

The Ephesian Elders come to Miletus

Now back to ACTS 20:17 *And from Miletus he sent to Ephesus, and called the elders of the church.* We mentioned above that the distance from Miletus to Ephesus is about thirty six miles. Note here that Paul didn't go to Ephesus again, but rather sent for the elders of the church at Ephesus to come and meet him at Miletus. It would most likely be at least the next night before the Ephesian elders could arrive, and possibly it was even a day or two later that they came. That is why we noted two to four days were spent at Miletus, yet the Apostle Paul trusted that the Lord would allow him the time needed at Miletus to get to see these precious Ephesian Saints once again. We can also assume that the Ephesian elders had some mode of transportation that they used other than foot.

The rest of the 20th chapter of ACTS concerns Paul's meeting with the Ephesian elders. We are not told who these people were, by name, nor are we told how many they were. It would seem probable to me that Aquila, and Priscilla were among this group of elders, however the scripture doesn't say one way or the other. Even though we weren't given the names of the Ephesian elders, the Apostle Paul did give some instructions concerning bishops, deacons, elders and overseers of the various churches in his later epistles, which we will review shortly. The reason we are not left with the names of these Ephesian elders in scripture is to not distract our attention to observing someone, or even a small group of people, but rather our attention should be focused upon God, and the word of His grace, which, as the Apostle Paul notes in ACTS 20:32 *...is able to build you up, and to give you an inheritance among all them which are sanctified.* This is exactly the same instructions that were given these Ephesian elders.

An "elder" as we need to think of it in our context here is defined by Vine's Dictionary as being "those who, being raised up and qualified by the work of the Holy Spirit, were appointed to have the spiritual care of, and to exercise oversight over, the churches." The duty of the elders is described by the Greek verb *episkopeo* {ep-ee-skop-eh'-o}, number 1983 in the Strong's Greek Concordance, which means in our context here: to diligently look upon, inspect, beware, to oversee, to look after, to care for, and look carefully after the care of the church. As Peter stated it in 1 PETER 5:1-3, which reads: *The elders which are among you I exhort, who am also an elder, and a witness of the sufferings of Christ, and also a partaker of the glory that shall be revealed: 2 Feed the flock of God which is among you, taking the oversight thereof, not by constraint, but willingly; not for filthy lucre, but of a ready mind; 3 Neither as being lords over God's heritage, but being ensamples to the flock.* Of course you may recall from JOHN 21:15-17 how Jesus questioned Peter, and encouraged him to also "feed the flock of God" when He so strongly admonished Peter to "Feed my lambs," and to "Feed my sheep." Peter obviously learned the lesson Jesus was teaching him, and taught these same things to the elders he was instructing.

To review the process Paul used to choose bishops, deacons, elders and overseers of the various churches he established, let's go back and review what Paul did at the conclusion of his first missionary journey. This takes us back to ACTS 14:22 & 23 where we find Paul and Barnabas going back through the various cities they had already preached: *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. 23 And when they had ordained them elders in every church, and had prayed with fasting, they commended them to the Lord, on whom they believed.*

The Greek word translated "confirming" here in ACTS 14:22 is number 1991 in the Strong's Concordance is a verb meaning: to establish besides; to make to lean upon; to strengthen as in to strengthen upon by use of a prop or support, the result being to strengthen more; to render more firm; to confirm. The thought of "confirming" here then is to give additional spiritual strength to the saints, the disciples of these cities, and this additional spiritual strength came by Paul and Barnabas in the form of additional instruction in the truth and faith of the gospel. Keep in mind that when Paul and Barnabas first left these cities under persecution, those new born saints in order to grow needed proper instruction in the gospel. The Holy Ghost was imperative in their lives and in their assemblies, for He is the agency of the trinity left to them (and to us) for the purpose of teaching them (us) all things pertaining to a spiritual nature; to guide them

(us) into all the truth, and to shew the truth to them (us). {See JOHN 14:26 and 16:13-15}. Paul and Barnabas were inspired tools of God with the power of the Holy Ghost resting upon their lives to encourage and instruct these young saints in the proper direction that their lives must take in order to continue in the new found faith that they had.

In ACTS 14:22 "exhorting" means to urge one to pursue some course of conduct with the prospect of always looking to the future. Paul always encouraged Saints to have a forward and upward look, ever to be looking for the return of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. Thus Paul encouraged these Saints ...*exhorting them to continue in the faith*,... which means: to remain in; to hold fast, to be true to, abide by, to keep the faith.

These qualities then were the backbone of what was to be expected in a bishop, deacon, elder, or any of the overseers Paul ordained in any of the churches he established. ACTS 14:23 explains what Paul did next: *And when they had ordained them elders in every church, and had prayed with fasting, they commended them to the Lord, on whom they believed.* Note first of all that Paul ordained elders in every church. "Ordained" here means to "appoint, select, or choose." Paul appointed or chose elders in every church, but how did he do this? In the Old Testament an elder was one of the old people from a family having years of experience under his belt. In ACTS 14:23 an "elder" was chosen after prayer and fasting to watch over a particular assembly. Obviously Paul would of had to spend more than a little time at each of these assemblies in order to know who was established enough in the faith to be qualified as an "elder." Just because someone wants to be a helper in an assembly doesn't necessarily qualify them to be an "elder," though an "elder" would be one who helped in an assembly. Those qualified as an "elder" would have been the ones who showed the most devotion to the Lord; the ones who had taken in the most, and thus would have had learned the most, and yielded the most unto the teaching of the Holy Ghost as inspired in the teachings of the Apostles Paul. These appointed persons were then to watch over and instruct the rest of these small assemblies, having themselves the most experience in the faith when compared to the others of their particular assembly. In short those found qualified to be an "elder" would have been found to show the greatest devotion to the Lord. In ACTS 17:11 we read of the Berean saints who are famous in scripture for being more noble than those saints in Thessalonica, in that they received the word of God with all readiness of mind, and searched the scriptures daily to see for themselves whether or not those things taught by Paul were true or not. It was this kind of zeal that Paul and Barnabas would look for in an "elder." The thing about the Berean saints was that the Apostle Paul was only there a short period of time, maybe as little as six weeks, yet the Bereans were fervently seeking God's best.

Back here in ACTS 14:23 we again read: *And when they had ordained them elders in every church, and had prayed with fasting, they commended them to the Lord, on whom they believed.* This thought of "commending" is committing or entrusting the keeping into the omniscient hands of God.

Paul was with the church at Ephesus longer than he was at any assembly, with the possible exception of the church at Antioch, Syria. He had more than two years there to expound his doctrine, and to establish the Saints. Additionally Aquila and Priscilla had founded a church in their home at Ephesus, and had been expounding Paul's gospel there even before Paul got to spend the time he spent there. So to come up with some seasoned "elders" in the Ephesian assembly would have been a lot easier than at the places Paul was allowed to have spent as much time.

We have other scripture left for us written by Paul with instructions for the appointment of "elders." In TITUS 1:5-9 we find one such place. TITUS 1:5 *For this cause left I thee in Crete, that thou shouldest set in order the things that are wanting, and ordain elders in every city, as I had appointed thee:* {Note that Titus had been "appointed" or "ordained" by Paul as an "elder" himself} 6 *If any be blameless, the husband of one wife, having faithful children not accused of riot or unruly.* 7 *For a bishop* {the superintendent, elder, or overseer of a Christian church, charged with the duty of seeing that things to be done by others are done rightly} *must be blameless, as the steward* {a steward being a manager of the monetary affairs of an assembly} *of God; not selfwilled, not soon angry, not given to wine, no striker, {bruiser, ready for a blow, contentious, quarrelsome person} not given to filthy lucre; {greedy for money}* 8 *But a lover of hospitality, {one who would receive into his house strangers, especially of the*

Saints, and fellow ministers} a lover of good men, sober, just, {towards men} holy, {towards God} temperate; {one in control of his passions, tongue, hands and eyes} 9 *Holding fast the faithful word as he hath been taught, that he may be able by sound doctrine both to exhort and to convince the gainsayers.* {Gainsayers are those who speak against or contradict another}.

These very same qualifying principles for bishops, deacons, elders, and overseers are again mentioned by Paul in his first letter to Timothy. 1 TIMOTHY 3:1 *This is a true saying, If a man desire the office of a bishop, he desireth a good work.* 2 *A bishop then must be blameless, the husband of one wife, vigilant, sober, of good behaviour, given to hospitality, apt to teach;* 3 *Not given to wine, no striker, not greedy of filthy lucre; but patient, not a brawler, not covetous;* 4 *One that ruleth well his own house, having his children in subjection with all gravity;* 5 *(For if a man know not how to rule his own house, how shall he take care of the church of God?)* 6 *Not a novice, lest being lifted up with pride he fall into the condemnation of the devil.* 7 *Moreover he must have a good report of them which are without; lest he fall into reproach and the snare of the devil.* 8 *Likewise must the deacons be grave, not doubletongued, {saying one thing with one person and another thing with another person (with the intent to deceive)} not given to much wine, not greedy of filthy lucre;* 9 *Holding the mystery of the faith in a pure conscience.* 10 *And let these also first be proved; {that is given the opportunity to make their character known, along with their knowledge, and devotion for the truth} then let them use the office of a deacon, being found blameless.* 11 *Even so must their wives be grave, not slanderers, sober, faithful in all things.* 12 *Let the deacons be the husbands of one wife, ruling their children and their own houses well.* 13 *For they that have used the office of a deacon well purchase to themselves a good degree, and great boldness in the faith which is in Christ Jesus.*

Note in 1 TIMOTHY 3:6 the mention of a "novice," which is to say one who has recently become a Christian. Yet in ACTS 14:23 it appears that the "elders" being appointed or ordained are just that, ones who have recently become a Christian. On the surface it also appears that when Paul chose Timothy to go with him in ACTS 16:1-3, that Timothy himself was a novice, yet not long after this Timothy is called an Apostle. A close examination of ACTS 16:2 tells us that Timothy *...was well reported of by the brethren that were at Lystra and Iconium.* Obviously this statement summarizes the qualities of an "elder" mentioned above, that is they must be well reported of by the brethren or disciples, and not just to the fact that they are indeed a good man, with all of the qualities mentioned above intact, but that they also have a deep devotion to the things of God, and the word of God, which is key to their qualifications as an elder, and that they have yielded to the power of the Holy Ghost in their own lives, thus showing *...great boldness in the faith which is in Christ Jesus.*

What then is the difference in qualification between an elder and a novice? The novice doesn't really know anything, and this can be true of someone who has been saved fifty years! Note in the above passages of scripture from TITUS 1, and 1 TIMOTHY 3 that the "elder" or "bishop" must be apt to teach, holding fast the faithful word as he hath been taught, holding the mystery of the faith in a pure conscience, and having great boldness in the faith which is in Christ Jesus. In other words these "elder" candidates were not really novices, but had already stepped out in faith taking a hold of the deeper things of God. Their appointment as "elders" came after being raised up and properly qualified by the Holy Spirit. Note also that there was to be more than one "elder" in every church mentioned in the above passages.

Later here in ACTS 20 we will again read of these Ephesian "elders," also called "overseers," and the instructions that the Apostle Paul left them, which helps us further understand the office of an "elder." ACTS 20:28 *Take heed therefore unto yourselves, and to all the flock, over the which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers, to feed the church of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood.* 29 *For I know this, that after my departing shall grievous wolves enter in among you, not sparing the flock.* 30 *Also of your own selves shall men arise, speaking perverse things, to draw away disciples after them.* 31 *Therefore watch, and remember, that by the space of three years I ceased not to warn every one night and day with tears.* 32 *And now, brethren, I commend you to God, and to the word of his grace, which is able to build you up, and to give you an inheritance among all them which are sanctified. ...35 I have shewed you*

all things, how that so labouring ye ought to support the weak, and to remember the words of the Lord Jesus, how he said, It is more blessed to give than to receive.

Two important points emerge from this portion of scripture concerning the qualification and duties of the "elders." First and foremost they are to take the oversight, and see to it that it is the word of God which is preached in their assembly. They themselves are *...to feed the church of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood.* What is it that they are to feed to the church of God, other than the word of God itself? Paul put into God's hands these "overseers," these "elders," and emphasized it was *...the word of his grace...* which he was commending them unto. It was also the word of God to whom Paul was commending the elders to in ACTS 14:23, where we again read that he *...commended them to the Lord, on whom they believed.* Sometime on your own go through the scripture and note how many times the Apostle Paul uses phrases like "the word of his grace," "the word of God," "the word of the Lord," "the word of Christ," "the word of truth," "the word of life," and many other such like statements to emphasize over and over again the importance of knowing "the word of God," that is scripture rightly divided. All full overcomers will have made this their born again life long pursuit, that is knowing "the word of God." On every page of the word of God you will find Jesus, Himself called "The Word of God" in REVELATION 19:13, *...which is able to build you up, and to give you an inheritance among all them which are sanctified.* {ACTS 20:32}

The second qualification of an "elder" that comes from Paul's speech to the Ephesian elders in ACTS 20 come from something he said in verse 35. ACTS 20:35 *I have shewed you all things, how that so labouring ye ought to support the weak, and to remember the words of the Lord Jesus, how he said, It is more blessed to give than to receive.* Note especially these words: *...that so labouring ye ought to support the weak, and to remember the words of the Lord Jesus,...* This in a nutshell is what it means to be an "elder."

ACTS 20:17 *And from Miletus he sent to Ephesus, and called the elders of the church.* 18 *And when they were come to him,...* This text also shows another quality of an elder. These Ephesian elders, who were busy with lives of their own, thought enough of Paul, and loved him enough, to drop everything they were doing, and instantly travel the thirty-six miles distance unto Miletus, hoping to arrive in time to see, and hear their beloved Apostle Paul before his ship departed. They didn't say, "oh, I'm too busy," or "I'd go, but this or that thing is more important to me." No, they realized that their window of opportunity was now. Obviously they loved Paul, and they loved Paul's gospel. They were followers of Paul as he followed Christ. Recall that Paul had already written some of the things that he preached, and in 1 CORINTHIANS 4:16 we read: *Wherefore I beseech you, be ye followers of me.* Again in 1 CORINTHIANS 11:1 *Be ye followers of me, even as I also am of Christ.* These Ephesian elders were such followers. And they followed Paul's instructions, and came with haste to see him here at Miletus. Note this quality, they followed Paul's instructions, and they followed Paul's gospel!

In studying the life of the Apostle Paul we now come to an important portion of scripture, for we get to see, and hear in scripture Paul's own thoughts at this particular time in his life. Verse 18-35 records Paul's own words spoken to the Ephesian elders. Luke may of had his pen in hand as Paul made this most important address. This was not a sermon, per se, but Paul's doctrine was expounded here unto these very devout listeners. Conybeare and Howson appropriately note that the Apostle Paul probably met up with these Ephesian elders "in some solitary spot upon the shore -- to listen to his address." They also note that the exact spot of Paul's address unto the Ephesian elders is not what is important, because *"...the words spoken by a careworn traveler to a few despised strangers are still living as they were that day, to teach lessons for all time, and to make know eternal truths to all who will hear them, -- while they reveal to us, as though they were merely human words, all the tenderness and the affection of Paul, the individual speaker."* {End of quote from Conybeare and Howson's book on The Life and Epistle of St. Paul.}

Albert Barnes' Notes on the Bible make the following commentary concerning Paul's speech that he is about to make to these Ephesian elders. "The discourse which follows is one of the most tender, affectionate, and eloquent which is anywhere to be found. It is strikingly descriptive of the apostle's manner of life while with them;

evinces his deep concern for their welfare; is full of tender and kind admonition; expresses the firm purpose of his soul to live to the glory of God, and his expectation to be persecuted still; and is a most affectionate and solemn farewell. No man can read it without being convinced that it came from a heart full of love and kindness; and that it evinces a great and noble purpose to be entirely employed in one great aim and object -- the promotion of the glory of God, in the face of danger and death." {End of quote from Barnes}.

Realize too as we read verses 18-35 of this 20th chapter of ACTS that in this portion of scripture we are given a beautiful glimpse into Paul's own heart attitude, and get to see a little of what it takes to be a race course runner, and a potential full overcomer. Sure he had a little time to prepare a speech for these Ephesian elders, but for the most part this was an impromptu speech, where his deepest and most inner thoughts and feelings were expressed. Paul will give other spur of the moment speeches, which we will see as we continue to study his life, but none will be given to such a dedicated group of believers as are gathered here at Miletus.

And as we read this portion of scripture, realize what a meek man the Apostle Paul was; note his tender compassion, and lack of braggadocio. In this portion of scripture Paul references himself twenty-six times, the number for THE GOSPEL, or GOOD NEWS, which Paul preached night and day unto these Ephesians. He speaks of the Ephesian elders twenty times, twenty being the number of REDEMPTION, which he preached unto them for three years. And he references members of the Holy Trinity sixteen times, sixteen being the number of LOVE. Once again this shows us that God is love. {See 1 JOHN 4:8 and 16.} What a speech this is.

ACTS 20:18 And when they were come to him, he said unto them, Ye know, from the first day that I came into Asia, after what manner I have been with you at all seasons, 19 Serving the Lord with all humility of mind, and with many tears, and temptations, which befell me by the lying in wait of the Jews: 20 And how I kept back nothing that was profitable unto you, but have shewed you, and have taught you publickly, and from house to house, 21 Testifying both to the Jews, and also to the Greeks, repentance toward God, and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ. 22 And now, behold, I go bound in the spirit unto Jerusalem, not knowing the things that shall befall me there: 23 Save that the Holy Ghost witnesseth in every city, saying that bonds and afflictions abide me. 24 But none of these things move me, neither count I my life dear unto myself, so that I might finish my course with joy, and the ministry, which I have received of the Lord Jesus, to testify the gospel of the grace of God. 25 And now, behold, I know that ye all, among whom I have gone preaching the kingdom of God, shall see my face no more. 26 Wherefore I take you to record this day, that I am pure from the blood of all men. 27 For I have not shunned to declare unto you all the counsel of God. 28 Take heed therefore unto yourselves, and to all the flock, over the which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers, to feed the church of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood. 29 For I know this, that after my departing shall grievous wolves enter in among you, not sparing the flock. 30 Also of your own selves shall men arise, speaking perverse things, to draw away disciples after them. 31 Therefore watch, and remember, that by the space of three years I ceased not to warn every one night and day with tears. 32 And now, brethren, I commend you to God, and to the word of his grace, which is able to build you up, and to give you an inheritance among all them which are sanctified. 33 I have coveted no man's silver, or gold, or apparel. 34 Yea, ye yourselves know, that these hands have ministered unto my necessities, and to them that were with me. 35 I have shewed you all things, how that so labouring ye ought to support the weak, and to remember the words of the Lord Jesus, how he said, It is more blessed to give than to receive.

A tremendous amount of information, and worthwhile instruction for the believer is given in these few verses. Brother Copley breaks down Paul's interview with the Ephesian elders into seven divisions, which are as follows:

- (1) Paul's past career in Ephesus -- verses 18-21, 27, and 33-35.
- (2) Paul's objective -- verses 22 & 23.
- (3) Paul's fortitude under trial -- verse 24.
- (4) Paul's forecasts -- verses 25, 29, and 30.

(5) Paul's exhortation to the elders -- verses 28 & 31.

(6) Paul's committal of the elders -- verse 32.

(7) Paul's parting moments -- verses 36-38.

Let's follow this seven divisional outline as we further study this speech, which doesn't necessarily take us down a verse by verse path.

(1) Paul's past career in Ephesus. Paul starts off in verse 18 and reminds these Ephesian elders that ...from the first day that I came into Asia, after what manner I have been with you throughout all the time. {Verse 18 from Conybeare's translation}.

