

Paul's Defence Speech at Jerusalem

ACTS 21:40 ...And when there was made a great silence, he spake unto them in the Hebrew tongue saying,... . A couple of thoughts before we move into the speech in ACTS 22. Paul beckoned with his hand, even though it was chained to a Roman soldier. Once again we see as was the case in ACTS 13:16 that the Apostle Paul liked to also speak with his hands. And so it was that he encouraged this rowdy mob to be quiet. The "great silence" was most unusual, and the Greek word that is used here to describe this silence is only found twice in New Testament scripture, here, and in REVELATION 8:1 wherethere was silence in heaven about the space of half an hour. Perhaps part of the reason "a great silence" was made here was because Paul addressed his nation of Israel in their native Hebrew tongue. No doubt most of the Jews in the audience would have also known Greek, but the fact that he addressed them in Hebrew caused them to keep the greater silence. One reason would be because the Jews knew that the Roman soldiers who were present here, and unwelcome in their sight, would not be able to understand what Paul was saying. In other words they felt a connection to Paul, if only for this moment, because he was addressing them in their native Hebrew language, which they all had respect for. ACTS 22:2 verifies this point noting: (*And when they heard that he spake in the Hebrew tongue to them, they kept the more silence: and he saith,*).

Conybeare's translation: ACTS 22:1 *Brethren and Fathers, hear me, and let me now defend myself before you. ...3 I am myself an Israelite, born indeed at Tarsus, in Cilicia, yet brought up in this city, and taught at the feet of Gamaliel, in the strictest doctrine of the law of our father; and was zealous in the cause of God, as ye all are this day. 4 And I persecuted this sect unto death, binding with chains and casting into prison both men and women. 5 And of this the High Priest is my witness, and all the Sanhedrin; from whom, moreover, I received letters to the brethren, and went to Damascus, to bring those also who were there to Jerusalem, in chains, that they might be punished.*

6 But it came to pass that as I journeyed, when I drew nigh to Damascus, about mid-day, suddenly there shone from heaven a great light round about me. 7 And I fell unto the ground, and heard a voice saying unto me, Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me? 8 And I answered, Who art thou, Lord? And he said unto me, I am Jesus of Nazareth, whom thou persecutest. 9 And they that were with me saw the light, and were terrified; but they heard not the voice of Him that spake unto me. 10 And I said, What shall I do, Lord? And the Lord said unto me, Arise, and go into Damascus; and there thou shalt be told of all things which are appointed for thee to do.

11 And when I could not see, from the brightness of that light, my companions led me by the hand, and so I entered into Damascus. 12 And a certain Ananias, a devout man according to the law, well reported of by all the Jews who dwelt there, 13 came and stood beside me, and said to me, Brother Saul, receive thy sight; and in that instant I received my sight and looked upon him. 14 And he said, The God of our fathers hath ordained thee to know His will, and to behold the Just One, and to hear the voice of His mouth. 15 For thou shalt be His witness to all the world of what thou hast seen and heard. 16 And now, why dost thou delay? Arise and be baptized and wash away thy sins, calling on the name of Jesus.

17 And it came to pass, after I had returned to Jerusalem, and while I was praying in the Temple, that I was in a trance, 18 and saw Him saying unto me, Make haste and go forth quickly from Jerusalem; for they will not receive thy testimony concerning me. 19 And I said, Lord, they themselves know that I continually imprisoned and scourged in every synagogue the believers in Thee. 20 And when the blood of thy martyr Stephen was shed, I myself also was standing by

and consenting gladly to his death, and keeping the raiment of them who slew him. 21 And He said unto me, Depart; for I will send thee far hence unto the Gentiles.

We have already commented much about this portion of scripture in the first 50 pages of this study, but there are some more interesting points to consider here also.

