Paul taught them *...the word of God...*. Read 1 and 2 CORINTHIANS and see further things that the Apostle Paul taught them after he left them. In 1 CORINTHIANS 4:17 Paul writes of *...my ways which be in Christ, as I teach every where in every church*. So we see that Paul taught both by living example, and by *...teaching the word of God among them*.

The second point we want to note here in ACTS 18:11 is that Paul *...continued there a year and six months*. ACTS 18:18 further notes that Paul *...after this tarried there yet a good while, and then took his leave of the brethren....*. There is considerable significance in Luke's noting that Paul *...continued there* (at Corinth) *a year and six months*. This is the first time while on a missionary journey that the Apostle Paul got the privilege to stay in one place for such a long period of time. An important fact that all full overcomers must face is again brought to light here, which can be summed up in one word; change. When we pray to the Lord and tell him we want to be a full overcomer, what we are really asking for is the Lord to change us. Put another way, there has never been a full overcomer yet whom the Lord didn't have to bring major changes into their life. These changes ultimately take place in one's heart, but also require changes in attitude; changes in willingness; changes in situation; and sometimes changes of locations. Look at it this way: when we pray to the Lord that we want to have God's best, that we too want to be in the Bride of Christ, that we want to be full overcomers, what we are really saying is: "Lord I want you to bring the changes in my life that will make me a full overcomer." Yet our human nature often is to resist such changes, and when God starts to bring those changes about in our life, we balk, squawk, scream and holler just like the young eagle on its first flying lesson. This is where many race course runners give up the race and go back to their so called familiar, and perhaps comfortable situation, hoping for no more change. Thus in return they settle for something less than God's best. However there are those true race course runners, potential full overcomers, who have grown somewhat in the grace and knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ, and they recognize some important things about running this race. These potential full overcomers have learned that running this race is all about winning Christ as Bridegroom, which in itself is sufficient encouragement to continue running. These potential full overcomers have truly learned, and know *"...that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose,"* {ROMANS 8:28}. These potential full overcomers also know *"that the trial of your faith, being much more precious than of gold that perisheth, though it be tried with fire, might be found unto praise and honor and glory at the appearing of Jesus Christ"* {1 PETER 1:7}. In fact, these potential full overcomers have learned that these events on their race course, these obstacles, if you will, are carefully planned and placed there by an eternal, careful, ever-loving Heavenly Father, who from the eternity's past has only had their, and our best interest in mind. HEBREWS 12:2 even tells us that *...Jesus (is) the author and finisher of our faith;...*. Each of our race courses is unique from one another, yet *"...there hath no temptation taken you but such as is common to man: but God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able; but will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear it."* {1 CORINTHIANS 10:13}. Look at it this way, God gets his kicks (so to speak), out of making sure each of the race course runner's race course is unique, just like each individual is unique, just like every snow flake is unique, just like every hour of every day is unique.

Let's now look a little at how the Lord likes to do the same thing differently as He makes changes in people's lives. Jesus while on earth healed countless blind people and gave them sight, yet he didn't always do it the same way. Note the following examples. 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. In the above verses Jesus heals the blind men by touching their eyes, and what a change this was in their life, obviously a change for them for the better. Next look at MARK 8:22-26; (here he spit on the blind man's eyes). 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. 26 And he sent him away to his house, saying, Neither go into the town, nor tell it to any in the town. A couple of chapters later Jesus heals blind Bartimaeus. 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? (We may read this question and think of it as a foolish question, however there was a lot of wisdom in this question: What wilt thou that I should do unto thee? In other words Jesus was asking blind Bartimaeus: What kind of change do you want me to make in your life?) 51....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. Note here that Jesus simply spoke the words and blind Bartimaeus received his sight. Another blind man receives his sight in JOHN 9:1-7; (here Jesus put clay in the blind man's eyes). JOHN 9:1 And as Jesus passed by, he saw a man which was blind from his birth. 2 And his disciples asked him, saying, Master, who did sin, this man, or his parents, that he was born blind? 3 Jesus answered, Neither hath this man sinned, nor his parents: but that the works of God should be made manifest in him. 4 I must work the works of him that sent me, while it is day: the night cometh, when no man can work. 5 As long as I am in the world, I am the light of the world. 6 When he had thus spoken, he spat on the ground, and made clay of the spittle, and he anointed the eyes of the blind man with the clay, 7 And said unto him, Go, wash in the pool of Siloam, (which is by interpretation, Sent.) He went his way therefore, and washed, and came seeing.