The first day that Paul came into Asia is recorded in ACTS 18:19-21, which again reads: *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,....* We see here in verse 20 that there were those Jews of Ephesus who yearned to hear more of Paul's gospel at that time. Perhaps some of these very same ones later became the elders Paul was now addressing. In ACTS 19:1-7 we find Paul once again arriving at Ephesus, and finding certain disciples, to whom he expounded his gospel, including facts about being filled with the Holy Ghost. Perhaps some of these disciples were the Ephesian elders Paul was now addressing. Whoever they were, Paul reminds them that they knew from the very first day he arrived at Ephesus they knew in what manner, and in what means, and why he was there for. In other words, there wasn't any secret hidden agenda that the Apostle Paul was trying to accomplish; his life was an open book, his testimony was solid, and they all knew this to be a true fact. Thus he established unto them in this introduction that the rest of his speech would also be a true fact.

1 CORINTHIANS 2 Paul wrote of the way it was when he came unto the Corinthians. 1 CORINTHIANS 2:1 *And I, brethren, when I came to you, came not with excellency of speech or of wisdom, declaring unto you the testimony of God. 2 For I determined not to know any thing among you, save Jesus Christ, and him crucified. 3 And I was with you in weakness, and in fear, and in much trembling. 4 And my speech and my preaching was not with enticing words of man's wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power: 5 That your faith should not stand in the wisdom of men, but in the power of God.* This, in essence, was the same thing the Apostle Paul was reminding these Ephesian elders of here in ACTS 20:18.

Conybeare's translation of ACTS 20:19 reads: Serving the Lord Jesus with all lowliness of mind, and with many tears and trials which befell me through the plotting of the Jews.

Three things of note concerning Paul's past career are mentioned in verse 19. First we find his *...humility of mind...* meaning, as the Conybeare translation reads; lowliness of mind. Even though the Apostle Paul knew he was the Apostle unto the Gentiles, and that he possessed the gospel of grace, and that his gospel was given to fill up the word of God, he did not flaunt it. In other words he didn't come to any of the towns he ever visited with a big, well promoted road show, but rather his approach was just the opposite. He came *...with all humility of mind.* Look up the Greek word (number 5012 in the Strong's Greek Concordance) that translates "humility" here and you will find it is used in seven scriptures. Seven is again the number that points us to SPIRITUAL COMPLETION or SPIRITUAL PERFECTION.

Knowing this, realize how important that "humility" is in the life of a full overcomer. Paul writes about this in several places, where we find this Greek word translated either "humility," or "lowliness," "humbleness of mind." In EPHESIANS 4:1-3 Paul writes: *I therefore, the prisoner of the Lord, beseech you that ye walk worthy of the vocation wherewith ye are called, 2 With all lowliness and meekness, with longsuffering, forbearing one another in love; 3 Endeavouring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.* PHILIPPIANS 2:3 *Let nothing be done through strife or vainglory; but in lowliness of mind let each esteem other better than themselves.* COLOSSIANS 3:12 & 13 -- *Put on therefore, as the elect of God, holy and beloved, bowels of mercies, kindness, humbleness of mind, meekness, longsuffering; 13 Forbearing one*

another, and forgiving one another, if any man have a quarrel against any: even as Christ forgave you, so also do ye.

The second thing of note concerning Paul's past career mentioned in verse 19 is the "many tears" he shed on the behalf of his ministering unto these Ephesian Saints. The "many tears" were shed as a result of his deep concern, and burden that he had for Saints everywhere. Paul again notes this very same fact in verse 31 when he states: *...remember, that by the space of three years I ceased not to warn every one night and day with tears.* In 2 CORINTHIANS 2:4 Paul writes: *For out of much affliction and anguish of heart I wrote unto you with many tears; not that ye should be grieved, but that ye might know the love which I have more abundantly unto you.* Thus we see the love the Apostle Paul had for Saints everywhere. Such shed tears come from the overcomers heart. Paul has noted in ACTS 13:22 that David was a man after God's own heart. David himself wrote in PSALMS 56:8 *Thou tellest my wanderings: put thou my tears into thy bottle: are they not in thy book?* A similar thought is expressed in REVELATION 5:8 where we find the overcomers in possession of *...golden vials full of odours, which are the prayers of saints.* Note here that these "prayers" were important to God, for He bottled them up, and saved them in "golden vials". In other words we find that God likes to collect certain things that are very important unto Him, and these collectable items to God are certain of our prayers, perhaps the ones where many tears were shed and bottles up, as David noted above in PSALMS 56:8.

The third thing of note concerning Paul's past career mentioned in verse 19 is the many "temptations," or "trials" the Lord allowed the Apostle Paul to have by the hands of the Jews there at Ephesus. Most of this goes unrecorded in detail in ACTS 19, but ACTS 19:8 records his disputing in the Jewish synagogue, and there are other references also made of how vagabond Jews tried to imitate Paul. Also in ACTS 19:23-41 there are hints that certain other Jews were against Paul, and his preaching at Ephesus. Paul plainly reminds these Ephesian elders of the facts they already knew here in ACTS 20:19 when he reminds them of the *...temptations, which befell me by the lying in wait of the Jews.* Paul, being a Jew, loved the Jews, and wrote much about his love for his fellow Jew. However the Jews collectively as a nation hated the message of the Apostle Paul, because he preached Jesus, whom they as a whole had rejected. Paul's own people the Jews gave him more trouble than any other one group people, as we have many times already noted in this study. We will see this is true through out the rest of his life time also.

Concerning "temptations," or trials, let it be known that there is no such thing as a trial free, or temptation free life. The full overcomers will be the ones who overcome these trials, or temptations, with the help of God through the Holy Spirit. Even Jesus suffered manifold trials, and was even tempted of Satan himself! The Apostle Paul wrote in 1 CORINTHIANS 10:13 *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.* Remember in ACTS 9:16 how that Ananias had told Paul, then known as Saul of Tarsus, how the Lord had explained unto Ananias that Paul would suffer many trials and temptations, and suffer great things for Jesus name's sake. Reference 2 CORINTHIANS 11:16-33 and review some of the many things that the Apostle Paul had already suffered for Jesus name sake, and realize as you read that portion of scripture that these things have already happened unto him, and he had many more tests to follow. As will all full overcomers. JAMES 1:2-4 explains this very same thing like this: *My brethren, count it all joy when ye fall into divers temptations; 3 Knowing this, that the trying of your faith worketh patience. 4 But let patience have her perfect work, that ye may be perfect and entire, wanting nothing.* (Sometime on your own study this portion of scripture out, and appreciate just what it is the Lord is trying to accomplish in your own life.)

The fourth and fifth points concerning Paul's past career at Ephesus take us to verse 20, which Conybeare translates: And how I kept back none of those things which are profitable for you, but declared them to you, and taught you both publicly and from house to house;... . The fourth point of note is that Paul *"...kept back nothing that was profitable unto you,..."* Verse 27 answers how Paul did this, stating: *For I have not shunned to declare unto you all the counsel of God.* The word of

God, the word of truth, the word of the Lord Jesus, the word of His grace, the word of promise, the word of life, the word of His power, the word of righteousness, all of this encompasses ...*all the counsel of God*. The purpose of declaring all the counsel of God unto these Ephesian Saints can be found in 2 CORINTHIANS 11:2 *For I am jealous over you with godly jealousy: for I have espoused you to one husband, that I may present you as a chaste virgin to Christ*. Do you see the importance of Paul's gospel and why we need to be studying it? No wonder Paul wrote what he did in 1 CORINTHIANS 4:16 *Wherefore I beseech you, be ye followers of me*. And again in 1 CORINTHIANS 11:1 *Be ye followers of me, even as I also am of Christ*. By declaring unto them all the counsel of God, the Apostle Paul was not withholding anything that was profitable unto them.

The fifth point concerning Paul's past career at Ephesus is Paul's show and tell, which starts in verse 20. Here we find ...*how I kept back nothing that was profitable unto you, but have shewed you, and have taught you publickly, (in the synagogue, and in the school of Tyrannus), and from house to house,...* . How many teachers, or preachers, or evangelists today take the time, or interest in individuals, to go around house to house, and teach people on an individual basis? Not many. Paul did. As he taught Paul said in verse 35 ...*I have shewed you all things,...* .

And what was it that Paul taught? Verse 21 tells us: ...*repentance toward God, and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ*. Verse 24 ...*to testify the gospel of the grace of God*. Verse 25 ...*I have gone preaching the kingdom of God...* . Verse 27 ...*For I have not shunned to declare unto you all the counsel of God*.

A few months prior to this point in time Paul wrote unto the Galatians: GALATIANS 1:8 *But though we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel unto you than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed*. 9 *As we said before, so say I now again, If any man preach any other gospel unto you than that ye have received, let him be accursed*. 10 *For do I now persuade men, or God? or do I seek to please men? for if I yet pleased men, I should not be the servant of Christ*. 11 *But I certify you, brethren, that the gospel which was preached of me is not after man*. 12 *For I neither received it of man, neither was I taught it, but by the revelation of Jesus Christ*. So we see that the Apostle Paul told what he was showed.

The sixth point concerning Paul's past career at Ephesus shows how he trusted God for money, as noted in verses 33-35. Paul quoted from HABAKKUK 2:4 when he wrote ROMANS 10:17; GALATIANS 3:11 and HEBREWS 10:38 noting ...*The just shall live by faith...* . ACTS 20:33-35 also shows Paul living example of this: *I have coveted no man's silver, or gold, or apparel*. 34 *Yea, ye yourselves know, that these hands have ministered unto my necessities, and to them that were with me*. 35 *I have shewed you all things, how that so labouring ye ought to support the weak, and to remember the words of the Lord Jesus, how he said, It is more blessed to give than to receive*.

Here are some other scriptures that illustrate how the Apostle Paul put his faith in God to provide for his daily financial needs. 1 THESSALONIANS 2:9 *For ye remember, brethren, our labour and travail: for labouring night and day, because we would not be chargeable unto any of you, we preached unto you the gospel of God*. 2 THESSALONIANS 3:7 *For yourselves know how ye ought to follow us: for we behaved not ourselves disorderly among you;* 8 *Neither did we eat any man's bread for nought; but wrought with labour and travail night and day, that we might not be chargeable to any of you:* 9 *Not because we have not power, but to make ourselves an ensample unto you to follow us*. 2 CORINTHIANS 11:9 *And when I was present with you, and wanted, I was chargeable to no man: for that which was lacking to me the brethren which came from Macedonia supplied: and in all things I have kept myself from being burdensome unto you, and so will I keep myself*.

Similar thoughts concerning giving are found in the following writings of Paul. 1 CORINTHIANS 16:1 *Now concerning the collection for the saints, as I have given order to the churches of Galatia, even so do ye*. 2 *Upon the first day of the week let every one of you lay by him in store, as God hath prospered him, that there be no gatherings when I come*. PHILIPPIANS 4:15 *Now ye Philippians know also, that in the beginning of the gospel, when I departed from Macedonia, no church communicated with me as concerning giving and receiving, but ye only*.

Probably the best summation of Paul's feelings on trusting the Lord for his everyday needs can be found in his advice written unto Timothy in 1 TIMOTHY 6:7-12: *For we brought nothing into this world, and it is certain we can carry nothing out. 8 And having food and raiment let us be therewith content. 9 But they that will be rich fall into temptation and a snare, and into many foolish and hurtful lusts, which drown men in destruction and perdition. 10 For the love of money is the root of all evil: which while some coveted after, they have erred from the faith, and pierced themselves through with many sorrows. 11 But thou, O man of God, flee these things; and follow after righteousness, godliness, faith, love, patience, meekness. 12 Fight the good fight of faith, lay hold on eternal life, whereunto thou art also called, and hast professed a good profession before many witnesses.*

(2) Paul's objective -- verses 22 & 23.

Conybeare's translation reads: 22 *And now as for me, behold I go to Jerusalem in spirit foredoomed to chains; yet I know not the things which shall befall me there, 23 Save that in every city the Holy Ghost gives the same testimony, that bonds and afflictions abide me.*

In these verses we once again see Paul's immediate travel plans, which he has already made known unto these very same Ephesians. Recall back in ACTS 19:21 while Paul was still in Ephesus we read: *After these things were ended, Paul purposed in the spirit, when he had passed through Macedonia and Achaia, to go to Jerusalem, saying, After I have been there, I must also see Rome.* He has accomplished most of this journey by verses 22 & 23 of ACTS 20, but Jerusalem and Rome are still in his future. To the Romans Paul has most recently written in ROMANS 15:25-29: *But now I go unto Jerusalem to minister unto the saints. 26 For it hath pleased them of Macedonia and Achaia to make a certain contribution for the poor saints which are at Jerusalem. 27 It hath pleased them verily; and their debtors they are. For if the Gentiles have been made partakers of their spiritual things, their duty is also to minister unto them in carnal things. 28 When therefore I have performed this, and have sealed to them this fruit, I will come by you into Spain. 29 And I am sure that, when I come unto you, I shall come in the fulness of the blessing of the gospel of Christ.* Within the previous week Luke has once again went over Paul's immediate travel plans in ACTS 20:16 stating: *For Paul had determined to sail by Ephesus, because he would not spend the time in Asia: for he hasted, if it were possible for him, to be at Jerusalem the day of Pentecost.* {Review page 628 of these notes to see how it was indeed possible for Paul to be in Jerusalem by the day of Pentecost.}

Paul also knew, and felt in his spirit, that his going to Jerusalem carried a personal risk. So he tells these Ephesian elders in verses 22 & 23: *And now, behold, I go bound in the spirit unto Jerusalem, not knowing the things that shall befall me there: Save that the Holy Ghost witnesseth in every city, saying that bonds and afflictions abide me.* Paul already knew that the path the Lord put him on of being the Apostle to the Gentiles, was a trial filled path, but one that he must travel. Ananias of Damascus had relayed unto Paul information that the Lord showed him, stating in ACTS 9:16 *For I will shew him how great things he must suffer for my name's sake.* Note it was the Lord, through His Holy Spirit, that showed Paul the great things he must suffer for Jesus name's sake, and here in ACTS 20:22 & 23 we see that Paul perceives trouble ahead, *...not knowing the things that shall befall me there... Save that the Holy Ghost witnesseth in every city, saying that bonds and afflictions abide me.* When Paul had returned to Jerusalem the first time after being saved, he wasn't there two weeks when we read in ACTS 9:29 *...but they went about to slay him.* This same pattern had followed him to nearly every city he went to, as we have so many times noted in this study. This is why Paul wrote what he did in 2 CORINTHIANS 11, which he had already penned by this point in time of his life: 23 *... in labours more abundant, in stripes above measure, in prisons more frequent, in deaths oft. 24 Of the Jews five times received I forty stripes save one. 25 Thrice was I beaten with rods, once was I stoned, thrice I suffered shipwreck, a night and a day I have been in the deep; 26 In journeyings often, in perils of waters, in perils of robbers, in perils by mine own countrymen, in perils by the heathen, in perils in the city, in perils in the wilderness, in perils in the sea, in perils among false brethren; 27 In weariness and painfulness, in watchings often, in hunger and thirst, in fastings often, in cold and nakedness.* This just tells a little of the great things the Apostle Paul

suffered for Jesus name's sake, and so matter of factly Paul states his case before the Ephesian elders: *And now as for me, behold I go to Jerusalem in spirit foredoomed to chains; yet I know not the things which shall befall me there, Save that in every city the Holy Ghost gives the same testimony, that bonds and afflictions abide me.* None of this caused Paul to waver from his objective of reaching Jerusalem by the day of Pentecost.

(3) Paul's fortitude under trial -- verse 24.

ACTS 20:24 *But none of these things move me, neither count I my life dear unto myself, so that I might finish my course with joy, and the ministry, which I have received of the Lord Jesus, to testify the gospel of the grace of God.*

This verse is probably one of the most important verses in this chapter for those of us who want to have God's best; for in this verse we find the true spirit of the full overcomer. Of course there is the majority of Christians who really have no desire to have God's best, or even know what it is. Most Christians are just satisfied to be saved, and even a lot of those don't believe that they are saved eternally. How sad this fact really is, but then a majority of Christians make up the innumerable multitude of REVELATION 7, which is another study we won't take time for here.

1 TIMOTHY 2:4 tells us that God would "*have all men to be saved, and to come unto the knowledge of the truth.*" It would be nice if the Christians of today would come unto the knowledge of the truth, but they for the most part are not taught the truth by the pastors of today, for the pastors of today themselves don't know the truth. Some pastors know some truth, but few know anything about the deeper things of God, the important things that can help Christians to become full overcomers. The pastors of today for the most part are taught how to run a church like a business, and that is profitable. They are taught that money is more important than your soul. Listen to them if you think I am telling a tale out of school. So no wonder Christians think it odd when questioned about being a full overcomer. But that is the main reason for this church age, so that Christ may take out as people for his name (ACTS 15:14).

The bride of Christ, Paul tells us, "is a great mystery" (EPHESIANS 5:32), and unfortunately it still is to most Christians and churches today! Most Christians believe that the whole church is the bride of Christ. How foolish and simple is this kind of thinking, but again most Christians don't know the truth. Their pastors themselves don't know much truth, and thus can only lead their flocks as far as they themselves have gone. The Christians who want to learn more truth barely have a chance in churches today to do so, and we all know how hard it is to find a place like Living Waters Tabernacle which preaches the whole council of God. In fact most of us who have come here faithfully for any length of time come here to learn truth; to learn the deeper things of God. Most who come here come to learn about God's best and want God's best for their own lives. God's best for us in this church age is to qualify to be in the bride of Christ. The ones that qualify are referred to by us as full overcomers.

The bride of Christ, Christ's wife, (as she is called in REVELATION 19:7) will have made herself ready. How did she get ready? By being saved only. No! Being saved is only the first qualification for being in the bride of Christ. Thus potentially all Christians from this church age can be in the bride of Christ, but all won't be because they all do not want to get ready. The second qualification for being in the bride of Christ is being filled with the Holy Ghost. The evidence of being filled is speaking with other tongues: {study ACTS 2:1-11; 10:44-46; and 19:1-6}. Once a Christian is filled with the Holy Ghost he or she can then enter into all of the truth; JOHN 16:13. The third qualification for being in the Bride of Christ is to "love his (Christ's) appearing:" 2 TIMOTHY 4:8. How many Christians do you hear talking about the soon coming of the Lord? Not very many. Finally, to be in the bride of Christ one must be a full overcomer.

What does this mean? To be a full overcomer means to yield your life totally over to the Lord, and let Him rule and overrule in all things. Brother Copley states this of an overcomer: "They are not content with simply a friendly affection for the Lord. They love him ardently, worship Him fervently, and serve Him faithfully. The Father watches over them as "the Apple of His eye." He has them in training for a throne. Their tests and trials are very strange and peculiar, often difficult to understand. They wholly follow the Lord." (End of quote from Brother Copley.) Thus we see that there must be

spiritual growth in a Christian in order for him or her to qualify as a full overcomer.

The Bride of Christ is not the whole church, but a rib portion taken out of the sleeping church! The Bride of Christ will be composed of the company of full overcomers from this church age. Sister Bodie notes: "Christ must have a bride like unto Himself, a companion, fit for Him, not an infant, nor a child, but a mature woman full-grown in every respect, able to enter into the fullest sympathy and understanding with all His desires and plans. The whole church has been betrothed; but they will not all qualify as the chaste virgin, who shall be presented.The young woman who is engaged must be proven and tried; she must measure up to the standard -- CHRIST, who is set before her, and thus grow up into His likeness. She must have His nature fully developed and manifested in her. And this is only possible as she holds her head (CHRIST), she the conscious weaker vessel, absolutely dependent upon Him, ...strengthened, energized and harmonized by His abundant life of which she is a partaker." (End of quoting Sister Bodie.)

This spiritual growth in a Christian takes place by learning the Word of God, and for us of this church age we need to know Paul's gospel, which sheds the proper light on the rest of scripture. Why is Paul's gospel so important to the Bridal saint? There are many, many reasons Paul's gospel is so important, but in short it is Paul who states; "*I am jealous over you with godly jealousy; for I have espoused you to one husband, that I may present you as a chaste virgin to Christ*" (2 CORINTHIANS 11:2). In Paul's gospel we find that there is a race course on which all potential full overcomers must run. 1 CORINTHIANS 9:24 *Know ye not that they which run in a race run all, but one receiveth the prize? So run, that ye may obtain.* The prize for the full overcomer is winning Christ as bridegroom.