This speech is really a brief testimony of Paul's life. A testimony really means: to bear witness, to testify, to bear record, to witness, to be a witness, give testimony, have a good report, give a good report, to bear witness, i.e. to affirm that one has seen or heard or experienced something, or that he knows it because he was taught it by divine revelation or inspiration, and to utter honourable testimony. Recall in that portion of scripture we so often reference in ACTS 26:16 how the Lord Jesus told Paul *...I have appeared unto thee for this purpose, to make thee... ..a witness both of these things which thou hast seen, and of those things in the which I will appear unto thee;...* . This is what Paul was doing here, giving his life's testimony on who he was, and what the Lord had done in his life that set him on a different course than he was pursuing on his own. In this testimony of Paul's we find Paul referencing himself forty-nine times. (Forty-nine is the product of seven times seven, SPIRITUAL PERFECTION times SPIRITUAL PERFECTION if you will. There is only One who can bring us unto SPIRITUAL PERFECTION, that is the Holy Ghost, whose perfection power works in the lives of all full overcomers. MATTHEW 5:48 *Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect.* 2 CORINTHIANS 13:11 *Finally, brethren, farewell. Be perfect, be of good comfort, be of one mind, live in peace; and the God of love and peace shall be with you.*) In this speech Paul speaks of the Lord Jesus Christ or God twenty-two times. (Twenty-two is the number of LIGHT. Jesus is the LIGHT of the world. In JOHN 8:12 we find these words of Jesus: *...I am the light of the world: he that followeth me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life.* Paul writes of this LIGHT in 2 CORINTHIANS 4:5 *For we preach not ourselves, but Christ Jesus the Lord; and ourselves your servants for Jesus' sake. 6 For God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined in our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ.*) It was the LIGHT of Jesus that blinded old Saul of Tarsus on the road to Damascus, and now the Apostle Paul was sharing his own witness of this LIGHT.

A little commentary here. This ratio of referencing one's own self to the Lord more than two times to one, as the Apostle Paul did, is perfectly normal in our own testimonies. As you examine this testimony you will find that Paul's focus wasn't on himself anyway, but rather on what the Lord had done in his own life; on how Jesus had changed the course of his life for the better, for the best. This is what a good testimony shows, the work of the Lord in one's own life. One has to use the words "me," "myself," and "I" in describing the mighty works of God in our own testimonies. However a testimony ceases to be a testimony, and drifts to the side of a report of our own affairs, the less the Lord is mentioned. A true testimony glorifies the Lord, and takes the spotlight off of one's own self. Read the testimony of Margaret Clark entitled "Angels Watching Over Me" in the February 2009 issue of Grace and Glory magazine, and note the spotlight that she put on God for the help He provided her in a hopeless situation. Her testimony glorified the Lord, yet she mentioned herself far more times than she mentioned God or Jesus. All true testimonies glorify the Lord, and put the spotlight on Him who has done so much more in our lives than we can ever properly tell. This is exactly what the Apostle Paul was doing here in ACTS 22:1-21.

The book of JOB could be considered to be a testimony of one's man's life, or specifically a dark mile in one man's life. Job references himself over seven hundred times in those forty two chapters, and he only mentions God fifty-four times. Yet Job's testimony has spoken to millions throughout history of the importance God places in one mans life who is devoted to the Lord. Job's testimony glorifies the Lord.

The under lying theme of Paul's testimony speech, before it got cut off short, was that Jesus Christ was indeed risen from the dead, and did appear unto him. However

Paul's words really fell on spiritually deaf ears here, the Jews having made up their mind that Paul was some kind of criminal.

In Paul's testimony speech he mentions by name three people who were influential in Paul's life. The three people mentioned by name were Gamaliel, Ananias of Damascus, and Stephen. All three of these men were instructors of Paul in one fashion or another.

If you could give a five or ten minute testimony of your life, could you find three people to mention who were influential in your life? Paul doesn't mention his father or mother, or sister in his testimony; nor does he mention any in his family as being influential in his life, though we know they were.

The first man Paul mentioned was Gamaliel (verse 3). Gamaliel was a famous teacher in Paul's day, one of only seven men ever honored with the title "Rabban," meaning Doctor of the law. As the famous "Rabban" Gamaliel was probably one of the heads of the Jewish Sanhedrin, the council that the Apostles were brought before in ACTS 5:27, and the council that Stephen was brought before in ACTS 6:12. Gamaliel was a Pharisee, and as also a Doctor of the law (of Moses), he was held in high esteem among the Jews of Jerusalem. It truly was a feather in the Apostle Paul's cap (so to speak) to be able to learn the law of Moses at the feet of Gamaliel. Gamaliel was probably dead by the time of Paul's speech here at Jerusalem, however the Jews hearing Paul's testimony would remember who Gamaliel was. Gamaliel taught Paul *...the perfect manner of the law... of Moses*, (verse 3). But the law of Moses didn't make Saul of Tarsus the Apostle Paul! Probably no one knew the law of Moses any better than Gamaliel, and no doubt Saul of Tarsus was his best student. Perhaps in time, with much study, Saul of Tarsus knew the law even better than Gamaliel! Thus we could say that Saul of Tarsus was an expert in the law of Moses! The Holy Ghost used Saul of Tarsus' knowledge of the law to teach Paul facts about the law that Gamaliel didn't teach; facts that Gamaliel couldn't teach; facts that Gamaliel didn't even know about the law.