In the above examples all of the blind received their sight, but he treated each situation differently, yet He brought the same changes unto each one of them. Those yearning to be a full overcomer, those who want God's best, those who are running the race to win Christ as bridegroom, all want the same thing, and by faith God will let them have it, yet each one will have his own God designed special race course full of obstacles to overcome; obstacles carefully placed there by the Author and Finisher of our faith, who simply wants us to live by faith in Him. Those like Paul who fight a good fight, and keep the faith, and finish their particular race course will be those in the bride of Christ, the full overcomers of this church age. And that is how the wife of Christ "hath made herself ready." She is willing to let Him make the necessary changes in her life in order to make herself ready. Jesus has sent us the Holy Spirit to help us with these necessary changes.

Also think about this: Have you ever taken the time to notice in scripture that while on earth when Jesus came upon the scene of whatever situation, how that things changed, and changed for the better? Jesus is in the business of change, and there is no change too small for Him to make, nor is there any change too big for Him to make. Let's review just a few quick examples from scripture of how Jesus changed things for the better. In JOHN 2 Jesus came to a wedding where they ran out of wine. There Jesus performed His first miracle, and changed the water into wine, thus changing things for

the better for all of those at this wedding. No one at this wedding was hurt by this change, and all in attendance benefited from this change! In JOHN 4 Jesus came unto a city of Samaria, and at Jacob's well changed the life of the Samaritan women for the better forever. She believed on Him and became a testimony unto many of the Samaritans, who also believed. {Study JOHN 4, especially verses 39-42}. For all that believed in Samaria things for them changed, and changed for the better. Again in JOHN 4 Jesus came upon the scene of a certain nobleman whose son was sick and nigh unto death. Jesus healed that son, and made things so much better for that family at that time. In JOHN 11 Lazarus died, but when Jesus finally came upon the scene things changed, and changed for the better, for in this chapter Jesus raised Lazarus up from the dead, even though he had been dead two days. There are several other accounts in scripture where Jesus raised up people from the dead, thus making things better for all those involved. Untold numbers were healed by Jesus when He came on the scene, thus making things better for all involved. Many other situations are discussed in scripture, which when Jesus came, were changed, and changed for the better.

Yet let's also note that the Lord Himself changes not, and thank God for that kind of stability, and for being the solid Rock He is. MALACHI 3:6 *For I am the LORD, I change not;...* . HEBREWS 13:8 *Jesus Christ the same yesterday, and to day, and for ever.* JAMES 1:17 *Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and cometh down from the Father of lights, with whom is no variableness, neither shadow of turning.*

Let's again read what took place here in ACTS 18:9-11, and see the changes that the Lord was bringing into the Apostle Paul's life. ACTS 18:9 *Then spake the Lord to Paul in the night by a vision, Be not afraid, but speak, and hold not thy peace: 10 For I am with thee, and no man shall set on thee to hurt thee: for I have much people in this city. 11 And he continued there a year and six months, teaching the word of God among them.* Specifically what we need to notice here is again that when the Lord appears upon the scene, things begin to change, and change for the better. In this particular instance the Lord was slowing the Apostle Paul down, and I am sure he welcomed this change, for it allowed him to stay in one place for a longer period of time, thus being better able to preach his gospel message himself to Saints willing to be established in Paul's gospel. Such Saints were Aquilla and Priscilla, who themselves went on to further establish Saints like Apollos, who then himself went on to spread Paul's gospel message with great eloquence.