Not all race course runners continue running the race. Paul put it this way in GALATIANS 5:7 (quoted for Conybeare's translation): "You were running the race well, who hast cast a stumbling block in your way? Who has turned you aside from your obedience to the truth." It is Satan's job to hinder, if you want to think of it that way, and often times God allows him to use Christians to hinder the race course runners. How many times over the years have Christians quit running the race because Brother So and so did thus and so, or said thus and so, or Sister So and So did thus and so or said so and so, or so and so said so and so did thus and so, and so forth. You and I both know that countless many times this has happened. Being a full overcomer means overcoming these obstacles on your race course. Brother Hill many times, inspired by the Holy Ghost, encouraged us to run this race, and stated "...come on get with it." A full overcomer overcomes the obstacles on his race course through faith and help from Christ, upon whom he is focused, and keeps on running the race. A full overcomer realizes, like Paul, that the race isn't over until it is over, that is the race for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus continues while we are here on earth. None of us here today are yet finished with our race course, thus we still have potential to be full-overcomers, that is of course if we want to be.

The Apostle Paul wanted God's best, so he states here in ACTS 20:24 *But none of these things move me, neither count I my life dear unto myself, so that I might finish my course with joy, and the ministry, which I have received of the Lord Jesus, to testify the Glad-tidings of the grace of God.* At a later point in his life, after many more tests and trials, the Apostle Paul would once again state facts about the spirit of the full overcomer, which he wanted to be. PHILIPPIANS 3:8 *Yea doubtless, and I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord: for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and do count them but dung, that I may win Christ,* 9 *And be found in him, not having mine own righteousness, which is of the law, but that which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith:* 10 *That I may know him, and the power of his resurrection, and the fellowship of his sufferings, being made conformable unto his death;* 11 *If by any means I might attain unto the resurrection of the dead.* 12 *Not as though I had already attained, either were already perfect: but I follow after, if that I may apprehend that for which also I am apprehended of Christ Jesus.* 13 *Brethren, I count not myself to have apprehended: but this one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things*

which are before, 14 I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus.

At the end of Paul's race course when he knew his race was over and his life here on earth was about to finish, he wrote about it in 2 TIMOTHY 4:6 *For I am now ready to be offered, and the time of my departure is at hand. 7 I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith: 8 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.* Especially note the phrase here "I have finished my course." We have not finished our race course yet, so we must continue running our race course laying aside every weight and the sin which doth so easily beset us, and continue running with patience the race that is set before us, continually looking with our eyes of faith unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith, the author and finisher of our race course. That is what we must do if we want to be a full overcomer.

ACTS 20:24 *But none of these things move me, neither count I my life dear unto myself, so that I might finish my course with joy, and the ministry, which I have received of the Lord Jesus, to testify the gospel of the grace of God.*

Let's consider this verse from a slightly different angle. Paul, in this one verse, considers his past, his present, and his future. Of his past he states: *But none of these things move me...* Here we see that Paul was confident that the Lord was the one directing his every step. No doubt he often thought about the following Old Testament scriptures. PSALMS 37:23 *The steps of a good man are ordered by the LORD: and he delighteth in his way.* 24 *Though he fall, he shall not be utterly cast down: for the LORD upholdeth him with his hand.* PSALMS 119:133 *Order my steps in thy word: and let not any iniquity have dominion over me.* PROVERBS 16:9 *A man's heart deviseth his way: but the LORD directeth his steps.* ISAIAH 2:5 *C house of Jacob, come ye, and let us walk in the light of the LORD.* JEREMIAH 10:23 *C LORD, I know that the way of man is not in himself: it is not in man that walketh to direct his steps.* EZEKIEL 20:19 *I am the LORD your God; walk in my statutes, and keep my judgments, and do them;...* Now each one of these scriptures can be applied to his walking with the Lord in the present, and in the future also. Paul already wrote to the ROMANS a commentary on his feelings about the Lord guiding his every step, past, present, and future. ROMANS 8:35 *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, 39 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.*

In ACTS 20:24 Paul expresses his feelings about the present this way: *...neither count I my life dear unto myself...* Paul is not saying here that he didn't really care anything about himself. Rather he had come to the realization in his life that the Lord cared for Paul even more than Paul himself did, and so Paul rested in this fact, that the Lord loved him beyond measure, as we just read in ROMANS 8 above where nothing can separate us for the great love Jesus has for us. 1 CORINTHIANS 6:19 *What? know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you, which ye have of God, and ye are not your own? 20 For ye are bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God's.* In COLOSSIANS 3:3 Paul writes that *...your life is hid with Christ in God.* 1 PETER 1:18 *Forasmuch as ye know that ye were not redeemed with corruptible things, as silver and gold, from your vain conversation received by tradition from your fathers; 19 But with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot: 20 Who verily was foreordained before the foundation of the world, but was manifest in these last times for you, 21 Who by him do believe in God, that raised him up from the dead, and gave him glory; that your faith and hope might be in God.* In JOHN 10:10 Jesus says: *...I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly.* The believer needs to apply this statement to his or her own life, realizing too that our life is very important to Jesus, for he loved you, and me, and died for each one of us, so that we might have life eternal, and life

more abundantly. This should be a present everyday reality in all of our lives. This fact certainly was a present reality to the Apostle Paul, thus he was able to state to these Ephesian elders *...neither count I my life dear unto myself...* realizing this his life was hid with Christ in God. In PHILIPPIANS 1:21-24 Paul again displays the present spirit of the full overcomer when he writes: *For to me to live is Christ, and to die is gain. 22 But if I live in the flesh, this is the fruit of my labour: yet what I shall choose I wot not. 23 For I am in a strait betwixt two, having a desire to depart, and to be with Christ; which is far better: 24 Nevertheless to abide in the flesh is more needful for you.*

We see the hope of the overcomer, or the future of the overcomer expressed this way in ACTS 20:24 *...that I might finish my course with joy.* We read above another way that Paul stated this very same fact in PHILIPPIANS 3:13 *Brethren, I count not myself to have apprehended: but this one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before, 14 I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus.* Part of Paul's race course was...the ministry, which I have received of the Lord Jesus, to testify the gospel of the grace of God... (ACTS 20:24). We have talked about this much before, for the Lord told Paul on the road to Damascus just exactly what it was He wanted him to do. ACTS 26:16 *...I have appeared unto thee for this purpose, to make thee a minister and a witness both of these things which thou hast seen, and of those things in the which I will appear unto thee; 17 Delivering thee from the people, and from the Gentiles, unto whom now I send thee, 18 To open their eyes, and to turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins, and inheritance among them which are sanctified by faith that is in me.* To Ananias of Damascus three day later the Lord revealed this concerning Paul: *...he is a chosen vessel unto me, to bear my name before the Gentiles, and kings, and the children of Israel:* (ACTS 9:15). So we note again that Paul knew what the future held for him, stating to these Ephesian elders: *...that I might finish my course with joy, and the ministry, which I have received of the Lord Jesus, to testify the gospel of the grace of God.* (ACTS 20:24). To the HEBREWS Paul wrote in HEBREWS 12:1 *...let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset us, and let us run with patience the race that is set before us, 2 Looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith; who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God.*

Thus Paul encourages all potential full overcomers to look to the future, which can only happen by *...Looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith; who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God.* (HEBREWS 12:2). He stated it this way in PHILIPPIANS 3:17 *Brethren, be followers together of me, and mark them which walk so as ye have us for an ensample. ...20 For our conversation is in heaven; from whence also we look for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ: 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.*

Following Brother Copley's outline of Paul's speech unto the Ephesian elders we come to the next important point of study:

(4) Paul's forecasts -- verses 25, 29, and 30.

If you take the time to look up the definition of forecast in the dictionary you will find that it is a term meaning to predict conditions in the future. The Apostle Paul in a sense was doing this in verses 25, 29, and 30, but these predictions were not just based upon his own particular feelings, but rather he was assured in his mind, knowing from the leading of the Holy Ghost, that certain things would be happening at Ephesus in the near future. Recall in JOHN 16:13 that part of the job of the Holy Ghost is to *...shew you things to come.* This is perhaps the number one reason why the Apostle Paul called for this urgent meeting with the Ephesian elders at this point in time, for he knew by revelation of the Holy Ghost some of the things that were to come specifically to the church at Ephesus. Let's again read verses 25, 29, and 30, and see just what it was that Paul was forecasting.

ACTS 20:25 *And now, behold, I know that ye all, among whom I have gone preaching the kingdom of God, shall see my face no more. ...29 For I know this, that after my departing shall grievous wolves enter in among you, not sparing the flock. 30*

Also of your own selves shall men arise, speaking perverse things, to draw away disciples after them.

Nineteen times in scripture we find the Apostle Paul either saying or writing the phrase: "I know." Nineteen is the number having to do with FAITH. Two of the nineteen times are found in the above verses. Thus we see by faith that the Apostle Paul knew a couple of things concerning the church at Ephesus. First he noted in verse 25 *...I know that ye all, among whom I have gone preaching the kingdom of God, shall see my face no more.* Whether Paul ever got to see here on earth any of these Ephesian elders ever again is a point that can be debated for hours on end, yet without any doctrinal purpose. Perhaps it was just like Paul forecast here, that these particular Ephesian elders never did get to see Paul face to face ever again. Conyebear and Howson indicate in their book on The Life and Epistles of St. Paul that it seems he may have returned to Ephesus in 66 A.D. This would be about eight years later than the time frame of ACTS 20. A lot of things can happen in eight years, as we all know, and if Paul did return unto Ephesus, even briefly, it may be that these same Ephesian elders he was now addressing were no longer around themselves. (1 TIMOTHY 4:13 indicates that Paul did intend to go to Ephesus, and see Timothy, whom he left in Ephesus as noted in 1 TIMOTHY 1:3.) If Paul did get to Ephesus again, as he wanted too, it may very well have been that some of the Ephesian elders were still alive, and at Ephesus, and may have even got to see the Apostle Paul once again themselves. However there is no indication of this given us in scripture. Thus we assume that this statement Paul made here in ACTS 20:25 may have held true: *...I know that ye all, among whom I have gone preaching the kingdom of God, shall see my face no more.* This statement seemed most upsetting to these Ephesian elders for ACTS 20:37 & 38 notes: *And they all wept sore, and fell on Paul's neck, and kissed him, 38 Sorrowing most of all for the words which he spake, that they should see his face no more.*

The second thing Paul said "I know" about unto these Ephesian elders is the main reason he called them together in the first place. ACTS 20:29 *For I know this, that after my departing shall grievous wolves enter in among you, not sparing the flock. 30 Also of your own selves shall men arise, speaking perverse things, to draw away disciples after them.*

Here we find two sources of corruption: (verse 29) from without -- *grievous wolves shall enter in among you;* and (verse 30) from within ; *...of your own selves shall men arise, speaking perverse things, to draw away disciples after them.*

Consider first the wolves. The wolf, or wolves, in scripture references that which is in opposition to the sheep. The sheep in scripture picture the believers on Jesus Christ. JOHN 10:27-29 tells us this in Jesus own words: *My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me: 28 And I give unto them eternal life; and they shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of my hand. 29 My Father, which gave them me, is greater than all; and no man is able to pluck them out of my Father's hand.* Here we also see the doctrine of eternal security, for no man can pluck the sheep out of Jesus hand, or out of God's hand!

Before Jesus made the above statement, He gave a discourse on the Good Shepherd, which is Jesus Himself, as Paul also noted in HEBREWS 13:20, which in part reads: *Now the God of peace, that brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus, that great shepherd of the sheep,...* This discourse on the Good Shepherd is found in JOHN 10.

JOHN 10:1 *Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that entereth not by the door into the sheepfold, but climbeth up some other way, the same is a thief and a robber. 2 But he that entereth in by the door is the shepherd of the sheep. 3 To him the porter openeth; and the sheep hear his voice: and he calleth his own sheep by name, and leadeth them out. 4 And when he putteth forth his own sheep, he goeth before them, and the sheep follow him: for they know his voice. 5 And a stranger will they not follow, but will flee from him: for they know not the voice of strangers. 6 This parable spake Jesus unto them: but they understood not what things they were which he spake unto them. 7 Then said Jesus unto them again, Verily, verily, I say unto you, I am the door of the sheep. 8 All that ever came before me are thieves and robbers: but the sheep did not hear them. 9 I am the door: by me if any man enter in, he shall be saved, and shall go in and out, and find pasture. 10 The thief cometh not, but for to steal, and to kill, and to destroy: I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly. 11 I am*

the good shepherd: the good shepherd giveth his life for the sheep. 12 But he that is an hireling, and not the shepherd, whose own the sheep are not, seeth the wolf coming, and leaveth the sheep, and fleeth: and the wolf catcheth them, and scattereth the sheep. 13 The hireling fleeth, because he is an hireling, and careth not for the sheep. 14 I am the good shepherd, and know my sheep, and am known of mine. 15 As the Father knoweth me, even so know I the Father: and I lay down my life for the sheep.

In the above discourse note in verse 12 that the function of the wolf was to scatter the sheep. This was what Paul was warning the Ephesian elders of in ACTS 20:29, those ...grievous wolves enter in among you, not sparing the flock.

Akin to those grievous wolves that would scatter the flock was those ...of your own selves shall men arise, speaking perverse things, to draw away disciples after them... (verse 30). The key to understanding this statement is to know what "perverse things" means, and it simply means: things that oppose or are against the plan of God. Who is behind anything that opposes God? Satan. No wonder then that Satan's name comes up again in this warning from the Apostle Paul found in 2 CORINTHIANS 11:13-15. 2 CORINTHIANS 11:13 *For such are false apostles, deceitful workers, transforming themselves into the apostles of Christ. 14 And no marvel; for Satan himself is transformed into an angel of light. 15 Therefore it is no great thing if his ministers also be transformed as the ministers of righteousness; whose end shall be according to their works.* Again in GALATIANS 1:6-9 we see another warning from the Apostle Paul concerning the preaching of false doctrine. GALATIANS 1:6 *I marvel that ye are so soon removed from him that called you into the grace of Christ unto another gospel: 7 Which is not another; but there be some that trouble you, and would pervert (turn around, twist) the gospel of Christ. 8 But though we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel unto you than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed. 9 As we said before, so say I now again, If any man preach any other gospel unto you than that ye have received, let him be accursed.*

The purpose of those who speak perverse things that is noted in ACTS 20:30 is to draw away disciples after themselves. In other words Paul was warning against those who would teach other doctrines than he himself had taught. Such doctrines would lead men away from following Christ. The Apostle Paul always encouraged those who would be followers of him, to ...*Be ye followers of me, even as I also am of Christ...* (1 CORINTHIANS 11:1). Paul warned Timothy about this very same thing, writing unto him in 1 TIMOTHY 1:3 *As I besought thee to abide still at Ephesus, when I went into Macedonia, that thou mightest charge some that they teach no other doctrine...* . Paul goes on to encourage Timothy later in this chapter stating in verse 18-20 *This charge I commit unto thee, son Timothy, according to the prophecies which went before on thee, that thou by them mightest war a good warfare; 19 Holding faith, and a good conscience; which some having put away concerning faith have made shipwreck: 20 Of whom is Hymenaeus and Alexander; whom I have delivered unto Satan, that they may learn not to blaspheme.* In 2 TIMOTHY Paul writes some more words unto Timothy about the importance of knowing Paul's sound doctrine, and knowing the difference of those that speak perverse things. 2 TIMOTHY 2:15 *Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth. 16 But shun profane and vain babblings: for they will increase unto more ungodliness. 17 And their word will eat as doth a canker: of whom is Hymenaeus and Philetus; 18 Who concerning the truth have erred, saying that the resurrection is past already; and overthrow the faith of some.* Earlier in 2 TIMOTHY 1:15 Paul had written Timothy about a couple of others who turned away from Paul's doctrine, stating: *This thou knowest, that all they which are in Asia be turned away from me; of whom are Phygellus and Hermogenes.* Undoubtedly Timothy taught these same doctrines of Paul to those of Ephesus.

Apparently these Ephesian elders heeded the warning of the Apostle Paul about those who would speak perverse things, for in REVELATION 2:6 we read this statement Jesus made concerning the church of Ephesus: *But this thou hast, that thou hatest the deeds of the Nicolaitans, which I also hate.* The Nicolaitans were obviously a group or sect of people who didn't follow the doctrines of the Apostle Paul, one of the main the founders of the church of Ephesus, who said here in ACTS 20:29 & 30 -- *For I know this,*

that after my departing shall grievous wolves enter in among you, not sparing the flock. 30 Also of your own selves shall men arise, speaking perverse things, to draw away disciples after them. A similar warning was made by the Apostle Paul in COLOSSIANS 2:8, which reads: *Beware lest any man spoil you through philosophy and vain deceit, after the tradition of men, after the rudiments of the world, and not after Christ.*

This brings us to the next important point of study following Brother Copley's outline of Paul's speech unto the Ephesian elders:

(5) Paul's exhortation to the elders -- verses 28 & 31. (An exhortation is to urge someone to pursue some course of action, looking to the future.)

ACTS 20:28 Take heed therefore unto yourselves, and to all the flock, over the which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers, to feed the church of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood. ...31 Therefore watch, and remember, that by the space of three years I ceased not to warn every one night and day with tears.

There are five elements to this exhortation, which are: (1) to take heed; (2) to feed; (3) to watch; (4) to remember; and (5) to warn.

There are two parts to Paul's "take heed" statement. They are to first "take heed" unto themselves. Paul is speaking to the Ephesian elders, here called "overseers," which in itself is a word that is not taken lightly. Brother Copley rightly notes that the word "bishop," or "overseer," is "episkopos" in the Greek, (number 1985 in the Strong's Concordance). It is used seven times in the New Testament, and literally means: "an overseer, a watcher, a guardian; especially, a public officer sent as inspector, or overseer of a subject state." Paul here also notes that these overseers were not chosen by man, but rather were ordained by the Holy Ghost to be these overseers. Their first duty as an overseer Paul also notes is to *...take heed therefore unto yourselves...* which is another way of saying examine yourselves first of all. Paul wrote in 2 CORINTHIANS 13:5 *Examine yourselves, whether ye be in the faith; prove your own selves.* Paul also wrote several similar statements: In 1 CORINTHIANS 3:10 Paul writes: *According to the grace of God which is given unto me, as a wise masterbuilder, I have laid the foundation, and another buildeth thereon. But let every man take heed how he buildeth thereupon.* In COLOSSIANS 4:17 Paul addresses a thought to Archippus, stating: *And say to Archippus, Take heed to the ministry which thou hast received in the Lord, that thou fulfil it.* To Timothy Paul writes in 1 TIMOTHY 4:16 *Take heed unto thyself, and unto the doctrine; continue in them: for in doing this thou shalt both save thyself, and them that hear thee.* This pretty much explains why Paul told these Ephesian elders to *...take heed therefore unto yourselves...*

The second part of Paul's "take heed" statement concerns taking heed for "all the flock" over which the Holy Ghost had made them the overseers. These elders were to not only watch their own walk with God, but see to it that the flock, the believers, walked according to the truth of the gospel. They were, in other words, to lead by example, and to walk in the ways of the Lord, to fear Him, to seek after God's best for their own lives, and encourage all the flock to follow their example.