For example consider the following scriptures written by Paul. ROMANS 3:19 *Now we know that what things soever the law saith, it saith to them who are under the law: that every mouth may be stopped, and all the world may become guilty before God. 20 Therefore by the deeds of the law there shall no flesh be justified in his sight: for by the law is the knowledge of sin. 21 But now the righteousness of God without the law is manifested, being witnessed by the law and the prophets; 22 Even the righteousness of God which is by faith of Jesus Christ unto all and upon all them that believe: for there is no difference: 23 For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God; 24 Being justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus: 25 Whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in his blood, to declare his righteousness for the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God; 26 To declare, I say, at this time his righteousness: that he might be just, and the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus. 27 Where is boasting then? It is excluded. By what law? of works? Nay: but by the law of faith. 28 Therefore we conclude that a man is justified by faith without the deeds of the law.* Gamaliel didn't teach Paul these facts!

Gamaliel probably did teach Paul the following fact however, which Paul penned in ROMANS 7:1 *Know ye not, brethren, (for I speak to them that know the law,) how that the law hath dominion over a man as long as he liveth?* The Holy Ghost taught Paul the following facts, which he penned a few verses later in ROMANS 7. ROMANS 7:4 *Wherefore, my brethren, ye also are become dead to the law by the body of Christ; that ye should be married to another, even to him who is raised from the dead, that we should bring forth fruit unto God. 5 For when we were in the flesh, the motions of sins, which were by the law, did work in our members to bring forth fruit unto death. 6 But now we are delivered from the law, that being dead wherein we were held; that we should serve in newness of spirit, and not in the oldness of the letter. 7 What shall we say then? Is the law sin? God forbid. Nay, I had not known sin, but by the law: for I had not known lust, except the law had said, Thou shalt not covet.*

On your own study the rest of ROMANS 7 and see the struggle Paul went through reconciling the two natures under the law.

In GALATIANS, written about the same time as ROMANS, Paul makes several more statements concerning the law, such as GALATIANS 2:21 *I do not frustrate the grace of God: for if righteousness come by the law, then Christ is dead in vain.* GALATIANS 3:11

But that no man is justified by the law in the sight of God, it is evident: for, The just shall live by faith. Again Gamaliel didn't teach Paul these facts, but rather the Holy Ghost revealed these important points unto Paul. Specifically Paul notes in GALATIANS 1:11 & 12 this fact: 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.

After years of experience as an Apostle, and after years of unlearning some of the points Gamaliel had emphasized unto him, the Apostle Paul wrote the following facts unto Timothy, a man that Paul had personally taught from his youth. 1 TIMOTHY 1:8 *But we know that the law is good, if a man use it lawfully; 9 Knowing this, that the law is not made for a righteous man, but for the lawless and disobedient, for the ungodly and for sinners, for unholy and profane, for murderers of fathers and murderers of mothers, for manslayers, 10 For whoremongers, for them that defile themselves with mankind, for menstealers, for liars, for perjured persons, and if there be any other thing that is contrary to sound doctrine; 11 According to the glorious gospel of the blessed God, which was committed to my trust. 12 And I thank Christ Jesus our Lord, who hath enabled me, for that he counted me faithful, putting me into the ministry; 13 Who was before a blasphemer, and a persecutor, and injurious: but I obtained mercy, because I did it ignorantly in unbelief. 14 And the grace of our Lord was exceeding abundant with faith and love which is in Christ Jesus. 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.*

Again Gamaliel didn't teach Paul all of this. The Holy Ghost taught Paul the facts about the law we have just looked at above.