Let's also note one more thing here as we study the life of the Apostle Paul. The Lord himself appeared unto the Apostle Paul many times during his life as an Apostle, and each time the Lord appeared unto him it was for the purpose of bringing further change into his life. Recall that the first time the Lord appeared unto Paul was when he was known as Saul of Tarsus. The change that took place on that day was that the Lord Jesus Christ Himself took the chiefest of sinners, and made him a Saint, and set him on the road to become the Apostle to the Gentiles during this church age. Each and every sinner who has, like the Apostle Paul, accepted Jesus Christ as their own personal Saviour, has experienced the most marvelous transformation, the biggest and best change in their life so far, for they have passed from death unto life. JOHN 5:24 expresses it like this in Jesus own words: *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.* Back to the conversion of Paul. At the very moment Paul believed he knew this was a major life changing event that was taking place in his life, and he said: *What shall I do, Lord? And the Lord said unto me, Arise, and go into Damascus; and there it shall be told thee of all things which are appointed for thee to do.* {ACTS 22:10}. Within three days the Lord again appeared on behalf of Paul, this time however the Lord appeared unto Ananias of Damascus, and told him how Paul was a chosen vessel to bear the name of Jesus before many Gentiles, and how that Ananias was to go lay hands on Paul. Ananias followed these instructions of the Lord, and another life changing event took place in the life of Paul, for he was filled with the Holy Ghost, and scales fell off of his eyes, and his sight was restored, and his spiritual eyes were greatly enlightened! GALATIANS 1:11 & 12 further tells how the Lord appeared unto Paul at still later times, and revealed what we now know as Paul's gospel unto him. This, of course, was another great life changing event in the life of the Apostle Paul. Here at Corinth the Lord has once again appeared unto Paul, and given

him the instructions, and confidence to stay in one place for a longer period of time than he was used too, and preach the gospel, stating: *...Be not afraid, but speak, and hold not thy peace: For I am with thee, and no man shall set on thee to hurt thee: for I have much people in this city.* {ACTS 18:9 & 10}. Later in ACTS 23:11, during probably one of the darkest midnight hours of Paul's Christian life, the Lord will again appear unto Paul and give him another life changing announcement, telling him that he would be a witness for the Lord also at Rome. This change didn't come about immediately, never the less Paul did go on to preach at Rome, howbeit not as he would have imagined it, but rather as a prisoner of the Lord. From that moment on Paul was a prisoner most of the rest of his life, and being a prisoner was another life changing event, but one he was able to endure with his hope and confidence being in the Lord, who had told him where he would end up, and that being Rome. It was while a prisoner that the Apostle Paul got to preach unto kings, just like the Lord had told Ananias of Damascus back in ACTS 9:15! Once again in ACTS 27 while on this life changing journey to Rome, during a fierce storm on a sinking ship with 276 souls aboard, all facing certain death by ship wreck, the angel of Lord again appeared unto Paul in the night, and a most dark and stormy midnight it was, and the Lord made another life changing statement unto him: ACTS 27:24 *...Fear not, Paul; thou must be brought before Caesar: and, lo, God hath given thee all them that sail with thee.* All 276 souls aboard Paul's ship were saved from drowning that night, and in time Paul was brought before Caesar. The last time Paul records the Lord appearing unto him was late in his life while before the court at Rome, and Paul writes in 2 TIMOTHY 4:16 *At my first answer no man stood with me, but all men forsook me: I pray God that it may not be laid to their charge. 17 Notwithstanding the Lord stood with me, and strengthened me; that by me the preaching might be fully known, and that all the Gentiles might hear: and I was delivered out of the mouth of the lion.* What was the life changing event here? Paul was strengthened, and delivered out of the mouth of the lion, and allowed to finish his last epistles, that his preaching might be fully known, and that all the Gentiles throughout this church age might hear the glorious gospel of the Apostle Paul! When this was accomplished Paul knew and wrote the following in 2 TIMOTHY 4:6-8: *I am now ready to be offered, and the time of my departure is at hand. I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith: Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give me at that day: and not to me only, but unto all them also that love his appearing.* Paul could have not written this statement while at Corinth, for the Lord had not brought all of the changes necessary in Paul's life at that point in time of his life.

We have been talking about change in this part of our lesson, and yes the Apostle Paul was very familiar with change, and as a Christian who wanted God's best, he allowed the Lord to bring many changes into his own life. Again note that it was the Lord who brought these changes into Paul's life. Ultimately the Apostle Paul became an example to all of us what a New Testament full overcomer is; someone who will allow the Lord to make the necessary changes in our own life. So the Apostle Paul wrote in EPHESIANS 2:10 words that should encourage each of us to allow the Lord to work His changes in our own lives: *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 wrote unto these very same Corinthians to whom he was sent to preach to here in ACTS 18 about the mystery of final change that will take place at the last trump. 1 CORINTHIANS 15:51 *Behold, I shew you a mystery; We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed, 52 In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump: for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed.* Paul also wrote in ROMANS 8:18 this about this most wonderful change: *For I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us.* And then again to these very same Corinthians Paul later wrote in 2 CORINTHIANS 3:18 *But we all, with open face beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord.*

One final thought concerning change before we move on. In our discussion above note that it is the Lord Jesus Christ who initiates these changes in the life of a willing potential full overcomer. We are His workmanship EPHESIANS 2:10 tells us. He is the Author and Finisher of our faith HEBREWS 12:2 tells us. We need to be the willing

vessel in the hands of the Master potter who can take this marred mess of vile clay that we are, and fashion us into like fashion as His own glorious body! PHILIPPIANS 3:21 *Who shall change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto his glorious body, according to the working whereby he is able even to subdue all things unto himself.* The full overcomer is willing to let the Lord bring these changes into their own life, just like all the full overcomers that have gone on before.