This brings us to Paul's second point of exhortation, which was *...to feed the church of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood.* What an awesome responsibility. Yet Paul himself had led by such example. He fed the flock from the Word of God. Timothy knew Paul's example of life probably better than anybody else. Paul later wrote to Timothy in 1 TIMOTHY 1:3 to *....teach no other doctrine...* and again in 1 TIMOTHY 5:17 Paul wrote to *...labour in the word and doctrine.* In 1 TIMOTHY 6:3-5 Paul writes: *If any man teach otherwise, and consent not to wholesome words, even the words of our Lord Jesus Christ, and to the doctrine which is according to godliness; 4 He is proud, knowing nothing, but doting about questions and strifes of words, whereof cometh envy, strife, railings, evil surmisings, 5 Perverse disputings of men of corrupt minds, and destitute of the truth, supposing that gain is godliness: from such withdraw thyself.* In 2 TIMOTHY 1:13 & 14 Paul writes: *Hold fast the form of sound words, which thou hast heard of me, in faith and love which is in Christ Jesus. 14 That good thing which was committed unto thee keep by the Holy Ghost which dwelleth in us.* Paul wrote Timothy in 2 TIMOTHY 2:1 *Thou therefore, my son, be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus. 2 And the things that thou hast heard of me among many witnesses, the same commit thou to faithful men, who shall be able to teach others also. 3 Thou therefore*

endure hardness, as a good soldier of Jesus Christ. ...15 Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth. ...24 And the servant of the Lord must not strive; but be gentle unto all men, apt to teach, patient, 25 In meekness instructing those that oppose themselves;... . In 2 TIMOTHY 3 Paul continues to explain to Timothy the importance of feeding the church of God, stating in verses 14-17: But continue thou in the things which thou hast learned and hast been assured of, knowing of whom thou hast learned them; 15 And that from a child thou hast known the holy scriptures, which are able to make thee wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus. 16 All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: 17 That the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works. In 2 TIMOTHY chapter 4 Paul concludes his exhortations unto Timothy, and states in verse 2 Preach the word; be instant in season, out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort with all longsuffering and doctrine. These were the kind of thoughts Paul was also expressing unto these Ephesian elders when he said: ...to feed the church of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood. Sound doctrine was what the Apostle Paul was interested in preaching and teaching, and so he also encouraged Titus to ...speak thou the things which become sound doctrine:... (TITUS 2:1).

Peter himself was told of the Lord three times in JOHN 21:15-17 ...to feed the church of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood. Peter finally got the message, and later wrote similar encouraging words like the Apostle Paul has just spoken unto these Ephesian elders, stating this in 1 PETER 5:1 The elders which are among you I exhort, who am also an elder, and a witness of the sufferings of Christ, and also a partaker of the glory that shall be revealed: 2 Feed the flock of God which is among you, taking the oversight thereof, not by constraint, but willingly; not for filthy lucre, but of a ready mind; 3 Neither as being lords over God's heritage, but being ensamples to the flock. 4 And when the chief Shepherd shall appear, ye shall receive a crown of glory that fadeth not away. Brother Copley noted these same verses, and wrote this concerning these Ephesian elders: "With such profound and solemn entreaties from those who had laid down their lives for the people and verified them by their unselfish conduct, we marvel that verse 29 and 30 could ever come to pass." (ACTS 20:29 For I know this, that after my departing shall grievous wolves enter in among you, not sparing the flock. 30 Also of your own selves shall men arise, speaking perverse things, to draw away disciples after them.) "But if the old man in preachers is not judged, he becomes the meanest old man of all, capable of doing the greatest harm." {End of quote from Brother Copley}. Thus we note the awesome responsibility that is entrusted with the overseers in their admonition ...to feed the church of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood.

ACTS 20:28 Take heed therefore unto yourselves, and to all the flock, over the which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers, to feed the church of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood. ...31 Therefore watch, and remember, that by the space of three years I ceased not to warn every one night and day with tears.

The third element of Paul's exhortation unto these Ephesian elders brings us to verse 31 where the overseers are told to "watch." We have already noted many of the things that they are to watch, such as their own conduct, and the conduct of the flock. Let's look at this word "watch" a little closer.

To "watch" means to heed, to give strict attention to, to be cautious, to be actively looking, to be awake. Here are some scriptures with this very thought. 1 CORINTHIANS 16:13 Watch ye, stand fast in the faith, quit you like men, be strong. COLOSSIANS 4:2 Continue in prayer, and watch in the same with thanksgiving;... . 1 THESSALONIANS 5:6 Therefore let us not sleep, as do others; but let us watch and be sober. 1 PETER 5:8 Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour:... . Note in these scriptures that once again the first thing these overseers are to "watch" is themselves. Afterwards they can encourage others to do the same.

The forth element to Paul's exhortation is to remember. This means to hold in memory, keep in mind, be mindful of, to remember, to call to mind the important things that one has been taught. Twice in this speech Paul uses the word "remember." ACTS

20:31 Therefore watch, and remember, that by the space of three years I ceased not to warn every one night and day with tears. ACTS 20:35 I have shewed you all things, how that so labouring ye ought to support the weak, and to remember the words of the Lord Jesus, how he said, It is more blessed to give than to receive. In verse 31 these Ephesian elders are to remember the lessons Paul taught, both with his mouth, and with his actions. In verse 35 they were also encouraged to ...remember the words of the Lord Jesus. In other words they were told to remember the things that caused faith in the Lord in their life. Way to often we remember the things we should forget, and forget the things we are to remember.

Before we get to far into this subject of remembrance, let's remember that there are certain things that we are to forget, especially if we ever intend to be a full overcomer. The Apostle Paul also to us to forget certain things: PHILIPPIANS 3:13 Brethren, I count not myself to have apprehended: but this one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before, 14 I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus. We are also to remember that the Lord too has forgot those things which are behind to those who are saved, for PSALMS 103:12 notes: As far as the east is from the west, so far hath he removed our transgressions from us. ISAIAH 38:17 in part states: ...but thou hast in love to my soul delivered it from the pit of corruption: for thou hast cast all my sins behind thy back. HEBREWS 8:12 and 10:16 both tell who God remembers the righteous, stating: ...and their sins and their iniquities will I remember no more. The full overcomer sees the importance of forgetting those things which are behind, and presses ever forward toward the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus. Let's don't let our past forgiven sins hinder our forward progress with the Lord, as has been the case with so many, maybe even an innumerable multitude.

We are not to forget everything however, just the things that hinder our progress with the Lord. We are to remember that our confidence is to be in the Lord, not in man. Remember these verses: PSALMS 118:8 It is better to trust in the LORD than to put confidence in man. 9 It is better to trust in the LORD than to put confidence in princes. JEREMIAH 17:5 Thus saith the LORD; Cursed be the man that trusteth in man, and maketh flesh his arm, and whose heart departeth from the LORD. ...7 Blessed is the man that trusteth in the LORD, and whose hope the LORD is.

The children of Israel remembered some things they should have forgot, and it got them into a lot of trouble, at least forty years of trouble. Turning to NUMBERS 11 we read: 4 And the mixt multitude that was among them fell a lusting: and the children of Israel also wept again, and said, Who shall give us flesh to eat? 5 We remember the fish, which we did eat in Egypt freely; the cucumbers, and the melons, and the leeks, and the onions, and the garlick: 6 But now our soul is dried away: there is nothing at all, beside this manna, before our eyes. ...10 Then Moses heard the people weep throughout their families, every man in the door of his tent: and the anger of the LORD was kindled greatly; Moses also was displeased. 11 And Moses said unto the LORD, Wherefore hast thou afflicted thy servant? and wherefore have I not found favour in thy sight, that thou layest the burden of all this people upon me? 12 Have I conceived all this people? have I begotten them, that thou shouldest say unto me, Carry them in thy bosom, as a nursing father beareth the sucking child, unto the land which thou swarest unto their fathers? 13 Whence should I have flesh to give unto all this people? for they weep unto me, saying, Give us flesh, that we may eat. 14 I am not able to bear all this people alone, because it is too heavy for me. ...18 And say thou unto the people, Sanctify yourselves against to morrow, and ye shall eat flesh: for ye have wept in the ears of the LORD, saying, Who shall give us flesh to eat? for it was well with us in Egypt: therefore the LORD will give you flesh, and ye shall eat. 19 Ye shall not eat one day, nor two days, nor five days, neither ten days, nor twenty days; 20 But even a whole month, until it come out at your nostrils, and it be loathsome unto you: because that ye have despised the LORD which is among you, and have wept before him, saying, Why came we forth out of Egypt? 21 And Moses said, The people, among whom I am, are six hundred thousand footmen; and thou hast said, I will give them flesh, that they may eat a whole month. 22 Shall the flocks and the herds be slain for them, to suffice them? or shall all the fish of

the sea be gathered together for them, to suffice them? 23 And the LORD said unto Moses, Is the LORD'S hand waxed short? thou shalt see now whether my word shall come to pass unto thee or not.

Moses had some overcoming things to learn before he could give the speech we know as DEUTERONOMY. We see here in verses 21 & 22 that Moses expressed his concerns on how the Lord was going to feed the children of Israel this much flesh. Moses was worried that they would have to slaughter all of their animals, and expressed his doubts as to how God would provide such a seemingly impossible request. Yet he had already witnessed many impossible things from God ever since EXODUS 3. It seems he failed to remember the many verbal conflicts with Pharaoh, and associated miracles, and how God was the one who had met their every need. Did Moses forget who it was that opened the Red Sea? And just who was it that provided the manna? It seems Moses didn't remember who really was in charge here. We find here that Moses still had a ways to go to become one of the heroes of faith mentioned in HEBREWS 11, even though he had been right there on the front line witnessing the leading of God ever since he was born! Moses had yet to learn the important things to remember. In other words he needed to remember some of the things he seemed to have forgot, and forget some of the things he was remembering. He needed first of all to remember that he was dealing with God, with whom all things are possible. Later Moses would remember this and write in GENESIS 18:14 *Is any thing too hard for the LORD?* Jeremiah also wrote similar words: JEREMIAH 32:17 *Ah Lord GOD! behold, thou hast made the heaven and the earth by thy great power and stretched out arm, and there is nothing too hard for thee:...* JEREMIAH 32:27 *Behold, I am the LORD, the God of all flesh: is there any thing too hard for me?* Moses here in NUMBERS 11 was also learning another lesson of something else he should have remembered, but apparently had forgot. HEBREWS 11:1 *Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen.* Moses could see the flesh in the animals the children of Israel had brought out of Egypt, yet he realized that this wasn't going to be enough to feed this great multitude for a whole month. Neither was he expressing faith in God when he said in frustration *...shall all the fish of the sea be gathered together for them, to suffice them?* Moses, in his mind, was limiting God: he was limiting God to what he could see. Moses still needed to learn more lessons about faith and trust in God. Moses had yet to remember that faith is not sight. Moses wanted to see how this provision of flesh to eat was going to get done, but God wanted Moses here to remember something's, some important things about God. One of the lessons Moses was about to relearn was that nothing was hard for God, and with God nothing was impossible. LUKE 1:37 tells us: *For with God nothing shall be impossible.* MATTHEW 19:26 further tells us *...with God all things are possible.* Moses also still needed to fully learn and remember the lesson of HEBREWS 10:38 *Now the just shall live by faith:...* Faith is not sight, and this too is one of those things we need to remember, that we seem to so soon forget. So yes here we see that Moses still had a ways to go to become one of the heroes of faith mentioned in HEBREWS 11; nearly forty years to go as a matter of fact! For us potential full overcomers this should give us some more things to think about; some more things to remember. How long before we too have such overcoming faith as the worthies of faith mentioned in HEBREWS 11? How long before we too truly believe God with the faith of a full overcomer, and *...shalt see now whether my word shall come to pass unto thee or not... ?* (NUMBERS 11:23). It took Moses those final forty years in the wilderness, trusting God in His leading the children of Israel, to get him to the place that we call full overcomer. Meanwhile Moses grew in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. We too may not be finished, yet, but, like Moses *...let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset us, and let us run with patience the race that is set before us, Looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith...* (HEBREWS 12:1 & 2). Let us learn to remember the important things we are to remember, and forget the things that are behind that hinder.

Paul remembered this story in NUMBERS 11, and wrote in 1 CORINTHIANS 10 a recollection of these events that we read above, starting in verse 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. An admonition is a reminder, if you will, that is to say it calls to our attention something we are to remember, and be warned about.

Let me give you some more scriptures that emphasize the importance of remembering the Lord, and the things the Lord has done for us. Some nearly forty years after the events of NUMBERS 11 that we read above, we find Moses giving a speech before the children of Israel. This speech is basically the book of DEUTERONOMY. In DEUTERONOMY Moses used the word "remember" fourteen (DELIVERANCE or SALVATION) times. He emphasized what exactly they were to remember. Five (GRACE) times he tells them to "remember that." DEUTERONOMY 5:15 And remember that thou wast a servant in the land of Egypt, and that the LORD thy God brought thee out thence through a mighty hand and by a stretched out arm:... . 15:15 And thou shalt remember that thou wast a bondman in the land of Egypt, and the LORD thy God redeemed thee:... . 16:12 And thou shalt remember that thou wast a bondman in Egypt:... . 24:18 But thou shalt remember that thou wast a bondman in Egypt, and the LORD thy God redeemed thee thence:... . 24:22 And thou shalt remember that thou wast a bondman in the land of Egypt:... .

Why is it important for us to remember such statements as these we just read in DEUTERONOMY? Because, once again, these things were our examples. The land of Egypt in scripture always is a figure of the world. JOHN 3:16 *For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.* Once saved we are no longer of the world, though we are still in the world. 2 CORINTHIANS 5:17 once again tells us: *Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new.* COLOSSIANS 3:1 *If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God. 2 Set your affection on things above, not on things on the earth. 3 For ye are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God. 4 When Christ, who is our life, shall appear, then shall ye also appear with him in glory.* Jesus said in JOHN 17:14 *I have given them thy word; and the world hath hated them, because they are not of the world, even as I am not of the world. 15 I pray not that thou shouldest take them out of the world, but that thou shouldest keep them from the evil. 16 They are not of the world, even as I am not of the world.* Paul also wrote in ROMANS 12:2 *...be not conformed to this world...* What all of this means in light of remembrance is that we too are to remember that we were once bondmen in Egypt, slaves to the world in other words, but once saved we free from such bondage, our life is forever safe and hid with Christ Jesus in God; *...How shall we, that are dead to sin, live any longer therein?* (ROMANS 6:2).

Here are some of the other "remember" statements that Moses gave in his DEUTERONOMY speech. DEUTERONOMY 7:18 *...remember what the LORD thy God did unto Pharaoh, and unto all Egypt. ...8:2 And thou shalt remember all the way which the LORD thy God led thee these forty years in the wilderness, to humble thee, and to prove thee, to know what was in thine heart, whether thou wouldest keep his commandments, or no. ...8:18 But thou shalt remember the LORD thy God; for it is he that giveth thee power to get wealth,...* . 9:7 Remember, and forget not, how thou provokedst the LORD thy God to wrath in the wilderness: from the day that thou didst depart out of the land of Egypt, until ye came unto this place, ye have been rebellious against the LORD. ...16:3 *Thou shalt eat no leavened bread with it; seven days shalt thou eat unleavened bread therewith, even the bread of affliction; for thou camest forth out of the land of Egypt in haste: that thou mayest remember the day when thou camest forth out of the land of Egypt all the days of thy life.*

Moses remembered the things of the Lord real good in his life, and was one of the Old Testament worthies of faith mentioned by name in HEBREWS 11. As we explained

above, it took him a while to get to the point that we could call him an Old Testament worthy of faith. It took him a lifetime of trusting in the Lord, as was, and is, the case with all the worthies of faith. Meanwhile let us remember the things that we are to remember, and forget those things which are behind that can hinder our forward overcoming progress. On the cross Jesus became the ultimate full overcomer, stating this concerning those who crucified Him: *Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do.* {LUKE 23:34.} Stephen too displayed such a full overcoming heart attitude upon being stoned to death when he ...cried with a loud voice, *Lord, lay not this sin to their charge.* {ACTS 7:60}.

To conclude our thoughts on remembrance, let's read PSALMS 103, Psalm of David, one of the Old Testament worthies of faith mentioned by name in HEBREWS 11. PSALMS 103:1 Bless the LORD, C my soul: and all that is within me, bless his holy name. 2 Bless the LORD, C my soul, and forget not all his benefits: 3 Who forgiveth all thine iniquities; who healeth all thy diseases; 4 Who redeemeth thy life from destruction; who crowneth thee with lovingkindness and tender mercies; 5 Who satisfieth thy mouth with good things; so that thy youth is renewed like the eagle's. 6 The LORD executeth righteousness and judgment for all that are oppressed. 7 He made known his ways unto Moses, his acts unto the children of Israel. 8 The LORD is merciful and gracious, slow to anger, and plenteous in mercy. 9 He will not always chide: neither will he keep his anger for ever. 10 He hath not dealt with us after our sins; nor rewarded us according to our iniquities. 11 For as the heaven is high above the earth, so great is his mercy toward them that fear him. 12 As far as the east is from the west, so far hath he removed our transgressions from us. 13 Like as a father pitieth his children, so the LORD pitieth them that fear him. 14 For he knoweth our frame; he remembereth that we are dust. 15 As for man, his days are as grass: as a flower of the field, so he flourisheth. 16 For the wind passeth over it, and it is gone; and the place thereof shall know it no more. 17 But the mercy of the LORD is from everlasting to everlasting upon them that fear him, and his righteousness unto children's children; 18 To such as keep his covenant, and to those that remember his commandments to do them. 19 The LORD hath prepared his throne in the heavens; and his kingdom ruleth over all. 20 Bless the LORD, ye his angels, that excel in strength, that do his commandments, hearkening unto the voice of his word. 21 Bless ye the LORD, all ye his hosts; ye ministers of his, that do his pleasure. 22 Bless the LORD, all his works in all places of his dominion: bless the LORD, C my soul.

One more commentary on what we just studied can be found in PSALMS 106, which should be read in it's entirety, but here is a few verses from it: PSALMS 106:1 Praise ye the LORD. C give thanks unto the LORD; for he is good: for his mercy endureth for ever. 2 Who can utter the mighty acts of the LORD? who can shew forth all his praise? 3 Blessed are they that keep judgment, and he that doeth righteousness at all times. 4 Remember me, C LORD, with the favour that thou bearest unto thy people: C visit me with thy salvation; 5 That I may see the good of thy chosen, that I may rejoice in the gladness of thy nation, that I may glory with thine inheritance. 6 We have sinned with our fathers, we have committed iniquity, we have done wickedly. 7 Our fathers understood not thy wonders in Egypt; they remembered not the multitude of thy mercies; but provoked him at the sea, even at the Red sea. 8 Nevertheless he saved them for his name's sake, that he might make his mighty power to be known. 9 He rebuked the Red sea also, and it was dried up: so he led them through the depths, as through the wilderness. 10 And he saved them from the hand of him that hated them, and redeemed them from the hand of the enemy. 11 And the waters covered their enemies: there was not one of them left. 12 Then believed they his words; they sang his praise. 13 They soon forgot his works; they waited not for his counsel: 14 But lusted exceedingly in the wilderness, and tempted God in the desert. 15 And he gave them their request; but sent leanness into their soul.43 Many times did he deliver them; but they provoked him with their counsel, and were brought low for their iniquity. 44 Nevertheless he regarded their affliction, when he heard their cry: 45 And he remembered for them his covenant, and repented according to the multitude of his mercies. 46 He made them also to be pitied of all those that carried them captives. 47 Save us, C LORD our God, and gather us from among the heathen, to give thanks unto thy holy name, and to triumph

in thy praise. 48 Blessed be the LORD God of Israel from everlasting to everlasting: and let all the people say, Amen. Praise ye the LORD.

Back to our text. ACTS 20:28 Take heed therefore unto yourselves, and to all the flock, over the which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers, to feed the church of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood. ...31 Therefore watch, and remember, that by the space of three years I ceased not to warn every one night and day with tears.