The second man Paul mentions in his testimony is Ananias of Damascus, (verse 12). One of the meanings of Ananias' name is "God is gracious." Certainly Ananias opened Paul eyes to see the grace of God. Ananias taught Paul his first lessons about Divine healing. Ananias taught Paul his first lessons about the Holy Ghost. Ananias taught Paul some of his first lessons about the grace of God. Ananias taught Paul what it was to be obedient to the voice of the Lord. In short Ananias opened Paul's eyes in more ways than one to help him start to receive the full gospel truth that the Lord Jesus Christ wanted him to have. Ananias became as important of an instructor to the Apostle Paul concerning the truth of the grace of God, as Gamaliel had been in teaching Paul about the law of Moses. ACTS 9:19 indicates that Paul spent much time with Ananias, and the other disciples of Damascus, whom he, as Saul of Tarsus, had first come to destroy! So as not to upset the Jews he was addressing at this point in his testimony, Paul didn't mention that Ananias was a devout Christian, but rather stated: *And one Ananias, a devout man according to the law, having a good report of all the Jews which dwelt there, Came unto me, and stood, and said unto me, Brother Saul, receive thy sight. And he said, The God of our fathers hath chosen thee, that thou shouldest know his will, and see that Just One, and shouldest hear the voice of his mouth. {ACTS 22:12-14}.* These particular words would not have offended any of Paul's Hebrew speaking listeners.

The third man Paul mentions in his testimony here in ACTS 22 is Stephen. Stephen means "crowned," and certainly old Saul of Tarsus got to see Stephen in his final crowning moments here on earth. ACTS 6:15 records this of Stephen: *And all that sat in the council, looking stedfastly on him, saw his face as it had been the face of an angel.* Stephen's face had a crowning glow about him as he preached his final sermon unto the Sanhedrin council, a sermon which Saul of Tarsus heard, and recorded in his mind forever! Stephen taught Paul what a man full of the Holy Ghost could do. Stephen taught Paul what it was to be a full overcomer. (ACTS 7:60 *And he kneeled down, and cried with a loud voice, Lord, lay not this sin to their charge.*) Stephen taught the Apostle Paul what it was to be a martyr for Jesus Christ. A martyr is defined as those who after his example have proved the strength and genuineness of their faith in Christ by undergoing a violent death. Recall in his speech unto those precious Saints in Caesarea in ACTS 21:13 that Paul had expressed his own feelings on being a martyr for Jesus Christ, stating: *...for I am ready not to be bound only, but also to die at Jerusalem for the name of the Lord Jesus.* Stephen taught the Apostle Paul what it was to be a living testimony for Jesus! Perhaps the memory of Stephen in part inspired this portion of scripture written by the Apostle Paul: 2 CORINTHIANS 3:2 *Ye are our epistle written in our hearts, known and read of all men: 3 Forasmuch as ye are manifestly declared to be*

the epistle of Christ ministered by us, written not with ink, but with the Spirit of the living God; not in tables of stone, but in fleshy tables of the heart.

The mention of Stephen before these Jews of Jerusalem no doubt put some of them on edge, for they remembered the Christian testimony of Stephen. In Stephen's sermon he asks this question in ACTS 7:52 *Which of the prophets have not your fathers persecuted?* Jesus had made a similar statement, which some of these very same Jews who had heard Stephen's final sermon, also heard Jesus state: MATTHEW 23:31 *Wherefore ye be witnesses unto yourselves, that ye are the children of them which killed the prophets. 32 Fill ye up then the measure of your fathers. 33 Ye serpents, ye generation of vipers, how can ye escape the damnation of hell? 34 Wherefore, behold, I send unto you prophets, and wise men, and scribes: and some of them ye shall kill and crucify; and some of them shall ye scourge in your synagogues, and persecute them from city to city: 35 That upon you may come all the righteous blood shed upon the earth, from the blood of righteous Abel unto the blood of Zacharias son of Barachias, whom ye slew between the temple and the altar. 36 Verily I say unto you, All these things shall come upon this generation. 37 O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, thou that killest the prophets, and stonest them which are sent unto thee, how often would I have gathered thy children together, even as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, and ye would not!* Stephen also went on to state: ACTS 7:52 *Which of the prophets have not your fathers persecuted? and they have slain them which shewed before of the coming of the Just One; of whom ye have been now the betrayers and murderers: 53 Who have received the law by the disposition of angels, and have not kept it.* The Just One whom Stephen references is none other than our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ Himself. Jesus was crucified before many of these same Jews who heard Jesus words above; who also heard Stephen's words; who were now hearing Paul's words.