ACTS 18:12 *And when Gallio was the deputy of Achaia, the Jews made insurrection with one accord against Paul, and brought him to the judgment seat, 13 Saying, This fellow persuadeth men to worship God contrary to the law. 14 And when Paul was now about to open his mouth, Gallio said unto the Jews, If it were a matter of wrong or wicked lewdness, C ye Jews, reason would that I should bear with you: 15 But if it be a question of words and names, and of your law, look ye to it; for I will be no judge of such matters. 16 And he drave them from the judgment seat. 17 Then all the Greeks took Sosthenes, the chief ruler of the synagogue, and beat him before the judgment seat. And Gallio cared for none of those things.*

We may wonder why the above portion of scripture was inspired by the Holy Ghost to be left here in the Bible. Recall from studying LUKE 1:1-4 and ACTS 1:1 & 2 that Luke was writing this account of Paul's life to "O Theophilus," who according to tradition, was a prominent man in the church at Antioch, Syria, which just also happened to be the church that sponsored Paul's missionary journeys. The accounts we have in scripture of the events that took place in the church at Antioch, Syria tell us that this was a prominently Gentile church. {Study again ACTS 15 and GALATIANS 2, along with ACTS 11:19-30, and 13:1-4}. Such Gentiles would be very familiar with contemporary events, such as who the different Gentile rulers were in various places, and when they ruled. Thus Luke inserts some facts in his writings concerning the Gentile rulership of Corinth, and a little bit about some of these rulers. In ACTS 18:2, for example, Luke had wrote concerning the fact that Aquila and Priscilla were recent exiles from Rome, Italy *...because that Claudius had commanded all Jews to depart from Rome...* Now here in ACTS 18:12-17 Luke inserts some facts concerning the Gentile rulership of Corinth during the time Paul was spending his eighteen months there. "O Theophilus" had people in his church at Antioch, Syria who would have known who these Roman Gentile rulers were, thus these very same facts were of great interest to them, especially in light of the fact that the Apostle Paul himself had come in contact with some of these very same rulers. The fact also remains that Ananias of Damascus had also told the Apostle Paul about the vision the Lord had given him, how that Paul was to bear the name of Jesus before the Gentiles, and kings, in other words, some of the rulers of this world. {Study ACTS 9:12-16}. Recall also that the main emphasis of the book of ACTS is about how the Holy Ghost was able to continue to do the wonderful works of Jesus through the lives of men who were full of the Holy Ghost. Peter and John were prominent in the early chapters of ACTS. Stephen and Philip were prominent in ACTS chapters six through eight. Barnabas was mentioned in ACTS 4, and found to be a big part of the early ministry of Paul in ACTS chapters 9, 11, and 13-15. Peter was prominent from chapters 10-12, and the ministry of the Apostle Paul is prominent from ACTS 13 through the end of ACTS.

Now tie all of these facts together with what we just read and studied here in ACTS 18. Paul has come to Corinth, and found lodging and work with Aquila and Priscilla, Jews lately displaced from Rome. Also Paul has done here at Corinth the same thing he did in every city he came to, which was to go first unto the synagogue of the Jews, and with the leading and guidance of the Holy Ghost preach the gospel he was given to preach, which we know as Paul's gospel. Here at Corinth, just like every place else Paul visited, there was opposition to his preaching. This continual opposition became the norm in Paul's life, yet he continued to follow Jesus, by yielding his life to the Lord, and the leading of the Holy Ghost. But being a man, just like you and me, he too got weary, and sometimes discouraged. Thus the Lord encouraged Paul in the night by a vision, and said these words unto him that we studied in verses 9 & 10 of ACTS 18: *Be not afraid, but speak, and hold not thy peace: For I am with thee, and no man shall set on thee to hurt thee: for I have much people in this city.* It should be no surprise to us then what happens next. Paul is brought before the proconsul of Achaia, Gallio the provincial governor, whose