The fifth element of Paul's exhortation to these Ephesian elders is found in verse 31, and is "to warn." The Greek word *noutheteo* {noo-thet-eh'-o} translated "warn" here is definitely a Paulism, found eight times in New Testament scripture, meaning: to admonish, to warn, or to exhort. It is number 3560 in the Strong's Greek Concordance, four times translated "warn," and four times it is translated "admonish." Admonish means to urge or exhort, or to inform or remind, or caution against specific faults. Eight is such an important number with several meanings, which we have covered many times in lessons past. Eight is the number that has to do with NEW CREATION, NEW BIRTH, NEW BEGINNING, RESURRECTION, and the BRIDE. What does this mean in light of Paul's warning these Ephesian elders? Obviously these Ephesian elders knew Paul's gospel message concerning the NEW CREATION, NEW BIRTH, NEW BEGINNING, RESURRECTION, and the BRIDE. But the Holy Ghost is using Paul here "to warn" them concerning the keeping, and teaching of these doctrines, and to remember, as we discussed above, just what it was that Paul taught, and warned about. ACTS 20:31 tells us *...that by the space of three years I ceased not to warn every one night and day with tears*. What was Paul warning them about? The keeping of the faith; the taking heed of themselves, and for "all the flock" over which the Holy Ghost had made them the overseers; and *...to feed the church of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood*; to actively watch over this flock *...which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers*. Essentially this was Paul's warning unto the Ephesian elders.

Note who it was that did the warning here; it was the Apostle Paul. By example he showed them the way, and did the work of an Apostle. But the work of a pastor, or teacher, or an overseer was to be the same, that is to be aware of what was going on, and to warn every one of the dangers that are constantly lurking about because of the workings of the enemy, Satan. Paul was telling these Ephesian elders to remember his warnings that he gave night and day unto them. In so remembering they too would be aware of what it was they were "to warn" their flock about.

Study 1 & 2 TIMOTHY, and TITUS, and see how the Apostle Paul also warned these very devout fellow Apostles also.

Let's quickly look at the other seven times we find the Greek word *noutheteo* {noo-thet-eh'-o} <3560> in scripture, and as we do so we can see how it was that these Ephesian overseers were to follow Paul's leading. ROMANS 15:14 *And I myself also am persuaded of you, my brethren, that ye also are full of goodness, filled with all knowledge, able also to admonish <3560> one another*. 1 CORINTHIANS 4:14 *I write not these things to shame you, but as my beloved sons I warn <3560> you*. COLOSSIANS 1:25 *Whereof I am made a minister, according to the dispensation of God which is given to me for you, to fulfil the word of God*; 26 *Even the mystery which hath been hid from ages and from generations, but now is made manifest to his saints*; 27 *To whom God would make known what is the riches of the glory of this mystery among the Gentiles; which is Christ in you, the hope of glory*; 28 *Whom we preach, warning <3560> every man, and teaching every man in all wisdom; that we may present every man perfect in Christ Jesus*... . COLOSSIANS 3:16 *Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom; teaching and admonishing <3560> one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord*. 1 THESSALONIANS 5:12 *And we beseech you, brethren, to know them which labour among you, and are over you in the Lord, and admonish <3560> you*; 13 *And to esteem them very highly in love for their work's sake. And be at peace among yourselves*. 14 *Now we exhort you, brethren, warn <3560> them that are unruly, comfort the feebleminded, support the weak, be patient toward all men*. 2 THESSALONIANS 3:14 *And if any man obey not our word by this epistle, note that man, and have no company with him, that he may be ashamed*. 15 *Yet count him not as an enemy, but admonish <3560> him as a brother*.

(6) Paul's committal of the elders -- verse 32. This is the sixth point in Brother Copley's outline of Paul's speech unto the Ephesian elders. ACTS 20:32 *And now, brethren, I commend you to God, and to the word of his grace, which is able to build you up, and to give you an inheritance among all them which are sanctified.*

Brother Copley made this comment on this particular verse: "To my mind, this is one of the most powerful portions of Holy Writing. Its huge importance is magnified by the criminal oversight and vaunting neglect thereof by the brethren. Paul did not flatter those elders because they were made overseers by the Holy Spirit. He did not make them feel that they were full-grown; but he put them back on the only means of up-building, or edification, even the sure Word of grace. One is surprised at how much is said about being built up in Christ.Being built up, or edified by the blessed Word of God is absolutely necessary in order to obtain the promised inheritance." {End of quoting from Brother Copley.}

Brother Copley's comments got me to thinking about how many times we have referenced this verse in this study, and I found it to be twenty-two times, so far. Twenty-two again is the number of LIGHT, and LIGHT points us to Jesus. As Brother Copley also noted this verse points us to being built up in Christ Jesus. That is the main reason why this verse is considered one of the more powerful portions of scripture, as noted by Brother Copley above.

As we study this verse we will find that there are seven key elements noted here. Seven is the number that has to do with SPIRITUAL PERFECTION or SPIRITUAL COMPLETION, so we could say that this is a perfect verse. It is a perfect verse to know for all who will become full overcomers.

ACTS 20:32 *And now, brethren, I commend you to God, and to the word of his grace, which is able to build you up, and to give you an inheritance among all them which are sanctified.* The first key part of this verse is found in this phrase: *And now, brethren,...* "Now, brethren," nails it right down to who, and when. Of course we know Paul is addressing the brethren, the Ephesian elders here. He is not addressing a group of sinners, but rather those closest of followers of his from Ephesus. Those who have taken on the responsibility of continuing the work, which the Apostle Paul so diligently started there at Ephesus. In this verse Paul calls them "brethren" once, and three times addresses them as "you." This takes care of the "who" part of this statement.

The "when" part of this statement *...And now, brethren,...* is "now." There are several Greek words that translate in English as "now," and this particular Greek word is *tanun* {tan-oon'} number 3565 in the Strong's Greek Concordance, used only five (GRACE) times in scripture, all in the book of ACTS. "Now" here means: now, the present. In other words Paul was not stating *...And now, brethren,...* and not meaning in some distant future time, but rather was stating *...And now, brethren,...* meaning at this present time. Most of the Greek words that translate into "now" mean at the present time, or at this time.

There are over three thousand scriptural references that include the word "now," or the thought of "now." Here are a few of the more important ones. Paul writes to the Corinthians, and quotes from ISAIAH 49:8 when he wrote in 2 CORINTHIANS 6:2 (*For he saith, I have heard thee in a time accepted, and in the day of salvation have I succoured thee: behold, now is the accepted time; behold, now is the day of salvation.*) This is the most important "now" statement for all sinners to realize: *...behold, now is the accepted time; behold, now is the day of salvation.* Having once accepted Jesus as your own personal Saviour, the next important "now" statement is to realize that *...Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be; but we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is.* {1 JOHN 3:2}. Here is another Important "now" statement for all Christians to latch on to: ROMANS 6:8 *Now if we be dead with Christ, we believe that we shall also live with him: 9 Knowing that Christ being raised from the dead dieth no more; death hath no more dominion over him. 10 For in that he died, he died unto sin once: but in that he liveth, he liveth unto God. 11 Likewise reckon ye also yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord. 12 Let not sin therefore reign in your mortal body, that ye should obey it in the lusts thereof.* Paul wrote another important "now" statement in GALATIANS 2:20 that all full overcomers must latch onto: *I am crucified with Christ:*

nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me. In 1 CORINTHIANS 12 Paul notes in verse 27: Now ye are the body of Christ, and members in particular. In 1 CORINTHIANS 1:21 Paul writes: Now he which stablisheth us with you in Christ, and hath anointed us, is God. In 2 THESSALONIANS 2:1 & 2 Paul warns that the day of Christ is now at hand, stating: Now we beseech you, brethren, by the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, and by our gathering together unto him, 2 That ye be not soon shaken in mind, or be troubled, neither by spirit, nor by word, nor by letter as from us, as that the day of Christ is at hand. In ROMANS 15:13 Paul writes: Now the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, that ye may abound in hope, through the power of the Holy Ghost. Finally let's note, and keep in mind for the present time these final two "now" statements found in HEBREWS. HEBREWS 10:38 Now the just shall live by faith: but if any man draw back, my soul shall have no pleasure in him. HEBREWS 11:1 Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen.

ACTS 20:32 And now, brethren, I commend you to God, and to the word of his grace, which is able to build you up, and to give you an inheritance among all them which are sanctified. Having discussed the first key element of this verse as being ...And now, brethren,... we come to the second important element of seven found in this verse, which is: ...I commend you to God. Paul realized, like all pastors should realize, that he couldn't really do anymore for these dear precious Saints other than to commit their care and keeping unto God. This is really what the word "commend" here means: that is to commit the keeping of, or to entrust the care of these saints into the hands of another. This is why Brother Copley entitled this section of his outline of Paul's speech unto these Ephesian overseers, Paul's committal of the elders. And what better hands to be placed in, than the hands of God! Again JOHN 10:27-29 tells us these words of Jesus: My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me: 28 And I give unto them eternal life; and they shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of my hand. 29 My Father, which gave them me, is greater than all; and no man is able to pluck them out of my Father's hand.

On the cross Jesus made this statement, found in LUKE 23:46 And when Jesus had cried with a loud voice, he said, Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit: and having said thus, he gave up the ghost. Jesus was quoting scripture here, quoting PSALMS 31:5 Into thine hand I commit my spirit: thou hast redeemed me, O LORD God of truth. Paul makes a related statement in ROMANS 5:8 But God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.

Back in ACTS 14:23 we found that Paul and Barnabas after fasting and prayer ...commended them (the elders of the churches they had visited on Paul's first missionary journey) to the Lord, on whom they believed. Again we see this thought of "commending" is committing or entrusting the keeping of the Saints into the omniscient hands of God. We noted this when studying ACTS 14:23: possibly Paul and Barnabas left these churches with words similar to those of Moses found in DEUTERONOMY 31:6-8 when he commended the care of Israel unto God: 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. All parents should be diligent to also commend, or commit their children unto God's care in like manner as did Moses, and the Apostle Paul did unto those who would follow in their footsteps of faith.

Let's quickly look at a couple more verses that express this same line of thinking. In PSALMS 37 David writes: 4 Delight thyself also in the LORD; and he shall give thee the desires of thine heart. 5 Commit thy way unto the LORD; trust also in him; and he shall bring it to pass. PROVERBS 16:3 states: Commit thy works unto the LORD, and thy thoughts shall be established.

ACTS 20:32 And now, brethren, I commend you to God, and to the word of his grace, which is able to build you up, and to give you an inheritance among all them which are

sanctified. The third key element of the seven found here in ACTS 20:32 concerns "the word," here called "the word of his grace." There are several ways of expressing the word of God, and "the word of his grace" is one of them. ACTS 14:3 uses this same phrase, speaking of Paul and Barnabas: *Long time therefore abode they speaking boldly in the Lord, which gave testimony unto the word of his grace, and granted signs and wonders to be done by their hands.* In scripture we find several similar phrases. "The word of the Lord" is found in 251 scriptures, the last of which reads: *But the word of the Lord endureth for ever. And this is the word which by the gospel is preached unto you.* {1 PETER 1:25}. In ISAIAH 5:24 the word of the Lord is called: "the word of the Holy One of Israel." It is called "the word of the Lord GOD" in EZEKIEL 6:3; 25:3; and 36:4. Forty five scriptures reference "the word of the Lord" as "the word of God." LUKE 11:28 kindly states these words of Jesus: *...blessed are they that hear the word of God, and keep it.* REVELATION 19:13 plainly tells us that it is Jesus who is the Word of God: *And he was clothed with a vesture dipped in blood: and his name is called The Word of God.* Jesus is also called "the Word of life" in 1 JOHN 1:1. ACTS 13:26 tells us: *Men and brethren, children of the stock of Abraham, and whosoever among you feareth God, to you is the word of this salvation sent.* The word of God is also called "the word of the LORD of hosts" in ISAIAH 39:5; and in ZECHARIAH 7:4; 8:1; and 8:18. It is called "the word of the kingdom" in MATTHEW 13:19; "the word of the gospel" in ACTS 15:7; "the word of the Lord Jesus" in ACTS 19:10; "the word of life" in PHILIPPIANS 2:16; "the word of the truth of the gospel" in COLOSSIANS 1:5; "the word of Christ" in COLOSSIANS 3:16; "the word of his power" in HEBREWS 1:3; and "the word of exhortation" in HEBREWS 13:22. 2 TIMOTHY 2:19 tells us: *...the word of God is not bound.* HEBREWS 4:12 states: *For the word of God is quick, and powerful, and sharper than any twoedged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discernor of the thoughts and intents of the heart.* The word of God is called "the word of truth" in five scriptures. EPHESIANS 1:13 in part reads: *...the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation...* 2 TIMOTHY 2:15 tells us to: *Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth.* ISAIAH 40:8 reads: *The grass withereth, the flower fadeth: but the word of our God shall stand for ever.* In REVELATION 3:10 Jesus states unto the church of Philadelphia: *Because thou hast kept the word of my patience, I also will keep thee from the hour of temptation, which shall come upon all the world, to try them that dwell upon the earth.* Are you beginning to see just how important "the word of His grace" is?

ACTS 20:32 *And now, brethren, I commend you to God, and to the word of his grace, which is able to build you up, and to give you an inheritance among all them which are sanctified.* The fourth of the seven elements of this verse draws our attention to the phrase: "His grace."

Grace in itself a huge subject to study in scripture, which we wont cover here. The subject of grace is found from GENESIS to REVELATION. The first mention of grace is in GENESIS 6:8 *But Noah found grace in the eyes of the LORD.* The last mention of grace is made in the last verse of the Bible, REVELATION 22:21 *The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all. Amen.* From GENESIS through REVELATION we have "the word of His grace." The word "grace" is found 170 times in scripture. Moses wrote the word "grace" eighteen times; Peter wrote it ten times; John seven. The word "grace" is used 99 times by the Apostle Paul in his writings! What this means is that no other inspired writer of scripture wrote about, nor probably appreciated the grace of God more than the Apostle Paul did.

Recall that the Apostle Paul called himself the chiefest of sinners in 1 TIMOTHY 1:15 *This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptation, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners; of whom I am chief.* He called himself the chief of sinners, in part because as a sinner he persecuted the church of God. He noted this twice in his epistles. In 1 CORINTHIANS 15:9 we read: *For I am the least of the apostles, that am not meet to be called an apostle, because I persecuted the church of God.* Then in GALATIANS 1:13-16 we read: *For ye have heard of my conversation in time past in the Jews' religion, how that beyond measure I persecuted the church of God, and wasted it: 14 And profited*

in the Jews' religion above many my equals in mine own nation, being more exceedingly zealous of the traditions of my fathers. 15 But when it pleased God, who separated me from my mother's womb, and called me by his grace, 16 To reveal his Son in me, that I might preach him among the heathen;... . From the chiefest of sinners Paul became the chiefest of Apostles, as he also noted in two scriptures. 2 CORINTHIANS 11:5 For I suppose I was not a whit behind the very chiefest apostles. 2 CORINTHIANS 12:11 I am become a fool in glorying; ye have compelled me: for I ought to have been commended of you: for in nothing am I behind the very chiefest apostles, though I be nothing.

Between being the chiefest of sinners, to becoming the chiefest of the Apostles we find the amazing grace of God manifest unto old Saul (desired) of Tarsus, who became the Apostle Paul (little), the Apostle unto the Gentiles. It was only the Apostle Paul who wrote: EPHESIANS 2:5 Even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ, (by grace ye are saved;) ...8 For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God. It was also the Apostle Paul who wrote in 2 THESSALONIANS 2:16 & 17: Now our Lord Jesus Christ himself, and God, even our Father, which hath loved us, and hath given us everlasting consolation and good hope through grace, 17 Comfort your hearts, and stablish you in every good word and work.

Let's now focus our attention on the phrase found here in ACTS 20:32 ...his grace. The phrase ...his grace... is found in nine scriptures, all of them associated with the Apostle Paul. I don't know if there ever was anyone who ever got saved that appreciated "his grace" more than the Apostle Paul did. All who are saved, and who ever were saved should have enjoyed, and rested in this fact of what Paul wrote us in ROMANS 3:24 Being justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus:... . Paul wrote in 1 CORINTHIANS 15:10 But by the grace of God I am what I am: and his grace which was bestowed upon me was not in vain; but I laboured more abundantly than they all: yet not I, but the grace of God which was with me. To the believer Paul also wrote the following scriptures about His grace: EPHESIANS 1:6 To the praise of the glory of his grace, wherein he hath made us accepted in the beloved. 7 In whom we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace... . EPHESIANS 2:7 That in the ages to come he might shew the exceeding riches of his grace in his kindness toward us through Christ Jesus. TITUS 3:7 That being justified by his grace, we should be made heirs according to the hope of eternal life.

We have now covered eight of the nine scriptures where we find the phrase "his grace." The last one we will look at is found in ACTS 14:3, where we find Paul and Barnabas a long time in Iconium. ACTS 14:3 Long time therefore abode they speaking boldly in the Lord, which gave testimony unto the word of his grace, and granted signs and wonders to be done by their hands. We could also say that a longer time Paul abode at Ephesus, and the word of his grace was also preached among them, and signs and wonders were also manifest in their midst, for ACTS 19:11 & 12 again tell us: And God wrought special miracles by the hands of Paul: 12 So that from his body were brought unto the sick handkerchiefs or aprons, and the diseases departed from them, and the evil spirits went out of them. It was to these very same Ephesian elders who witnessed these things first hand that the Apostle Paul was committing them unto God, as we once again read in ACTS 20:32 And now, brethren, I commend you to God, and to the word of his grace, which is able to build you up, and to give you an inheritance among all them which are sanctified.

The fifth key element found here in ACTS 20:32 references the building up of the Saints. ACTS 20:32 And now, brethren, I commend you to God, and to the word of his grace, which is able to build you up, and to give you an inheritance among all them which are sanctified.

There is a key phrase used here that links "the word of his grace" to the building up of the Saints. That phrase is: "which is able to."

My Dad was a custom home builder; one of the finest builders in Denver. He understood the importance of having a good, and solid, well planned, and perfectly laid out foundation. If the foundation was off just a little, it would mess up the rest of the construction of the home. So he endeavored to hire the best in the business at getting

the foundation just right. This meant that holes had to be drilled in the soil where the house was to be built, the dirt then be examined by an engineer, and recommendations followed that would allow for the most solid foundation. If cussions were to be first poured before any foundation work could ever be started, then that was what had to be done. Always before even the cussions were poured was the excavation. My Dad seemed to always use the same old excavation contractor because he could dig a hole where the house was to be built, and be within an inch of keeping the basement level. This saved workers hours of labor later. The big old houses my Dad used to build also had to have their foundations be square, in every direction. I remember spending hours with him getting the measurements just right, so that the hole for the foundation would be perfectly square. Then the best foundation people were hired to construct the actual foundation. By being such a perfectionist, and paying attention to such details, by Dad was able to construct some award winning homes.