Paul was not now far from the place where he first heard Stephen mention "*the Just One.*" Perhaps Paul was the only one who heard Stephen mention "*the Just One*" who accepted Christ as his own personal Saviour. The Lord only knows the answer to such a question, however Paul once again, under the inspiration of the same Holy Ghost who inspired Stephen to mention "*the Just One,*" states more facts about "*that Just One,*" which some of these Jews had rejected twice before! Paul using the same words Stephen used states in ACTS 22:14 *...The God of our fathers hath chosen thee, that thou shouldest know his will, and see that Just One, and shouldest hear the voice of his mouth.*

Interestingly we only find Jesus called "*the Just One*" in these two scriptures: ACTS 7:52 (the words of Stephen), and ACTS 22:14 (the words of Paul). Paul had the words "*the Just One*" ingrained in his heart from the moment he first heard this statement in Stephen's sermon. And by now Paul had personally witnessed *...that Just One...* and heard *...the voice of his mouth...* numerous times. How many times have you heard *...the voice of his mouth?*

Two other times in the previous twenty-five years we find Jesus "*the Just One*" spoken of to large crowds assembled here in the temple grounds. The first time was on the day of Pentecost when Peter preached his first sermon, and told the assembled crowd on that day these words found in ACTS 2. ACTS 2:22 *Ye men of Israel, hear these words; Jesus of Nazareth, a man approved of God among you by miracles and wonders and signs, which God did by him in the midst of you, as ye yourselves also know: 23 Him, being delivered by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God, ye have taken, and by wicked hands have crucified and slain: 24 Whom God hath raised up, having loosed the pains of death: because it was not possible that he should be holden of it. 25 For David speaketh concerning him, I foresaw the Lord always before my face, for he is on my right hand, that I should not be moved: 26 Therefore did my heart rejoice, and my tongue was glad; moreover also my flesh shall rest in hope: 27 Because thou wilt not leave my soul in hell, neither wilt thou suffer thine Holy One to see corruption.* That Holy One Peter referenced was Jesus Christ, "*the Just One*" whom Stephen spoke of to the Sanhedrin council, and "*that Just One*" whom Paul had mentioned in his testimony here in ACTS 22.

The next time we read of Jesus mentioned here in the temple grounds in association as being "*the Just One*" is found in ACTS 3 after Peter and John performed their first miracle of healing the lame man in the name of Jesus. Peter then spoke unto the crowd, and in part stated: ACTS 3:12 *...Ye men of Israel, why marvel ye at this? or why*

look ye so earnestly on us, as though by our own power or holiness we had made this man to walk? 13 The God of Abraham, and of Isaac, and of Jacob, the God of our fathers, hath glorified his Son Jesus; whom ye delivered up, and denied him in the presence of Pilate, when he was determined to let him go. 14 But ye denied the Holy One and the Just, and desired a murderer to be granted unto you; 15 And killed the Prince of life, whom God hath raised from the dead; whereof we are witnesses.

Thus we see that some of the hearers of Paul testimony speech here in ACTS 22, have had the opportunity on four different occasions to learn more about our precious Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, here in ACTS 22:14 called "that Just One."

Let's look at verse 9. ACTS 22:9 *And they that were with me saw indeed the light, and were afraid; but they heard not the voice of him that spake to me.* Compare this with what was stated in ACTS 9:7 *And the men which journeyed with him stood speechless, hearing a voice, but seeing no man.* Is there a contradiction here? Did the men traveling with Paul hear a voice, or not? Scofield notes that the men traveling with Paul "heard the "voice" as a sound, but did not hear the "voice" as articulating" words. Conybeare and Howson also note that those traveling with Paul were "stunned, stupefied and confused" by the bright light which engulfed Paul, and the voice that spoke unto Paul was to them "a sound mysterious and indistinct." Paul heard the words which Jesus spoke unto him, and the men traveling with him heard an "awful sound," which was to them "without meaning," this according again to the commentary of Conybeare and Howson. One translation of ACTS 22:9 states this concerning the voice: "...the voice of him who spoke to me they did not understand." So we see that the men traveling with Paul did with their ears perceive a noise, but not as distinct words of a voice.