seat of authority was also known as the judgment seat. And note in ACTS 18:12 it is the Jews, the unbelieving Jews, that made insurrection against Paul with one accord, and brought him before Gallio. Of course their motive was to harm Paul, and stop his preaching, however the Lord had just told Paul in verse 10 that *...no man shall set on thee to hurt thee...* . It would take great faith in the Lord at this point in time to believe that *...no man shall set on thee to hurt thee...* when with one accord a mob of Jews has just brought you before the judgment seat, and yet we find that Paul truly believed the Lord here. Paul's instructions from the Lord were to *...Be not afraid, but speak, and hold not thy peace...* and ACTS 18:14 tells us that this is just what the Apostle Paul intended to do. Yes, the great faith of the Apostle Paul was on display here before the judgment seat of Gallio, and yet Gallio didn't see it, but some, if not all, of the persecuting Jews did see it. What they saw was a man full of the Holy Ghost, who was not afraid, who was not going to hold his peace, who was about to speak when the governor Gallio interrupted, and said unto the Jews: *...If it were a matter of wrong or wicked lewdness, Cye Jews, reason would that I should bear with you: 15 But if it be a question of words and names, and of your law, look ye to it; for I will be no judge of such matters. 16 And he drave them from the judgment seat.* {ACTS 18:14-16}. For Paul in a matter of a couple of minutes this whole stressful situation had been diffused. Observing this whole conflict were the Greeks of Corinth, themselves no doubt also unbelievers, who seized this as an opportunity to show their displeasure with the Jews, many of whom had recently been exiled from Rome also, like Aquila and Priscilla, and showed their allegiance to the Roman Empire by commencing to beat Sosthenes, the chief ruler of the Jewish synagogue, because Sosthenes was perceived to be the leader of this uprising against Paul. ACTS 18:17 again tells us: *Then all the Greeks took Sosthenes, the chief ruler of the synagogue, and beat him before the judgment seat. And Gallio cared for none of those things.*

The end result for our Brother Paul here was just like the Lord had promised him in verse 10: *...I am with thee, and no man shall set on thee to hurt thee.* The fact that no harm had come upon the Apostle Paul here at Corinth was just as great a miracle as the children of Israel crossing the Red sea on dry ground, or any other great miracle you could think of! Let's consider some facts here that are left for us in scripture to further emphasize this miracle. First of all Paul was allowed to teach the word of God here at Corinth a year and six months according to ACTS 18:11. We just read in verse 12 how Paul was also brought before the judgment seat there at Corinth, and brought there by the Jews. Yet we don't again read of the Jews persecuting Paul at Corinth. This was part of the miracle, for as we have found out during this study, the Jews were responsible for Paul having been run out of many towns, and cities on his missionary journeys. Yet no further record is recorded of Paul being persecuted here at Corinth. Secondly when Paul later writes a letter to the Saints of Corinth he mentions Cephas, (Peter) four times. {See 1 CORINTHIANS 1:12; 3:22; 9:5; and 15:5}. Paul mentions Peter because by the time Paul had written this epistle of 1 CORINTHIANS, Peter, no doubt, had visited Corinth. Yet GALATIANS 2:9 along with ACTS 15 indicates that one of the end results of the conference that was held in Jerusalem at the time of ACTS 15 was that Peter was to preach mainly to the Jews, and Paul and Barnabas were to preach primarily unto the Gentiles. Obviously at this later time the Jews of Corinth allowed Peter to preach to them too. This is a part of the result of the miracle of Paul being allowed to preach an extended time at Corinth without fear of further persecution. Also later that great orator Apollos, a Jew from Alexandria, mighty in scriptures, also was allowed to preach unto the Corinthians. {See 1 CORINTHIANS 1:12; 3:4-6; 3:9; 3:22; 4:6; and 16:12}. Further Apollos was allowed to preach Paul's gospel unto these very same Corinthians, and to do so without being persecuted by the Jews of Corinth. All of these events were a part of that great miracle that took place in Corinth that day when Paul was brought before Gallio, and no harm was allowed to come upon him.