What does all of this have to do with what we are studying? *"The word of his grace"* is the oh so important foundation *"which is able to build" up the Saints!* Jesus Christ Himself is "The Word of God" as we have so many time before noted in REVELATION 19:13. Jesus is also that sure foundation as noted in ISAIAH 28:16 *Therefore thus saith the Lord GOD, Behold, I lay in Zion for a foundation a stone, a tried stone, a precious corner stone, a sure foundation: he that believeth shall not make haste.* Peter quoted this scripture in 1 PETER 2:6 *Wherefore also it is contained in the scripture, Behold, I lay in Sion a chief corner stone, elect, precious: and he that believeth on him shall not be confounded.* The Apostle Paul also notes that Jesus is that sure foundation in this statement found in 1 CORINTHIANS 3:10 & 11: *According to the grace of God which is given unto me, as a wise masterbuilder, I have laid the foundation, and another buildeth thereon. But let every man take heed how he buildeth thereupon. 11 For other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ.* The Apostle Paul also acknowledges that Jesus Christ is the chief foundation corner stone as noted above in ISAIAH 28:16 in his writing the following passage from EPHESIANS 2. EPHESIANS 2:19 *Now therefore ye are no more strangers and foreigners, but fellowcitizens with the saints, and of the household of God; 20 And are built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner stone; 21 In whom all the building fitly framed together groweth unto an holy temple in the Lord: 22 In whom ye also are builded together for an habitation of God through the Spirit.* There will never be a Master piece of His construction without such a sure and perfect foundation. EPHESIANS 2:10 *For we are his workmanship, (His Masterpiece in the making) created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them.*

The phrase from ACTS 20:32, *"which is able to"* is found in three New Testament scriptures; and the phrase *"is able to"* is found in twenty-six scriptures! Twenty-six is the number associated with the GOSPEL, or THE GOOD NEWS of the GOSPEL. The gospel is *"the word of his grace."* The gospel is *...the word of his grace, which is able to build you up, and to give you an inheritance among all them which are sanctified.*

Though I couldn't find no translation of ACTS 20:32 that read *"who is able to build you up,"* rest assured it is the triune God that is the Who, by "the word of His grace," Who is able *to build you up* and give you an inheritance among all them that are sanctified. Many of the twenty-six scriptures where we find the phrase *"is able to"* verify the fact that the Lord is the One *"which is able to build" up the Saints!* For example the three Hebrew children in DANIEL 3 knew Who their foundation was. They said in DANIEL 3:17 *If it be so, our God whom we serve is able to deliver us from the burning fiery furnace, and he will deliver us out of thine hand, O king.* The Apostle Paul wrote in 2 CORINTHIANS 9:8 *And God is able to make all grace abound toward you; that ye, always having all sufficiency in all things, may abound to every good work:...* In EPHESIANS 3:20 Paul again encouraged these very same Ephesian Saints, writing: *Now unto him that is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that worketh in us, 21 Unto him be glory in the church by Christ Jesus throughout all ages, world without end. Amen.* Paul again wrote Timothy of

the fact that it is our Saviour, "who is able to build you up," using these words in 2 TIMOTHY 1:12 *For the which cause I also suffer these things: nevertheless I am not ashamed: for I know whom I have believed, and am persuaded that he is able to keep that which I have committed unto him against that day.* Jude also made note of this fact in JUDE 1:24 & 25: *Now unto him that is able to keep you from falling, and to present you faultless before the presence of his glory with exceeding joy, 25 To the only wise God our Saviour, be glory and majesty, dominion and power, both now and ever. Amen.*

One of the meanings of the phrase from ACTS 20:32, "which is able to" means: which has power to. This comes from the meaning of the word "able" here, coming from the Greek word *dunamai* {doo'-nam-ahee}, number 1410 in the Strong's Greek Concordance, that also means: to be able to do something; to be capable, strong and powerful; or to have power. Of course in our text it is *...the word of his grace, which is able to* (which has power to) build you up, and to give you an inheritance among all them which are sanctified. Here in our text we find that this power found in the Word of God is able to build up the Saints. In HEBREWS 7:25 we find that this Greek word *dunamai* {doo'-nam-ahee} is used in regard to His saving power: *Wherefore he is able <1410> also to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by him, seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for them.* In JOHN 10:29 this Greek word *dunamai* {doo'-nam-ahee} is used to show His mighty keeping power: *My Father, which gave them me, is greater than all; and no man is able <1410> to pluck them out of my Father's hand.* In EPHESIANS 3:20 above we found His exceeding abundant more than we can ask or even think power: *Now unto him that is able to <1410> do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that worketh in us.* And in PHILIPPIANS 3:21 we find *dunamai* {doo'-nam-ahee} used to express His translating resurrection power: *Who shall change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto his glorious body, according to the working whereby he is able <1410> even to subdue all things unto himself.*

The building up of the Saints can only take place after the proper foundation is laid, and we found in 1 CORINTHIANS 3:11 above that: *For other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ.* Upon this solid foundation can be raised a building, a building of the Lord's. 1 CORINTHIANS 3:9 tells us: *For we are labourers together with God: ye are God's husbandry, ye are God's building.* These Ephesian elders already knew what we just read here in 1 CORINTHIANS 3:9, for Paul had already taught them these very same truths, having written 1 CORINTHIANS 3:9 from Ephesus. So Paul states here in ACTS 20:32 *And now, brethren, I commend you to God, and to the word of his grace, which is able to build you up <2026>...* The Greek word Paul uses here translated "to build you up" is *epoikodomeo* {ep-oy-kod-om-eh'-o}, number 2026 in the Strong's Greek Concordance, found eight times in scripture. Here the word is applied to a house which is raised and completed in degrees, and by toil. It means to build upon, or to build up, and to finish the structure of which the foundation has already been laid, to give constant increase in Christian knowledge, and in a life conformed thereto.

We noted here that *epoikodomeo* {ep-oy-kod-om-eh'-o}, number 2026 in the Strong's Greek Concordance, which is translated in ACTS 20:32 "to build you up," is found eight times in New Testament scripture. Again one of the meanings of the number eight points us to the BRIDE of Christ. One of the first scriptures that begins to teach about the Bride of Christ is in GENESIS 2:22, which reads: *And the rib, which the LORD God had taken from man, made he a woman, and brought her unto the man.* The word "made" here in GENESIS 2:22 is the same Hebrew word that translates into: build, built, buildeth, build up, plus some other meanings, and also means: to be built, to be built up, and to be established. In light of what we have just learned, we can read GENESIS 2:22 this way: *And the rib, which the LORD God had taken from man, builded he a woman, and brought her unto the man.* The gospel of the Apostle Paul was specifically given to build up Saints, and there will be a rib portion of these Saints from this present church age that will be taken from the body of Christ, also known as the church, from which He will build a woman, known as His Bride, who will brought unto The Man, Christ Jesus! This is the building work that is still in progress today. *And the rib, which the LORD God had taken from man, builded he a woman, and brought her unto the man...* Christ Jesus!

We mentioned the Greek word Paul uses here in ACTS 20:32 that is translated “to build you up” is *epoikodomeo* {ep-oy-kod-om-eh'-o}, number 2026 in the Strong's Greek Concordance, and is found eight times in scripture. Here are the eight scriptures: ACTS 20:32 *And now, brethren, I commend you to God, and to the word of his grace, which is able to build you up <2026>, and to give you an inheritance among all them which are sanctified.* 1 CORINTHIANS 3:10 *According to the grace of God which is given unto me, as a wise masterbuilder, I have laid the foundation, and another buildeth <2026> thereon. But let every man take heed how he buildeth <2026> thereupon.* 11 *For other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ.* 12 *Now if any man build <2026> upon this foundation gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, stubble;* 13 *Every man's work shall be made manifest: for the day shall declare it, because it shall be revealed by fire; and the fire shall try every man's work of what sort it is.* 14 *If any man's work abide which he hath built <2026> thereupon, he shall receive a reward.* EPHESIANS 2:19 *Now therefore ye are no more strangers and foreigners, but fellowcitizens with the saints, and of the household of God;* 20 *And are built <2026> upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner stone;* 21 *In whom all the building fitly framed together groweth unto an holy temple in the Lord:* 22 *In whom ye also are builted together for an habitation of God through the Spirit.* COLOSSIANS 2:6 *As ye have therefore received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk ye in him:* 7 *Rooted and built up <2026> in him, and stablished in the faith, as ye have been taught, abounding therein with thanksgiving.* JUDE 1:20 *But ye, beloved, building up <2026> yourselves on your most holy faith, praying in the Holy Ghost,* 21 *Keep yourselves in the love of God, looking for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ unto eternal life.*

We have mentioned that there are seven key elements to ACTS 20:32, the verse that Brother Copley called: “one of the most powerful portions of Holy Writ.” We have come to the sixth key element of this verse, which may be the most important we have covered so far in it's doctrinal teaching. The sixth key element found in ACTS 20:32 concerns an inheritance. ACTS 20:32 *And now, brethren, I commend you to God, and to the word of his grace, which is able to build you up, and to give you an inheritance among all them which are sanctified.*

Here is what Brother Copley had to say about an inheritance. “There is an inheritance for believers. Salvation from sin is not the inheritance. Salvation is God's free gift to undeserving, guilty men, when they repent, and believe the Gospel. A rich young ruler came to Jesus, thinking to inherit eternal life by doing something -- LUKE 18. The Lord showed him at once what he would have to do, if he would gain it by his own works. He was very sorrowful; for he was very rich. He would not trade his wealth for the lasting riches of eternal life. No, he would not if he could -- “*the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God*” -- 1 CORINTHIANS 2:14. He could not if he would -- “*for by grace are ye saved thru faith; not of works, lest any man should boast.*” EPHESIANS 2:8 & 9. Jesus proceeded to show him and the disciples that salvation is not obtained by inheritance, but by faith in Himself, the world's Sin-bearer. By faith in Jesus, we become children of God (JOHN 1:12, 13); “*and if children, then heirs, heirs of God and joint-heirs with Christ, if so be that we suffer with Him, that we may be also glorified together*” -- ROMANS 8:17. Children justly inherit, or fall heir to, their parents' riches. Likewise God's children are His rightful inheritors. But parents divide their possessions to their children usually upon certain deserving conditions, as good behaviour, etc. Likewise God's children will come into the divine inheritance upon certain prescribed scriptural conditions. Sinners are saved by faith upon the merit of Christ, because of His death in their behalf; but believers will obtain an inheritance because of their own merit, by divine enabling, of course. If this is not the truth, why Paul's exhortation to give heed to the Word of grace? If eternal life is the inheritance; if believers shall all obtain an inheritance by the fact only of their being saved, there is no meaning to the Apostle's words here. Observe closely that the joint heirship with Christ hereafter, depends upon joint suffering with Him here. Being glorified together with Jesus, depends upon our suffering and groaning in fellowship with Him on earth.. ROMANS 8:17 to 39 teaches that, or nothing at all. Study also 2 TIMOTHY 2:9 to 14.”

"Let no Christian worker imagine that he will inherit alike with others, and be rewarded on a par with others, no matter how he lives, or labors, or what he teaches. Let no believer think that he can live after the flesh, and expect an inheritance and a reward after the Spirit. Impossible! Unreasonable! Unjust! Unscriptural! Children cannot remain dwarfs and receive an inheritance. They would not appreciate and enjoy it, if they did receive it. Just so it is in the spiritual. Neither can dwarfs be of much use in service; therefore, for them there is little reward. *"Be not deceived. God is not mocked. Whatsoever any man soweth, that shall he also reap."* {GALATIANS 6:7}."

"What is the inheritance? Someone may ask. REVELATION 21:7 answers the question in a comprehensive way, giving also the chief condition upon which the inheritance is obtained. *"He that overcometh shall inherit all things."* There is a present inheritance for those who are born again. All that the death of Christ has purchased, as for example, divine healing for the body, and the anointing with the Spirit. The latter is the earnest of our inheritance in its fulness -- EPHESIANS 1:14. Thru faith and patience, Saints inherit the promises -- HEBREWS 6:12. Now if you would know what is the full inheritance of the Church, study Paul's epistles. If you would know the rewards of the Saints, study also the seven letters to the seven churches in Asia -- REVELATION 2 & 3. In those various writings, we learn also upon what conditions both will be obtained." {End of quoting from Brother Copley}.

Brother Copley noted in his discourse above the importance of knowing Paul's gospel; knowing Paul's epistles. This is a big part of why we are studying the life of the Apostle Paul, to learn more about the man who wrote these epistles. One of the topics Paul was instructed of the Lord to teach concerned the teaching about an inheritance. Paul, as Saul of Tarsus, was told on the road to Damascus these words by the Lord Jesus Christ found in ACTS 26:16-18, which again reads: *But rise, and stand upon thy feet: for I have appeared unto thee for this purpose, to make thee a minister and a witness both of these things which thou hast seen, and of those things in the which I will appear unto thee; 17 Delivering thee from the people, and from the Gentiles, unto whom now I send thee, 18 To open their eyes, and to turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins, and inheritance among them which are sanctified by faith that is in me.*

Let's look at some scriptures that shows how Paul taught this doctrine of inheritance. One such example is found in our text of ACTS 20:32 where Paul again states: *And now, brethren, I commend you to God, and to the word of his grace, which is able to build you up, and to give you an inheritance among all them which are sanctified.* Note again that it is the word of God, the word of His grace which worketh also in you that believe, that is able to build you up, and to give you an inheritance among all them which believe. Later to these same Ephesians Paul would write, and again emphasize facts concerning their, and our eternal inheritance. In EPHESIANS 1 we find Paul mentioning about some of the things Christ Jesus purchased for us with His own precious blood on the cross of Calvary, and how He has given us an inheritance. EPHESIANS 1:11 *In whom also we have obtained an inheritance, being predestinated according to the purpose of him who worketh all things after the counsel of his own will: 12 That we should be to the praise of his glory, who first trusted in Christ. 13 In whom ye also trusted, after that ye heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation: in whom also after that ye believed, ye were sealed with that holy Spirit of promise, 14 Which is the earnest of our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession, unto the praise of his glory.* Paul knew that not all believers would understand, or be able at first to latch on to such wonderful doctrines, so he writes out a prayer of his, also found in EPHESIANS 1, and there he states: *17 That the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give unto you the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of him: 18 The eyes of your understanding being enlightened; that ye may know what is the hope of his calling, and what the riches of the glory of his inheritance in the saints, 19 And what is the exceeding greatness of his power to us-ward who believe, according to the working of his mighty power, 20 Which he wrought in Christ, when he raised him from the dead, and set him at his own right hand in the heavenly places,....*

To the COLOSSIANS Paul writes out another prayer of his, and states starting in COLOSSIANS 1:9 *For this cause we also, since the day we heard it, do not cease to pray for you, and to desire that ye might be filled with the knowledge of his will in all wisdom and spiritual understanding; 10 That ye might walk worthy of the Lord unto all pleasing, being fruitful in every good work, and increasing in the knowledge of God; 11 Strengthened with all might, according to his glorious power, unto all patience and longsuffering with joyfulness; 12 Giving thanks unto the Father, which hath made us meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light: 13 Who hath delivered us from the power of darkness, and hath translated us into the kingdom of his dear Son: 14 In whom we have redemption through his blood, even the forgiveness of sins:...*

Earlier in this study we have also learned that there are different inheritances among the believers. From ancient Hebrew times we find that an inheritance consisted of passing property down from one generation to another, with the eldest usually given the larger portion. The value system of God is similar when it comes to an inheritance, with the full overcomers obtaining the greatest portion. REVELATION 21:7 tells us: *He that overcometh shall inherit all things; and I will be his God, and he shall be my son.* Now all believers are sons of God by their new birth in Christ Jesus. 1 JOHN 3:1 & 2 tells us: *Behold, what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God: therefore the world knoweth us not, because it knew him not. 2 Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is.* GALATIANS 3:26 further states: *For ye are all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus.* All of God's children have an inheritance. ROMANS 8:17 explains degrees of heirship. ROMANS 8:17 *And if children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ; if so be that we suffer with him, that we may be also glorified together.* We see here that there are heirs, and that there are joint-heirs with Christ.

A joint-heir is a fellow heir, a heir together, a heir with, or a joint participant with some other heir or heirs. In this case we are discussing joint-heirship with Jesus Christ our Lord and Saviour. HEBREWS 1:1 & 2 tells us that Jesus Christ has been appointed heir of all things by God. HEBREWS 1:1 *God, who at sundry times and in divers manners spake in time past unto the fathers by the prophets, 2 Hath in these last days spoken unto us by his Son, whom he hath appointed heir of all things, by whom also he made the worlds.* In other words a joint-heir with Christ will be someone who shares with Christ Jesus His heirship of all things appointed to Him by God. This someone will actually be a group of someone's collectively known as the Bride of Christ, the full overcomers. This makes sense once you realize that husbands and wives in normal healthy marriages share equally ownership of all their things. Since Jesus Christ has been *...appointed heir of all things...* His Bride will be joint-heir of all things. I think all Christians want to be a *...joint-heir with Christ...*, but most will fall short of this opportunity because they are not willing to wholly commit their heart attitude to the second part of ROMANS 8:17, which reads; *if so be that we suffer with him.* In other words the only way a Son of God can become a joint-heir with Christ, is to be willing to *suffer with him.* The Apostle Paul re-emphasizes this point in that often misunderstood scripture of 2 TIMOTHY 2:12; *If we suffer, we shall also reign with him: if we deny him, he also will deny us.* Brother Hill has often emphasized the truth of this statement by pointing out the fact that Paul is telling Timothy this; Timothy if we suffer with Jesus Christ, we shall also reign with Him, however if we in our hearts deny Him the right to suffer with Him, then He has no choice but to deny us the right of joint-heirship with Him. This has nothing to do with the fact of ones salvation, but has everything to do with living lives of faith, and going on to have Gods best in our lives. All Christians are heirs of God, but not all Christians are joint-heirs with Christ, for not all Christians are willing to suffer with Christ Jesus, and this is what ROMANS 8:17 is pointing out. So to be a *...joint-heir with Christ...* means to be willing to *...suffer with him.*

The joint-heirs with Christ are the Bride of Christ, those who were willing to study their Bible, and draw close unto Christ by the leading of the Holy Spirit on a life long quest to obtain God's best, to separate themselves from the world, and popular religious teaching, and follow the Apostle Paul as he followed Christ, and go on to marry Christ

Jesus. In REVELATION chapters 2 & 3 seven churches were found in these two chapters, and each church mentioned had different rewards of the Saints. This speaks to us a little of the different inheritances which will be found of the different Saints.

The seventh key element found in ACTS 20:32 concerns sanctification. ACTS 20:32 *And now, brethren, I commend you to God, and to the word of his grace, which is able to build you up, and to give you an inheritance among all them which are sanctified.*

The doctrine of sanctification is a huge, and important subject paramount in understanding the Apostle Paul's teaching. We can see by the way the Apostle Paul used this word "sanctified" here in ACTS 20:32, that the Ephesian elders understood this doctrine of sanctification, nor did they have any question as to what he was talking to them about. We have studied about sanctification many times already in this study. We will now review some of our thoughts concerning ...all them which are sanctified.

Sanctification is one of the giant building blocks Paul's doctrine first laid upon the solid Rock foundation of Jesus Christ. Sanctification was one of the doctrines that the Lord Jesus Christ ordained the Apostle Paul to preach unto the Gentiles, and He did so when He first appeared unto him on the road to Damascus. This takes us back to that most important scripture we so often reference in this study, ACTS 26:16-18. ACTS 26:16 *But rise, and stand upon thy feet: for I have appeared unto thee for this purpose, to make thee a minister and a witness both of these things which thou hast seen, and of those things in the which I will appear unto thee; 17 Delivering thee from the people, and from the Gentiles, unto whom now I send thee, 18 To open their eyes, and to turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins, and inheritance among them which are sanctified by faith that is in me.* Note that Jesus specifically told the Apostle Paul that he was to teach the Gentiles what it is they have ...among them which are sanctified by faith that is in me.

The Greek verb "sanctified" used here in ACTS 20:32 is hagiozo {hag-ee-ad'-zo}, number 37 in the Strong's Greek Concordance, a verb used 29 times in 26 different New Testament scriptures. The fact that this word hagiozo {hag-ee-ad'-zo} is number 37 in the Strong's Greek Concordance is also significant, in that the number 37 is the number that has to do with THE WORD OF GOD! Again REVELATION 19:13 plainly tells us that Jesus Christ Himself is called "The Word of God," because He is THE WORD OF GOD!

Eight times this word hagiozo {hag-ee-ad'-zo}, "sanctified," is used in the present perfect tense. The perfect tense in Greek corresponds to the perfect tense in English, and describes an action which is viewed as having been completed in the past, once and for all, not needing to be repeated. Such an action was completed by Jesus Christ on the cross, once and for all, not needing to be repeated, as is noted by the Apostle Paul in this statement found in HEBREWS 10:10 *By the which will we are sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all.* All believers in Jesus Christ ...are sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all. 1 CORINTHIANS 1:2 teaches: that all believers in Jesus Christ are sanctified in Christ Jesus, and are called saints, with all that believe in every place call upon the name of Jesus Christ our Lord. In ROMANS 15:15 & 16 the Apostle Paul writes the Saints in Rome concerning this doctrine of sanctification, which he has already taught these Ephesian Saints for three years, stating: 15 *Nevertheless, brethren, I have written the more boldly unto you in some sort, as putting you in mind, because of the grace that is given to me of God, 16 That I should be the minister of Jesus Christ to the Gentiles, ministering the gospel of God, that the offering up of the Gentiles might be acceptable, being sanctified by the Holy Ghost.*

Vine's Dictionary of New Testament words tells us that this Greek verb hagiozo {hag-ee-ad'-zo} means here in ACTS 20:32 "the setting apart of the believer for God." ACTS 20:32 *And now, brethren, I commend you to God, and to the word of his grace, which is able to build you up, and to give you an inheritance among all them which are sanctified.* This further shows us once again that sanctification also means to be separated unto God, a place which men can only enter by faith in Christ Jesus. Sanctification means set apart for God's use, and is what ROMANS 6, 7, and 8 are all about.