ACTS 26:14 further tells us that this voice of the Lord Jesus Christ was distinctly directed unto Saul of Tarsus: *And when we were all fallen to the earth, I heard a voice speaking unto me, and saying in the Hebrew tongue, Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me?* Thank God that Saul of Tarsus positively answered the call of the Lord, and believing he asked Jesus for further instructions, stating in ACTS 22:10 *...What shall I do, Lord?* Yes indeed Paul answered the call of the Lord, but this calling here was exclusive to the Apostle Paul; those traveling with him heard some indistinct noise, which they never did understand!

One of the things we should get out of this is that the Lord wasn't speaking unto the men traveling with Paul. Neither were they blinded by the glory of the Light that left Paul without sight for three days. If the Lord is speaking unto you, don't expect others to hear it. Here the Lord was calling Paul into the ministry, making him the Apostle unto the Gentiles. This calling of the Lord was exclusive to Paul. First Paul had to accept Jesus Christ as his own personal Saviour. Those traveling with him were not being called into the ministry. We are never even told if they accepted Jesus Christ as their own personal Saviour. No doubt they were the recipients of Paul's first sermons. Whether or not they even heard in their heart Paul's persuasive words concerning receiving Jesus as their own personal Saviour, we are not told. We do know that they witnessed on the road to Damascus a miracle, and that being the chiefest of sinners getting saved! (Study 1 TIMOTHY 1:15). But miracles do not bring salvation. TITUS 2:11 tells us that it is *...the grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men...* . But all men do not receive Jesus as their own personal Saviour. 1 TIMOTHY 2:4 tells us that it is our Lord and Saviour *...Who will have all men to be saved, and to come unto the knowledge of the truth.* 2 THESSALONIANS 3:2 also tells us *...all men have not faith.* These men that were traveling with Paul on the road to Damascus were of the same mind set as Saul of Tarsus, and were with him as he made havock of the church (ACTS 8:3). Again we are never told in scripture of the fate of the men who traveled with Saul of Tarsus as he went unto Damascus, other than what we read in ACTS 9:7 & 8. ACTS 9:7 *And the men which journeyed with him stood speechless, hearing a voice, but seeing no man.* 8 *And Saul arose from the earth; and when his eyes were opened, he saw no man: but they led him by the hand, and brought him into Damascus.* The word "speechless" found in ACTS 9:7 is unique in the New Testament as to the word used here in Greek, which is "enneos," number 1769 in the Strong's Greek Concordance. It means: dumb, mute, destitute of power of speech, unable to speak for terror, struck dumb, astounded. The men who traveled with Saul of Tarsus on the road to Damascus then were left speechless about what they saw, and took their leader to Damascus, but beyond that we do

not know their eternal fate. When we get to heaven we will know the answer to such a question. We do know that they were the recipients of Paul's first testimony concerning Jesus Christ being the risen Son of God.

All three accounts of ACTS 9, 22, and 26 that speak about the conversion of Saul of Tarsus, talk about the sudden Light that appeared from heaven. The great Light of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ is spoken of five (GRACE) times in these three accounts. Three times here in this speech of ACTS 22 Paul mentions that great Light, which blinded him. The five references are as follows: ACTS 9:3 says: *...and suddenly there shined round about him a light from heaven.* In ACTS 22:6 Paul says: *...about noon, suddenly there shone from heaven a great light round about me.* ACTS 22:9 *And they that were with me saw indeed the light, and were afraid; but they heard not the voice of him that spake to me.* ACTS 9:8, and 22:11 shows us that this Light of Jesus didn't blind those who traveled with Paul: ACTS 22:11 *And when I could not see for the glory of that light, being led by the hand of them that were with me, I came into Damascus.* And ACTS 26:13 records: *At midday, C king, I saw in the way a light from heaven, above the brightness of the sun, shining round about me and them which journeyed with me.* We know that this light was Jesus appearing unto Saul of Tarsus. Those traveling with him witnessed the Light, and were afraid, but they were not blinded by the Light, for this bright beam of Jesus was focused straight on the dark sinful heart of old Saul of Tarsus. Thank God Saul of Tarsus received Jesus as his own personal Saviour, thus letting the Light of Jesus brighten, and lighten his life forever! Paul later expressed it like this in 2 CORINTHIANS 4:6 *For God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined in our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ.*