This brings us to Sosthenes, who is first noted in ACTS 18:17. In ACTS 18:17 Sosthenes is noted to be the chief ruler of the synagogue there at Corinth. Possibly Sosthenes was the successor of Crispus, who became a believer in ACTS 18:8. Mention again is made of Sosthenes to these very same Corinthians in 1 CORINTHIANS 1:1, whom Paul there calls "our brother," meaning our brother in Christ. Many commentators do not connect this Sosthenes of 1 CORINTHIANS 1:1 with Sosthenes of ACTS 18:17 thinking that he couldn't possibly be the same man. We have no way of really knowing whether

these two mentions of Sosthenes reference the same man, or not. However considering that the Apostle Paul never got run out of Corinth, and that later mention is made of other Jews being allowed to preach there at Corinth, and that Sosthenes is mentioned as being familiar to these very same Corinthian's, and noted as a "brother" in 1 CORINTHIANS 1:1, it is not hard to believe, nor impossible with God, that this very same Sosthenes who led the persecution against Paul at Corinth, later got saved because of the gospel of Paul, who at Corinth was not afraid to speak, nor held his peace, but with the love of God shed abroad in his heart continued to preach, and lead people to the Lord at Corinth. Recall that the chiefest of sinners, and that great persecutor Saul of Tarsus, himself got saved on day on the road to Damascus, and such a miracle was also possible with Sosthenes, the chief ruler of the synagogue of Corinth, who one day was found party to the group of Jews that made insurrection against Paul!

The Conclusion of Paul's Second Missionary Journey

ACTS 18:18-22 conveys a lot of information in a very few verses, and essentially describes the conclusion of Paul's second missionary journey. The time frame covered in these few verses is about six months.

ACTS 18:18 *And Paul after this tarried there yet a good while, and then took his leave of the brethren, and sailed thence into Syria, and with him Priscilla and Aquila; having shorn his head in Cenchrea: for he had a vow. 19 And he came to Ephesus, and left them there: but he himself entered into the synagogue, and reasoned with the Jews. 20 When they desired him to tarry longer time with them, he consented not; 21 But bade them farewell, saying, I must by all means keep this feast that cometh in Jerusalem: but I will return again unto you, if God will. And he sailed from Ephesus. 22 And when he had landed at Caesarea, and gone up, and saluted the church, he went down to Antioch.*

The main subject of the above verses is, of course, the Apostle Paul. In verse 18 we find that Paul, after staying at Corinth a year and a half, setting sail for Syria, meaning he was returning to Antioch, Syria, and the church there which had sponsored his missionary journeys. We know the Apostle Paul followed the leading of the Holy Ghost in his life, thus we know it was time for him to leave Corinth. Perhaps Aquila and Priscilla had decided now to move to Ephesus, and Paul purposed to be in Jerusalem if at all possible for the feast "*...that cometh in Jerusalem...*" (verse 21), which probably was the annual Jewish feast of Pentecost spoken of in LEVITICUS 23:15-22.

Luke included a little extra information at the end of verse 18, (*...having shorn his head in Cenchrea: for he had a vow...*), which has led to a lot of different speculation on what he meant to say. Some commentators think that it was Aquila who had taken a vow, and others think it was the Apostle Paul. Unfortunately Luke does not clear up this controversy, and assumes the reader (O Theophilus) will understand the meaning here. When we get to ACTS 21:23-26 we will find another time when Paul becomes associated with a Jewish vow. However we must remember that Paul's preaching never taught about keeping a vow, or keeping the law. Rather in ROMANS 10:4 he stated: *For Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth.* Later to these very same Corinthians, whom he is now leaving, Paul writes: 1 CORINTHIANS 9:19 *For though I be free from all men, yet have I made myself servant unto all, that I might gain the more. 20 And unto the Jews I became as a Jew, that I might gain the Jews; to them that are under the law, as under the law, that I might gain them that are under the law; 21 To them that are without law, as without law, (being not without law to God, but under the law to Christ,) that I might gain them that are without law. 22 To the weak became I as weak, that I might gain the weak: I am made all things to all men, that I might by all means save some. 23 And this I do for the gospel's sake, that I might be partaker thereof with you.*

Having said all of this, let's now consider the following. In ACTS 18:13 we find Paul while at Corinth being brought before the Roman Governor of Achaia, Gallio, accused of the Jews who said: *... This fellow persuadeth men to worship God contrary to the law.* Sosthenes, the chief ruler of the synagogue, appears to be the leader of those who brought Paul before Gallio. Yet we later read in 1 CORINTHIANS 1:1 Paul addressing