Brother Copley wrote a tract about 100 years ago called "Pauline Sanctification," where he expounds upon this doctrine of sanctification, which the Apostle Paul taught,

which we are to embrace, especially if we ever expect to be a full overcomer! Brother Copley makes mention of *...being sanctified by the Holy Ghost...* which we referenced above in ROMANS 15:15 & 16, and he noted: "the anointing with the Spirit is necessary to accomplish our full sanctification. ...It is Christ enthroned within, through the fullness of the Holy Spirit. Christ Jesus is made unto us of God sanctification -- 1 CORINTHIANS 1:30. He is our holiness. We have none apart from Him. No matter how free from sin we are, if we do not see that Christ's indwelling alone is our victory, we will go down in defeat again and again. Paul's nutshell testimony rings out most clearly here -- "*Christ liveth in me*" -- GALATIANS 2:20. As to personal experience, Christ's enthronement, or indwelling in us is the great central doctrine of the New Testament. This is the sanctification. And this is brought to us in the anointing with the Holy Spirit. Observe in" (ROMANS) "chapter 8 the various phrases about the Spirit -- "Walk after the Spirit;" "the Spirit of life;" "the mindings of the Spirit;" "in the Spirit;" the "Spirit that dwelleth in you," etc. Notice, too, that it is all in connection with Christ. "In Christ;" "Christ in you;" "the Spirit of Christ;" "the Spirit of Him that raised up Jesus," etc."

"Then observe that this is Sanctified Life:" (Quoting from ROMANS 8) "(1) ...is a life free from condemnation... -- ROMANS 8:1; (2). ...is a life "*free from the law of the sin and death*" ROMANS 8:3. Because, (3) we "*walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit*" -- ROMANS 8:4, "*ye are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit, if so be that the Spirit of God dwell in you*" -- ROMANS 8:9. (4) It is an experience of "life and peace" -- ROMANS 8:6. (5) ...It is a life of victory in the body... "*...if Christ be in you, the body is dead on account of sin...*" -- ROMANS 8:10. (6) It is a life of victory over the clamorings of the flesh,... *...through the Spirit, we make the deeds of the body to die continually...* -- ROMANS 8:13. (7) In Christ, we are led by the Spirit, and have the deep assurance of sonship with God, and the bright hope of being glorified" together "with Christ" -- ROMANS 8:14-17. (8) This sanctified life is also one of intercession for others. This is the sublimest and most far reaching phase of the Spirit-filled life. It is to be learned after we have the anointing with the Spirit, we learn to yield to God. The Spirit helps our infirmities -- ROMANS 8:26. (9) The Spirit-filled life is one of perpetual advantage. "*...We 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." End of quoting from Brother Copley, but I am going to add another tenth (10) item to this sanctified life that we have in Christ Jesus. It is a life that is sanctified in Christ Jesus, that cannot be separated from His infinite love by tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword, or death, or life, or by angels, or by principalities, or by powers, or by things present, or by things to come, nor by height, nor by depth, nor by any other thing... ROMANS 8:35-39.

Recall how Jesus prayed for our sanctification in His prayer of JOHN 17. JOHN 17:14 *I have given them thy word; and the world hath hated them, because they are not of the world, even as I am not of the world. 15 I pray not that thou shouldest take them out of the world, but that thou shouldest keep them from the evil. 16 They are not of the world, even as I am not of the world. 17 Sanctify them through thy truth: thy word is truth. 18 As thou hast sent me into the world, even so have I also sent them into the world. 19 And for their sakes I sanctify myself, that they also might be sanctified through the truth.* ACTS 26:18 puts us in notice of the fact that all believers *...are sanctified by faith that is in...* Christ Jesus. That is all believers are separated unto God from the world by faith in Jesus Christ. We know that there are degrees of separation also as some believers apprehend more and more of the word of God than do others. Some believers separate themselves apart from the world more than do other believers because some believers believe more of God's word than do others.

This doctrine of sanctification then goes right along with, and supplements Paul's doctrine of separation, which we studied earlier in this study. {See pages 504 to 513 of these notes}. Here is some of what we noted in that portion of this study.

Separation was something that the Apostle Paul was very familiar with from the time he was a baby. In ACTS 23:6 Paul states: *...I am a Pharisee, the son of a Pharisee...* . The word Pharisee comes from an Aramaic word meaning "separated." {Study again page 2 of these notes.} This means that the Pharisee chose a manner of life different, a

life separate from the general Jewish public. The Pharisee was looked upon by the general Jewish public in high regard. Paul grew up in this "separated" life style. When Paul met our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ on the road to Damascus, he became even more separated, even to the point of being separated to be the Apostle unto the Gentiles! ACTS 26:16-18 *...I have appeared unto thee for this purpose, to make thee a minister.... unto... the Gentiles,... To open their eyes, and to turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins, and inheritance among them which are sanctified by faith that is in me.*

All the Old Testament worthies of faith knew the doctrine of separation, for their lives reflected the fact that they lived different than the majority around them. They lived by faith, and that is how they separated themselves from others. The same is still true today. In other words the full overcomers will come from among those who live the doctrine of separation.

Sanctification is a word that in part means to be set apart, (separated if you will), set apart for God's use. The first time we find sanctification in scripture is in GENESIS 2:3 *And God blessed the seventh day, and sanctified it: because that in it he had rested from all his work which God created and made.* Stated another way, the seventh day was set apart unto God as a day of rest, a day free from work, a day set apart for the service of God. It was a separate day from the other days of the week. The day we meet that is set apart for the service of God according to New Testament Doctrine is the first day of the week, Sunday, a separate day for worship from the rest of the week. {Study JOHN 20:19; ACTS 20:7; and 1 CORINTHIANS 16:2.}

Consider Abraham for a moment. GALATIANS 3 and ROMANS 4 define Abraham as the father of those which are of faith. {Study GALATIANS 3:6-9.} Abraham before he could become that great man of faith had to make choices of separation that is first talked about in GENESIS 12:1. GENESIS 12:1 *Now the LORD had said unto Abram, Get thee out of thy country, and from thy kindred, and from thy father's house, unto a land that I will shew thee:...* . In other words, Abraham, even before God changed his name from Abram unto Abraham, and was told of the Lord to separate himself from the land that he now dwelt in, and to separate himself from his relatives, and to separate himself even from his father's house, and to separate for this purpose, to come *...unto a land that I will shew thee:...* . We see here many degrees of separation, and many steps to separation. These were just the first of many steps of faith that Abraham took throughout his life that separated him, set him apart from other men, and in the end made him that great man of faith that he became. Study GENESIS 15:18-21, and NEHEMIAH 9:7 & 8, and ACTS 7:2-4, and see how Abraham separated himself from his own country, and his own family, and dwelt in the land of Canaan. Study also GENESIS 13 and see how Abraham and his herdmen had to separate themselves from Lot and his herdmen.

As for Abraham, after he separated himself from Lot, he continued to make choices that separated him as the father of them which are of faith. Abraham separated himself from ordinary men by choosing to believe and to trust in God. When Sodom and Gomorrah were to be destroyed, Abraham believed God for the safe keeping of Lot and his family. When Abraham and Sarah were childless well after the normal years of child bearing, Abraham believed God for Isaac. When Abraham was told to offer his only son Isaac unto God, Abraham followed God's instructions, knowing in his heart that God would provide himself a lamb for a burnt offering. After Sarah died, Abraham believed that God would provide a wife for Isaac from among his own kindred, and GENESIS 24, tells us that this was so. All of these events tested the faith of Abraham. All of these events separated Abraham as the father of them which are of faith. Abraham's faith increased to the point where he set his affections on things above, and not on the things of this earth, (COLOSSIANS 3:2), thus we read in HEBREWS 11:10 *For he looked for a city which hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God.* It was this full overcoming faith in God that separated Abraham into one of the Old Testament hero's of faith mentioned in the 11th chapter of HEBREWS.

What separated Enoch from his peers? Enoch walked with God, and pleased God by walking in faith, thus Enoch's life was ended by translation, separating him as one of two in the Old Testament who was translated.

Noah found grace in the eyes of the Lord even though he lived in a wicked generation. {Study GENESIS 6:5-9.} Noah separated himself from the men of his generation by believing God, and following God's instructions on building an ark. 2 PETER 2:5 calls Noah "a preacher of righteousness." To whom did Noah preach? Noah preached to those of his wicked generation while he was preparing the ark God had commanded him to build. {Study 1 PETER 3:18-22.} There was a wide and vast separation between Noah, and the men of his generation. GENESIS 6:3 indicates that it may have taken Noah 120 years to build the ark. This means that Noah was "a preacher of righteousness" a minimum of 120 years.

Study all the lives of those mentioned in HEBREWS 11, and notice what separated them from even other believers. In all cases it was their faith in God, and their steps of faith that separated them from their peers. Yes, even Rahab took several steps of faith that separated her from the unbelievers of Jericho, and because of her faith, and her willingness to be separated and counted among the believers in God, only she and her household were saved during Israel's conquest of Jericho. *By faith the harlot Rahab perished not with them that believed not, when she had received the spies with peace.* {HEBREWS 11:31.} By faith Rahab even became one of the Grandmothers of Jesus! {MATTHEW 1:5.} By faith Rahab even got mentioned by name in HEBREWS 11:31.

Rebekah in GENESIS 24 is a type of the Bride of Christ. In that 24th chapter of GENESIS, Abraham is a type of God the Father, and Isaac is a type of Christ. Abraham's servant (Eliezer) is a type of the Holy Ghost in GENESIS 24. We read this fact starting in GENESIS 24:53 *And the servant brought forth jewels of silver, and jewels of gold, and raiment, and gave them to Rebekah...* . This raiment and jewelry given to Rebekah was hers to keep as a token of the love that Isaac had for her, however it was up to Rebekah whether or not to accept these gifts, or put any of these items on. (We know she accepted these gifts, and took her place of being engaged to Isaac). These gifts that Abraham's servant gave Rebekah were different than the gifts he gave the rest of the family. The reason why this was to separate (to cleave asunder) her from everyone else. There is a Greek word merismos {mer-is-mos'} (number 3311 in the Strong's Concordance) that expresses this kind of separation, that also translates into English as "dividing asunder." We find this word in HEBREWS 4:12 *For the word of God is quick, and powerful, and sharper than any twoedged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder <3311> of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart.* What we need to recognize here in relation to the story of Rebekah in GENESIS 24 is that it is the word of God that will separate, not only the believer from the unbeliever, but the believer that will go on with Him from the believer that will not fully go on with Him. Rebekah pictures those that will go on with Him 100%, thus the difference in gifts that she receives figures this kind of separation. Rebekah separated herself from her family in GENESIS 24:58 *And they called Rebekah, and said unto her, Wilt thou go with this man? And she said, I will go.*

How far will you let the sanctified life that you now have in Christ Jesus take you , being sanctified by the Holy Ghost? May it be to the ultimate inheritance among them which are sanctified by faith that is in Christ Jesus, which is to be His Bride! ACTS 20:32 *And now, brethren, I commend you to God, and to the word of his grace, which is able to build you up, and to give you an inheritance among all them which are sanctified.*

Before we get to the final point in Brother Copley's outline of Paul's speech unto these Ephesian elders, which concerns Paul's parting moments with them, I want to reflect a little on the importance, and impact of Paul's impromptu Holy Ghost inspired speech he gave to these very devout men. These were his parting words unto them, and perhaps they never heard the sound of his voice ever again after this time! So often in life we remember the last time we got to see some loved one, and recall most vividly these memories. This is exactly what Luke recorded here in ACTS 20:18-35, Paul's historic parting words to these dear Ephesian elders whom he had spent the most time with. No doubt this speech left a great impression upon these Ephesian elders, and we know it left a great impression upon those men Paul was traveling with too.

Consider some of the parting words we find in scripture. We find Moses' parting words to Israel, also given as a speech, known to us at the book of DEUTERONOMY. One of

the many thoughts Moses left the children of Israel with is found in DEUTERONOMY 31:6 & 8, which we have gone over many times before in this study, and reads: *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. ...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.*

Let's now think about one phrase Jesus told His disciples in His parting words found in JOHN 13 through JOHN 16. This one phrase, which we will get to in a moment, Jesus used fourteen times during the last passover supper He had with His disciples. Fourteen recall is the number that has to do with DELIVERANCE or SALVATION. This is the main reason Jesus came to the world in the first place, so that all men could have DELIVERANCE, and SALVATION from sin. Paul wrote in 1 TIMOTHY 1:15 *...that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners...* The phrase that Jesus used fourteen times during the last passover supper was: "I go." Jesus said in JOHN 13:33 *...Whither I go, ye cannot come,...* meaning you cannot come with me at this present time, as he explained in JOHN 13:36 *...Whither I go, thou canst not follow me now; but thou shalt follow me afterwards.* In JOHN 14:2-4 Jesus tells His disciples: *...I go to prepare a place for you. 3 And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also. 4 And whither I go ye know, and the way ye know.* The disciples questioned Jesus about these particular "I go" statements, then Jesus told them in JOHN 14:12 *Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that believeth on me, the works that I do shall he do also; and greater works than these shall he do; because I go unto my Father.* Pastor Smith Wigglesworth latched on to this verse, and many like it, and built a powerful healing ministry upon this truth spoken by Jesus. So did Peter, and John, and the rest of the Apostles. Jesus said in JOHN 14:28 *Ye have heard how I said unto you, I go away, and come again unto you. If ye loved me, ye would rejoice, because I said, I go unto the Father: for my Father is greater than I.*

Jesus disciples didn't fully understand what He was telling them with these parting words, yet they pondered these statements in their heart, and the Apostle John penned them at a later time. Thus the importance of Jesus parting words remain with us today. Note how Jesus continued to use these "I go" statements in JOHN 16. JOHN 16:4 *But these things have I told you, that when the time shall come, ye may remember that I told you of them. And these things I said not unto you at the beginning, because I was with you. 5 But now I go my way to him that sent me; and none of you asketh me, Whither goest thou? 6 But because I have said these things unto you, sorrow hath filled your heart. 7 Nevertheless I tell you the truth; It is expedient for you that I go away: for if I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you; but if I depart, I will send him unto you. 8 And when he is come, he will reprove the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment: 9 Of sin, because they believe not on me; 10 Of righteousness, because I go to my Father, and ye see me no more; 11 Of judgment, because the prince of this world is judged. 12 I have yet many things to say unto you, but ye cannot bear them now. 13 Howbeit when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth: for he shall not speak of himself; but whatsoever he shall hear, that shall he speak: and he will shew you things to come.* We see here in this discourse that Jesus was emphasizing unto them the importance of having the Holy Spirit in their lives. And yet the disciples still didn't yet fully understand what Jesus was saying unto them as noted in JOHN 16:16 & 17. JOHN 16:16 *A little while, and ye shall not see me: and again, a little while, and ye shall see me, because I go to the Father. 17 Then said some of his disciples among themselves, What is this that he saith unto us, A little while, and ye shall not see me: and again, a little while, and ye shall see me: and, Because I go to the Father?* Jesus perceived their questions, and answered them the best He could in the remaining verses of JOHN 16, but it took the power of the Holy Ghost in their lives, which they received on the day of Pentecost, for them to fully understand the importance of Jesus parting words.

Brother Hill also noted in his Bible that of the 89 total chapters of the four gospel records, nearly a third deal with the final week of Jesus ministry here on earth, and His crucifixion. Do you think the disciples spent a lot of time pondering Jesus parting words? I know they did. The conclusion that Brother Hill came to in his notes was that the emphasis in scripture was not on Jesus earthly life, His sinless character, His ministry, His teachings, and miracles, but rather the emphasis was on Christ's precious

shed blood. As we have studied Paul speech unto these Ephesian elders we find the same important message highlighted, to know the many benefits that we have in Christ Jesus because of His precious shed blood. This was the purpose of Paul's missionary work everywhere he traveled, to point souls to Christ, and to the word of His grace, and expound this word among them, and put them on a course, a race course, and encourage them to examine the word of God for themselves, knowing that such a course would build them up, and give them an inheritance among all them which are sanctified through the blood of Jesus Christ. ACTS 20:32 *And now, brethren, I commend you to God, and to the word of his grace, which is able to build you up, and to give you an inheritance among all them which are sanctified.*

This brings us to the final point of study following Brother Copley's outline of Paul's speech unto the Ephesian elders:

(7) Paul's parting moments -- verses 36-38. ACTS 20:36 *And when he had thus spoken, he kneeled down, and prayed with them all. 37 And they all wept sore, and fell on Paul's neck, and kissed him, 38 Sorrowing most of all for the words which he spake, that they should see his face no more. And they accompanied him unto the ship.*

An expounded translation of these verses reads: 36 With these words he fell on his knees with them all and prayed with the whole group. 37 They all burst into tears as they folded Paul in their arms and kissed him lovingly. 38 What saddened them most of all was his saying about never seeing his face again. And they brought him on his way unto the ship.

One can only imagine the emotions each party here felt. Obviously all in attendance were affected deeply. We have spent much time dissecting this speech Paul gave these Ephesian elders, and have duly noted it's importance in scripture. These parting words of Paul gave the Ephesian elders encouragement's, exhortations, edification and commendation to fall back on, and in the days following I am sure that these words grew in importance in their own individual lives. But for this particular moment, the realization of Paul telling them that he would never see his face again was overwhelming to them, as well as it may have been to Paul too.

Let's consider something here. Was this indeed the last time Paul got to see these Ephesian elders face to face? Perhaps it was, but maybe not for all of them. The Lord knows the answer to this question for sure. Conyebare and Howson in their book on The Life and Epistles of St. Paul note that about eight years after the time frame of ACTS 20 Paul may have once again had an opportunity to briefly visit Ephesus, and they reference some statements made in 1 & 2 TIMOTHY, and TITUS as evidence.

In 1 TIMOTHY 1, written about nine years after this point in time, Paul writes: *1 Paul, an apostle of Jesus Christ by the commandment of God our Saviour, and Lord Jesus Christ, which is our hope; 2 Unto Timothy, my own son in the faith: Grace, mercy, and peace, from God our Father and Jesus Christ our Lord. 3 As I besought thee to abide still at Ephesus, when I went into Macedonia, that thou mightest charge some that they teach no other doctrine, 4 Neither give heed to fables and endless genealogies, which minister questions, rather than godly edifying which is in faith: so do.* Note a couple of statements in this portion. First in verse 3 Paul writes Timothy how he ...*besought thee to abide still at Ephesus, when I went into Macedonia...* . This was just the opposite of when Paul was in Ephesus in ACTS 19:22 and sent Timothy into Macedonia. So obviously Paul himself must of at least briefly passed through Ephesus during the time frame referenced here in 1 TIMOTHY 1:3.