There are 399 scriptures that speak of "light," and many of them, either directly, or indirectly, reference Jesus as being the Light of this otherwise dark world. For example let's read the first few verses of JOHN 1. JOHN 1:1 *In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.* 2 *The same was in the beginning with God.* 3 *All things were made by him; and without him was not any thing made that was made.* 4 *In him was life; and the life was the light of men.* 5 *And the light shineth in darkness; and the darkness comprehended it not.* 6 *There was a man sent from God, whose name was John.* 7 *The same came for a witness, to bear witness of the Light, that all men through him might believe.* 8 *He was not that Light, but was sent to bear witness of that Light.* 9 *That was the true Light, which lighteth every man that cometh into the world.* 10 *He was in the world, and the world was made by him, and the world knew him not.* 11 *He came unto his own, and his own received him not.* 12 *But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name:* 13 *Which were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God.* 14 *And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father,) full of grace and truth.* 15 *John bare witness of him, and cried, saying, This was he of whom I spake, He that cometh after me is preferred before me: for he was before me.* 16 *And of his fulness have all we received, and grace for grace.* 17 *For the law was given by Moses, but grace and truth came by Jesus Christ.*

In the above verses we find seven references to "light," and are told that Jesus indeed is the Light that shineth in darkness, the darkness of this old world. In JOHN 8:12 we find these words of Jesus: *...I am the light of the world: he that followeth me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life.* This phrase "the light of life" is only found this one time in scripture. It means that Jesus is the Light of everlasting life. Life is the opposite of death, just like Light is the opposite of darkness. Here in JOHN 8:12 we find that Jesus is both Light and Life. Again in JOHN 12:36 Jesus again stated: *While ye have light, believe in the light, that ye may be the children of light.* Here in ACTS 22, while on the road to Damascus, the future Apostle Paul believed in the Light, that temporarily left him blind, and became one of "the children of light" spoken of by Jesus here in JOHN 12:36. In four scriptures we find the phrase "children of light." Two are written by the Apostle Paul. In EPHESIANS 5:8 Paul writes: *For ye were sometimes darkness, but now are ye light in the Lord: walk as children of light:...* . And in 1

THESSALONIANS 5:5 Paul states: *Ye are all the children of light, and the children of the day: we are not of the night, nor of darkness.*

Here again in JOHN 8:12 we find that Jesus is both Light and Life. Saul of Tarsus up to this point in his life was living in darkness, and had the sting of death all over him. Later in 1 CORINTHIANS 15:56 Paul wrote: *The sting of death is sin; and the strength of sin is the law.* Such was Saul of Tarsus; dead in trespasses and living in the darkness of sin. Then Jesus came! Jesus the Light of the world came and lit up Saul of Tarsus. So bright was the glory of that Light that Saul of Tarsus fell to the earth. {See ACTS 9:4; 22:7 and 26:14.} So bright was the glory of that Light that Saul of Tarsus was left blind for three days. So bright was the glory of that Light that Saul of Tarsus that day passed from death unto life! How dark is death, and how bright is life? Additionally JOHN 5:24 tells us: *Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that heareth my word, and believeth on him that sent me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation; but is passed from death unto life.* Because of this bright Light of Jesus shining on Saul of Tarsus, the Apostle Paul was later able to write these words found in 2 CORINTHIANS 4:3-6 *But if our gospel be hid, it is hid to them that are lost: 4 In whom the god of this world hath blinded the minds of them which believe not, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them. 5 For we preach not ourselves, but Christ Jesus the Lord; and ourselves your servants for Jesus' sake. 6 For God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined in our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ.*

Saul of Tarsus may have been left physically blind for three days after witnessing this bright Light of Jesus, but his spiritual eyes were forever opened, and in the process he became the vessel the Lord Jesus Christ used for we 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.* {ACTS 26:18}. What a wonderful, and powerful, and everlasting Light Jesus is! Let Him Light up your life.

A very important doctrinal point is found in ACTS 22:16, and we have discussed this point before, and will reemphasize it again now. ACTS 22:16 records these words of Ananias spoken unto Saul of Tarsus: *And now why tarriest thou? arise, and be baptized, and wash away thy sins, calling on the name of the Lord.* Brother Copley uses two pages of notes to explain this verse. The reason Brother Copley spends so much time on this verse is because of the way this verse reads in our King James version. A better wording of this verse would read: *And now why tarriest thou? arise, and be baptized, and wash away thy sins, having called on the name of the Lord.* The word "calling" in our King James version is in the past perfect tense. It means that Saul of Tarsus had called fully on the name of the Lord before he was exhorted to be baptized in water by Ananias of Damascus. This means, in short, that Saul of Tarsus became a believer, and got saved while traveling on that road to Damascus. Before Ananias ever met Saul of Tarsus he knew that he was a believer, for the Lord had told Ananias of how Saul was a chosen vessel unto Him. Ananias then addressed Saul of Tarsus as "*Brother Saul*" because Ananias knew Saul was a believer.

These confusing words ...*wash away thy sins...* in ACTS 22:16 comes from a rarely used Greek word, found only twice in New Testament scripture. The words "wash away" comes from the Greek word "apolouo," number 628 in the Strong's Greek Concordance, meaning, according to Vine's Dictionary: "to wash off or away, is used in the Middle Voice, metaphorically, to wash oneself, in ACTS 22:16, where the command to Saul of Tarsus to wash away his sins indicates that by his public confession, he would testify to the removal of his sins, and to the complete change from his past life; this "washing away" was not in itself the actual remission of his sins, which had taken place at his conversion." Paul used this same Greek word, "apolouo," translated "*ye are washed*" in his first letter unto the Corinthians, where he addresses this motley crew by informing them of the kind of sinners they were before accepting Christ as their own personal Saviour. After noting some sins, Paul states in 1 CORINTHIANS 6:11 *And such were some of you: but ye are washed, but ye are sanctified, but ye are justified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God.* These believing Corinthians were justified in

the name of the Lord Jesus having previously called fully on the name of the Lord to be their Saviour, just the same as Saul of Tarsus had done on the road to Damascus.

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

When we read the words of our text in ACTS 22, keep in mind that Paul was speaking unto the Jews of Jerusalem after being arrested there. These words of ACTS 22:16 would convey a special message to them, which seems to be somewhat confounding to we Gentile believers. ACTS 22:16 *And now why tarriest thou? arise, and be baptized, and wash away thy sins, calling on the name of the Lord.* Baptism in water was the one bold and convincing expression to a Jew of real repentance. An unwillingness by a Jew to be baptized in water was the equivalent to saying, "I do not believe in Jesus Christ; I will not have Him to be my Messiah and King." Note here in ACTS 22:16 that Ananias gets after Saul of Tarsus a little bit when he asks: *And now why tarriest thou?* Saul of Tarsus must have hesitated to be baptized, not because he had not yet believed in Jesus, but because he knew what persecution would follow him because of his being baptized in water. Saul of Tarsus had come to Damascus to persecute those Jews who had outwardly expressed their inward belief in Jesus Christ by submitting to water baptism. Now he had become one of them. This is why we read later in ACTS 9:23 that *...the Jews took counsel to kill him.*

Brother Copley pointed out that "salvation is by faith in the blood of Christ apart from any works, even wholly apart from the beautiful symbol of baptism in water." The Apostle Paul in his preaching never emphasized water baptism. In fact he writes in 1 CORINTHIANS 1:17 & 18 his point of emphasis: *For Christ sent me not to baptize, but to preach the gospel: not with wisdom of words, lest the cross of Christ should be made of none effect. 18 For the preaching of the cross is to them that perish foolishness; but unto us which are saved it is the power of God.*

The Reaction to Paul's Speech

ACTS 22:21 *And he said unto me, Depart: for I will send thee far hence unto the Gentiles. 22 And they gave him audience unto this word, and then lifted up their voices, and said, Away with such a fellow from the earth: for it is not fit that he should live.*

This is a most interesting portion of scripture. There are several points to cover here. Let's start by noting this was the third time we have a record of where the Lord sent Paul unto the Gentiles. We haven't heard this third account until now. Verse 21 is Paul's recollection of the words the Lord spoke unto him while praying in Jerusalem upon his first returning there after getting saved, which would have been some three years after his conversion: *And he said unto me, Depart: for I will send thee far hence unto the Gentiles.* The first time Paul was told by the Lord he was to preach unto the