The second statement Paul made here worthy of note is why Paul left Timothy here at Ephesus in the first place, which was ...*that thou mightest charge some that they teach no other doctrine, Neither give heed to fables and endless genealogies,...* . It was this very kind of thing that the Apostle Paul warned against in his speech unto the Ephesian elders in ACTS 20:28-30 where he stated: *Take heed therefore unto yourselves, and to all the flock, over the which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers, to feed the church of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood. 29 For I know this, that after my departing shall grievous wolves enter in among you, not sparing the flock. 30 Also of your own selves shall men arise, speaking perverse things, to draw away disciples after them.* Obviously there were those at Ephesus teaching some other

doctrine than Paul taught, and Paul mentions in writing Timothy that these doctrines included fables and endless genealogies. These kind of things were not of God, or found to be taught in the word of his grace, as he also noted in ACTS 20:32, which again reads: *And now, brethren, I commend you to God, and to the word of his grace, which is able to build you up, and to give you an inheritance among all them which are sanctified.* Paul goes on in 1 TIMOTHY 1 to name the names of those who taught such things as being Hymenaeus and Alexander, as he notes in verse 19 & 20: *...which some having put away concerning faith have made shipwreck: 20 Of whom is Hymenaeus and Alexander; whom I have delivered unto Satan, that they may learn not to blaspheme.*

Paul mentions Hymenaeus again when he writes Timothy his second letter from prison, stating: 2 TIMOTHY 2:15 *Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth. 16 But shun profane and vain babblings: for they will increase unto more ungodliness. 17 And their word will eat as doth a canker: of whom is Hymenaeus and Philetus; 18 Who concerning the truth have erred, saying that the resurrection is past already; and overthrow the faith of some.* Here again we find Paul encouraging Timothy to make sure the doctrine he teaches is the word of truth, the word of God's grace. Hymenaeus and Philetus were teaching error, as you can tell by studying verse 18 above.

Why didn't the Apostle Paul stay in Ephesus and correct these things himself? Because he was on the move, and not spending much time in any one place. I believe that in this point in his life he knew his time on earth was short, at best. Here in 2 TIMOTHY, Paul is writing from prison. In between 1 & 2 TIMOTHY Paul writes Titus, that quiet traveling companion of the Apostle Paul who we hear so little about. To TITUS Paul writes in TITUS 1:5 *For this cause left I thee in Crete, that thou shouldest set in order the things that are wanting, and ordain elders in every city, as I had appointed thee:...* . Again we note that the Apostle Paul was moving on, having passed the baton of establishing churches unto his close disciples; men such as Timothy and Titus. To Timothy Paul again writes in 2 TIMOTHY 4:19 & 20: *Salute Prisca and Aquila, and the household of Onesiphorus. 20 Erastus abode at Corinth: but Trophimus have I left at Miletum sick.* Aquila and Priscilla (Prisca) lived in Ephesus. Recall from earlier lessons, and ACTS 20:4 that Trophimus was from Ephesus, so perhaps Paul made a quick stop in Ephesus to see Trophimus, or Trophimus may have once again been traveling with Paul when Paul made one last quick stop in Ephesus. We don't know because scripture doesn't tell us any more than we have already noted. Trophimus is only mentioned in these three scriptures: ACTS 20:4; ACTS 21:29, and 2 TIMOTHY 4:20. Trophimus' name means "nourishment," and no doubt he, as a minister for Jesus Christ, gave out nourishment for many, including the Apostle Paul.

So back to our thought concerning the Apostle Paul's final words to the Ephesian elders here in ACTS 20. Was this the last time Paul got to see these Ephesian elders face to face? Perhaps yes it was. I am sure for some of them it was. If you consider any gathering of people you have ever been to, realize that this same group of people are not likely to ever be together as a group again. Those who attend a church service will never have the exact same people there more than once, or so it seems as to my own observation. So these no doubt were Paul's final words to some, or maybe most of these Ephesian elders.

ACTS 20:36 *And when he had thus spoken, he kneeled down, and prayed with them all. 37 And they all wept sore, and fell on Paul's neck, and kissed him, 38 Sorrowing most of all for the words which he spake, that they should see his face no more. And they accompanied him unto the ship.*

Paul's parting words ended with a prayer. And he prayed with them all. And everyday he prayed for them all, as he had been doing all along. In 2 CORINTHIANS 11:28 Paul wrote about *...that which cometh upon me daily, the care of all the churches.* The care of all the churches included praying for all of those in these assemblies. Later to the Ephesian Saints Paul wrote in EPHESIANS 1:15 *Wherefore I also, after I heard of your faith in the Lord Jesus, and love unto all the saints, 16 Cease not to give thanks for you, making mention of you in my prayers; 17 That the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give unto you the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of him: 18 The eyes of your understanding being enlightened; that ye may know what is the hope of his calling, and what the riches of the glory of his inheritance in the saints,*

19 And what is the exceeding greatness of his power to us-ward who believe, according to the working of his mighty power, 20 Which he wrought in Christ, when he raised him from the dead, and set him at his own right hand in the heavenly places, 21 Far above all principality, and power, and might, and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world, but also in that which is to come: 22 And hath put all things under his feet, and gave him to be the head over all things to the church, 23 Which is his body, the fulness of him that filleth all in all. Later in the EPHESIANS epistle Paul encouraged these same Ephesian Saints on how to pray themselves: EPHESIANS 6:18 *Praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, and watching thereunto with all perseverance and supplication for all saints; 19 And for me, that utterance may be given unto me, that I may open my mouth boldly, to make known the mystery of the gospel, 20 For which I am an ambassador in bonds: that therein I may speak boldly, as I ought to speak.*

These two portions of scripture gives us some idea on the importance of prayer. JAMES 5:16 tells us: *The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much.* I wonder if each one of us has any idea how many prayers are said on our behalf everyday. And these prayers are heard by God, and in most cases, they are felt by the individuals being prayed for. Note in the scripture we just read above how the Apostle Paul requested prayer even for himself in stating how we are to pray *...for all saints, 19 And for me, that utterance may be given unto me, that I may open my mouth boldly, to make known the mystery of the gospel, 20 For which I am an ambassador in bonds: that therein I may speak boldly, as I ought to speak.* In 1 THESSALONIANS Paul writes in 5:25 *Brethren, pray for us.* Again in 2 THESSALONIANS 3:1 Paul once again requests: *Finally, brethren, pray for us, that the word of the Lord may have free course, and be glorified, even as it is with you...* In HEBREWS 13:18 Paul writes: *Pray for us: for we trust we have a good conscience, in all things willing to live honestly.* To Timothy Paul writes in 1 TIMOTHY 2:1 *I exhort therefore, that, first of all, supplications, prayers, intercessions, and giving of thanks, be made for all men.* And the list of the importance of prayer as taught by Paul goes on and on.

No doubt when Paul *...prayed with them all...* here in ACTS 20:36 he said things that stuck with these Ephesian elders for the rest of their life too, however Luke didn't record these statements here. Perhaps each individual elder was addressed in his prayer, along with any family they may have had, but we don't know this kind of information as we are not told what was said in this prayer. We do know that *...they all wept sore, and fell on Paul's neck, and kissed him...* for ACTS 20:37 tells us they did.

The picture we get here in ACTS 20:37 is one filled with deep emotion: *And they all wept sore, and fell on Paul's neck, and kissed him,....* . There are three actions described in this verse: (1) they wept sore; (2) they fell on Paul's neck, and (3) they kissed him. Let's look at these actions a little closer.

When *...they all wept sore...* it was a loving reaction to the deep sorrow they felt not ever expecting to see Paul again this side of heaven. We see here a little picture of the great appreciation they had for Paul, and the many things about Christ he had taught them. Obviously as an ambassador for Christ, the Apostle Paul had shown them in all aspects of his life, the love of Jesus. This explains in a great part the reason that they *...fell on Paul's neck, and kissed him.*

The neck pictures strength, in that the neck holds the head up. The Apostle Paul wrote in 1 CORINTHIANS 11:3 a lesson he had already taught these Ephesian elders, stating: *But I would have you know, that the head of every man is Christ; and the head of the woman is the man; and the head of Christ is God.* In a symbolic way the Holy Ghost had Luke to write here in ACTS 20:37 that these Ephesian elders *...fell on Paul's neck...* showing their appreciation that the Apostle Paul pointed them to their true leader, and true head, Jesus Christ. The Apostle Paul in uplifting Jesus Christ as the true head that He is, showed his true colors as a Philadelphian Saint in that he had a little strength, and kept the word, and did not deny the name of Jesus. (In REVELATION 3:8 Jesus states this unto the church of Philadelphia: *I know thy works: behold, I have set before thee an open door, and no man can shut it: for thou hast a little strength, and hast kept my word, and hast not denied my name.*) There was none better at holding up Jesus Christ as the head of all things, especially unto the Gentiles, as was the Apostle Paul.

The third action found in ACTS 20:37 that requires a better understanding is the fact that these Ephesian elders in expressing their heart felt emotions for the Apostle Paul, not only embraced him, and threw their loving arms around his neck, but they also kissed him. There are three Greek words that translate into our English as "kiss," or "kissed." Phileo {5368 in the Strong's Greek Concordance} is one such Greek word, that also translates in to love, as is the case in Jesus' discourse to Peter in JOHN 21:15-17. Phileo is not the Greek word used here in ACTS 20:37, but a stronger Greek verb kataphileo is used here that shows the genuine heart felt devotion that these Ephesian elders had for the Apostle Paul. Kataphileo {2705 in the Strong's Greek Concordance} means: to kiss much, kiss again and again, kiss tenderly. This is the "holy kiss" that the Apostle Paul wrote about in four different places. ROMANS 16:16 *Salute one another with an holy kiss.* 1 CORINTHIANS 16:20 *...Greet ye one another with an holy kiss.* 2 CORINTHIANS 13:12 *Greet one another with an holy kiss.* 1 THESSALONIANS 5:26 *Greet all the brethren with an holy kiss.* The Greek noun that translates "holy kiss" is philema, {5370 in the Strong's Greek Concordance}. The "holy kiss" is not a kiss of romantic passion, but rather is a kiss free from any prejudice, or discrimination, given as a salute one to another, without any attitude of condescension, or disrespect one towards another, acknowledging a mutual personal relationship with our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, thus showing an outward expression of the love of Christ in each others life. Think of the "holy kiss" like this. We can't right now see Jesus, yet we can see one another, and we can often see the love of Jesus in one another. Right now we can't kiss Jesus either, but we can acknowledge the love of Jesus we see in one another by greeting one another with a "holy kiss." Remember this is not a kiss of passion for one another, but rather is to be a kiss granted as an expression of mutual love in Christ Jesus. Paul also wrote in 1 CORINTHIANS 14:40 *Let all things be done decently and in order.*

Let's read our text again. ACTS 20:37 *And they all wept sore, and fell on Paul's neck, and kissed him,...* . When these Ephesian elders kissed Paul with an holy kiss, they were acknowledging their appreciation for the gospel of Jesus Christ that he had preached unto them. They were acknowledging also the fact that they would never forget him, and that they truly loved him, as Jesus had also commanded, *...That ye love one another...* . {Study JOHN 13:34; 15:12; 15:17; ROMANS 13:8; 1 THESSALONIANS 4:9; 1 PETER 1:22; 1 JOHN 3:23; 4:7; 4:11 & 12; and 2 JOHN 1:5.}

ACTS 20:38 *Sorrowing most of all for the words which he spake, that they should see his face no more.* As we conclude Paul's parting moments with these Ephesian elders, let's note something from this verse. What was it that they heard? Paul told these Ephesian elders in verse 25 that they would see his face no more, and it seems that is where they checked out in listening unto his speech. Did they miss his forecasts found in verse 25, 29, and 30? ACTS 20:25 *And now, behold, I know that ye all, among whom I have gone preaching the kingdom of God, shall see my face no more. ...29 For I know this, that after my departing shall grievous wolves enter in among you, not sparing the flock. 30 Also of your own selves shall men arise, speaking perverse things, to draw away disciples after them.* We have seen a glimpse into the future above {see page 666 of these notes} how that Hymenaeus and Alexander and Philetus later came to these Ephesians and taught error. {Study again 1 TIMOTHY 1:19 & 20, and 2 TIMOTHY 2:17 & 18.} Did these Ephesian elders miss his five fold exhortation of verse 28 & 31? ACTS 20:28 *Take heed therefore unto yourselves, and to all the flock, over the which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers, to feed the church of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood. ...31 Therefore watch, and remember, that by the space of three years I ceased not to warn every one night and day with tears.* The five elements to this exhortation are again: (1) to take heed; (2) to feed; (3) to watch; (4) to remember; and (5) to warn. Did these elders of Ephesus not hear Paul state in verse 32 his committal unto them: *And now, brethren, I commend you to God, and to the word of His grace; even to Him who is able to build you up and to give you an inheritance among all them that are sanctified...*? We went over seven important elements found in this verse, which Brother Copley noted was probably one of the most powerful scriptures found in the Bible. Did they miss hearing it? Paul had for three years been telling these very same Ephesians' about the high calling we have in Christ Jesus, and instead of rejoicing evermore as Paul had first taught the Thessalonians in 1 THESSALONIANS 5:16, these Ephesian elders were *...sorrowing most of all for the words which he spake, that they*

should see his face no more. In other words they were focused on the things they could see, but faith focuses on the things one can not see. HEBREWS 11:1 tells us: *Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen.* Stated another way, faith is not sight. These Ephesian elders were feeling sorry for themselves, having latched on to Paul's statement that they should see his face no more. On the other hand, Paul was trying to get these very same Ephesian elders to see Jesus, and to focus upon Jesus. Instead of looking down at worldly things, and feeling sorry for themselves, Paul was encouraging these elders to look up to the heavenly places. Later Paul would write these very same Ephesians a letter encouraging them to look up to the heavenly places. In EPHESIANS 1:3 Paul writes: *Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ....* . Again in EPHESIANS 2:6 Paul states: *And hath raised us up together, and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus....* . He told them in EPHESIANS 1:19-21 of *...the exceeding greatness of his power to us-ward who believe, according to the working of his mighty power, Which he wrought in Christ, when he raised him from the dead, and set him at his own right hand in the heavenly places, Far above all principality, and power, and might, and dominion, and every name that is named....* .

Now, lest you think in your own mind that you can't get caught up with focusing on worldly things, and the things you can see, instead of Jesus and looking for His soon coming, consider His disciples back in ACTS 1. We read this in ACTS 1:3 *To whom also he shewed himself alive after his passion by many infallible proofs, being seen of them forty days, and speaking of the things pertaining to the kingdom of God: 4 And, being assembled together with them, commanded them that they should not depart from Jerusalem, but wait for the promise of the Father, which, saith he, ye have heard of me. 5 For John truly baptized with water; but ye shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost not many days hence.* Jesus had already told His disciples in LUKE 24:29 *And, behold, I send the promise of my Father upon you: but tarry ye in the city of Jerusalem, until ye be endued with power from on high,...* and here in ACTS 1 Jesus is once again telling them to have that upward heavenly look, awaiting the baptism of the Holy Ghost. But note what kind of things were of interest, and were the focus of His disciples as we read on in ACTS 1:6 *When they therefore were come together, they asked of him, saying, Lord, wilt thou at this time restore again the kingdom to Israel?* Once again we see disciples focusing on the things of earth, instead of looking up. However within a couple of minutes Jesus had them all looking up. Here is how He did it. ACTS 1:7 *And he said unto them, It is not for you to know the times or the seasons, which the Father hath put in his own power. 8 But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judaea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth. 9 And when he had spoken these things, while they beheld, he was taken up; and a cloud received him out of their sight. 10 And while they looked stedfastly toward heaven as he went up, behold, two men stood by them in white apparel; 11 Which also said, Ye men of Galilee, why stand ye gazing up into heaven? this same Jesus, which is taken up from you into heaven, shall so come in like manner as ye have seen him go into heaven.* Do you think from that point forward they were looking up, looking for Jesus soon return? Peter himself wrote in 2 PETER 1:11 a statement that showed his focus was no longer on worldly things, such as restoring the kingdom to Israel, but rather his focus was on *...the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.*

It was this kind of upward focus that made the Old Testament worthies of faith the examples they are for us to study. Abraham, the father of the faithful, had this kind of testimony, which the Apostle Paul noted in HEBREWS 11:10 *For he looked for a city which hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God.* In other words Abraham had a heavenly focus. Ask yourself: what kind of focus do I have?

The church of today can be grouped as Laodicean, as Jesus noted in REVELATION 3:14-19. Note what Jesus says to them in verses 15-18: *I know thy works, that thou art neither cold nor hot: I would thou wert cold or hot. 16 So then because thou art lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will spue thee out of my mouth. 17 Because thou sayest, I am rich, and increased with goods, and have need of nothing; and knowest not that thou art wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked: 18 I counsel thee to buy of me gold tried in the fire, that thou mayest be rich; and white raiment, that thou*

mayest be clothed, and that the shame of thy nakedness do not appear; and anoint thine eyes with eyesalve, that thou mayest see. Do you see an upward, heavenly focus in this accounting of the church of Laodicea? They are neither cold nor hot, but indifferent. They are rich in worldly goods, but lacking in spiritual things. They say they are in need of nothing, thus magnifying the fact that their focus is on the things of earth, not on heavenly things. Certainly they don't even know what it is to have God's best! How sad. Next time you watch religious programming on television, or listen to it on the radio, measure what they say in light of what you now know, and see if their focus is upon the things of heaven, or the things of earth. If you find some that teach about the high calling of God in Christ Jesus, then next do what Paul told the Apostle Timothy to do in 2 TIMOTHY 2:15 *Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth.* See for yourself if they are rightly dividing the word of truth. May we too have our focus on things above like the Apostle Paul did, keeping in mind some of his most important final words, also found in 2 TIMOTHY 4:8 *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.* Do you love His appearing? Are you looking for Jesus soon coming? Or are you focused on the trivial things of this earth?

ACTS 20:36 *And when he had thus spoken, he kneeled down, and prayed with them all. 37 And they all wept sore, and fell on Paul's neck, and kissed him, 38 Sorrowing most of all for the words which he spake, that they should see his face no more. And they accompanied him unto the ship.* Brother Copley notes that this was the finale of Paul's third missionary journey, but it really wasn't. All of Paul's missionary journeys started in Antioch, Syria, and most of them ended there too. This third missionary journey of Paul's was not over when he left these Ephesian elders, per say, but the Ephesian church was the main focus of his third missionary journey. Paul now will continue on to Jerusalem, and be arrested there, and this will essentially end his third missionary journey, without one last visit to Antioch, Syria.

We noted earlier in this study that the Apostle Paul has written six of his fourteen epistles by this point in his life, which are 1 & 2 THESSALONIANS; 1 & 2 CORINTHIANS; GALATIANS; and ROMANS. According to Conyebare and Howson it will be about five years before he writes another epistle, and in total he will write eight more. This gap of five or more years is one in which the exceeding riches of God's grace in His kindness toward us through Christ Jesus is worked out even more in the Apostle Paul's own life. {Reference EPHESIANS 1:7}. It is Luke who fills in a large portion of this gap of five or more years in the life of the Apostle Paul in the remaining chapters of ACTS, which would be ACTS 21 through 28.

We will get to looking at ACTS 21 in the next page of these notes, but before we do, let's back track for a moment, and see again where we are in Paul efforts of ACTS 20:16, which again reads: *For Paul had determined to sail by Ephesus, because he would not spend the time in Asia: for he hasted, if it were possible for him, to be at Jerusalem the day of Pentecost.* There are fifty days from Passover to Pentecost, and approximately twenty seven days since Passover have now passed, as we noted earlier in this study. {See again page 628 of these notes}. It will be twenty three more days until Pentecost. In ACTS 21:15 Paul will arrive in Jerusalem. Between this last verse of ACTS 20 until ACTS 21:15 the time table of Paul's travels goes like this. From Miletus in three days Paul went from Coos, to Rhodes, and Patara (ACTS 21:1). Two more days would suffice for the voyage to Tyre (ACTS 21:2 & 3). Thirty two days from Passover. In ACTS 21:4 we find Paul at Tyre for seven days, making it thirty nine days since Passover. ACTS 21:7 indicates that one day was spent in Ptolemais making it forty days since Passover. The next day Paul came to Caesarea and spent many days at the house of Philip the evangelist. (We will examine this most remarkable event in some detail later, Lord willing. Just for now think in you mind how it would be for the old Saul of Tarsus to meet up with one of the close associates of Stephen, and you will see it was for Paul the Apostle to spend time in the house of Philip the evangelist. An impossible event except for the marvelous grace of God!) And from Caesarea it was about a days journey to Jerusalem, meaning that Paul could have very easily have been in Jerusalem by the day of Pentecost, and he probably arrived there two or three days before Pentecost.