

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

Gentiles was when he was on the road to Damascus, as Paul records for us in ACTS 26:17 *Delivering thee from the people, and from the Gentiles, unto whom now I send thee,...* . The second time was three days later when Annanias of Damascus told Paul these words of the Lord found in ACTS 9:15 *...for he is a chosen vessel unto me, to bear my name before the Gentiles, and kings, and the children of Israel:...* .

To the Gentile way of thinking, what the Lord told Paul in these three different instances appears to be no big deal. But to the Jew, being sent unto the Gentiles was a big deal. Why? Because the Jews knew, and were taught from their youth, that they are God's chosen people, and they are! DEUTERONOMY 7 explains why the Jews were God's chosen people. DEUTERONOMY 7:1 *When the LORD thy God shall bring thee into the land whither thou goest to possess it, and hath cast out many nations before thee, the Hittites, and the Girgashites, and the Amorites, and the Canaanites, and the Perizzites, and the Hivites, and the Jebusites, seven nations greater and mightier than thou; 2 And when the LORD thy God shall deliver them before thee; thou shalt smite them, and utterly destroy them; thou shalt make no covenant with them, nor shew mercy unto them: 3 Neither shalt thou make marriages with them; thy daughter thou shalt not give unto his son, nor his daughter shalt thou take unto thy son. 4 For they will turn away thy son from following me, that they may serve other gods: so will the anger of the LORD be kindled against you, and destroy thee suddenly. 5 But thus shall ye deal with them; ye shall destroy their altars, and break down their images, and cut down their groves, and burn their graven images with fire. 6 For thou art an holy people unto the LORD thy God: the LORD thy God hath chosen thee to be a special people unto himself, above all people that are upon the face of the earth. 7 The LORD did not set his love upon you, nor choose you, because ye were more in number than any people; for ye were the fewest of all people: 8 But because the LORD loved you, and because he would keep the oath which he had sworn unto your fathers, hath the LORD brought you out with a mighty hand, and redeemed you out of the house of bondmen, from the hand of Pharaoh king of Egypt. 9 Know therefore that the LORD thy God, he is God, the faithful God, which keepeth covenant and mercy with them that love him and keep his commandments to a thousand generations; 10 And repayeth them that hate him to their face, to destroy them: he will not be slack to him that hateth him, he will repay him to his face. 11 Thou shalt therefore keep the commandments, and the statutes, and the judgments, which I command thee this day, to do them.*

We have just read in DEUTERONOMY 7 why God chose the Jews to be a special people unto Himself, which somewhat helps explain their narrow minded thinking toward the Gentiles. The twelve disciples, which are named in MATTHEW 10:2-4, were sent forth by Jesus in MATTHEW 10:5 & 6: *These twelve Jesus sent forth, and commanded them, saying, Go not into the way of the Gentiles, and into any city of the Samaritans enter ye not: 6 But go rather to the lost sheep of the house of Israel.* Note that they were sent forth unto the Jews, not to the Gentiles. So after Jesus death there were twelve Apostles, which we call kingdom Apostles, all sent for of Jesus to continue preaching unto the Jews.

The Apostle Peter too had this mind set, Knowing what we just read in DEUTERONOMY 7, and what Jesus had told him in MATTHEW 10:5 & 6, so we begin to see how the Lord had to deal with Peter in ACTS 10 for him to even go over to the Gentile house of Cornelius. Most all of ACTS 10, and about half of ACTS 11 deal with this subject on how Peter was sent to preach unto some Gentiles at the house of Cornelius. ACTS 10:28 *And he said unto them, Ye know how that it is an unlawful thing for a man that is a Jew to keep company, or come unto one of another nation;...* . Now if the Apostle Peter, a disciple of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, and a man full of the Holy Ghost still has these kind of feelings towards the Gentiles, how much more do we expect to find this kind of Jewish attitude in those Jews who follow the traditional teachings of the law, and are not themselves believers in the fact that Jesus Christ is also their Lord and Saviour? Obviously the Jews of this kind of thinking do not want to have any defiling association with the Gentiles. However Peter being full of the Holy Ghost was led by Holy Spirit unto the house of Cornelius to break the ice (so to speak) of this kind of traditional Jewish thinking. Peter had to learn the facts of ACTS 10:34 & 35, which states that *...God is no*

respector of persons: 35 But in every nation he that feareth him, and worketh righteousness, is accepted with him.

That God is no respector of persons was nothing new. God has always been a God of grace unto all people. Gentiles were saved all through out scripture. Enoch was not a Jew, and God translated him because Enoch put his faith and trust in God. Noah was not a Jew, but GENESIS 6:8 tells us that *...Noah found grace in the eyes of the LORD*. All of us are descendants of Noah. Had Noah not found grace in the eyes of the Lord, none of us would be here. Rahab was a Gentile harlot, but by putting her faith and trust in the God of Israel she became one of the few Old Testament overcomers mentioned by name in the 11th chapter of HEBREWS, and also history and scripture records that she was one of the grandmothers of Jesus! So was Ruth the Moabitess, a Gentile. The Shulamite of SONG OF SOLOMON too was a Gentile, typical of the Bride of Christ. NUMBERS 11:4 mentions the "mixt multitude" (Gentiles) that was redeemed out of Egypt along with the children of Israel. Both MATTHEW 12:17-21 and LUKE 2:32 quote from ISAIAH 42, which speaks of Jesus. MATTHEW 12:21 tells us: *And in his name shall the Gentiles trust*. LUKE 2:32 reminds us that Jesus is: *A light to lighten the Gentiles, and the glory of thy people Israel*. Jesus healed many Gentiles during his ministry here on earth proving once again *...God is no respector of persons*. In JOHN 4 Jesus dealt with the woman of Samaria, a Gentile, who in verse 9 reminded Jesus: *...for the Jews have no dealings with the Samaritans*. However after Jesus revealed Himself unto her she became a testimony for Him. JOHN 4:41 & 42 state: *And many more believed because of his own word; 42 And said unto the woman, Now we believe, not because of thy saying: for we have heard him ourselves, and know that this is indeed the Christ, the Saviour of the world*. And in REVELATION 5:9 we read of all the full overcomers singing a new song, *...saying, Thou art worthy to take the book, and to open the seals thereof: for thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God by thy blood out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation...* . Every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation includes Gentile overcomers from every walk in life; Gentiles, who like Enoch, and Noah, and Rahab, and Ruth, believed God, and walked by faith with God.

Back to Peter visiting the house of Cornelius in ACTS 10. Let's read again what happened. Peter came to the house of Cornelius, and preached unto the Gentiles gather there.

ACTS 10:34 *Then Peter opened his mouth, and said, Of a truth I perceive that God is no respector of persons: 35 But in every nation he that feareth him, and worketh righteousness, is accepted with him. 36 The word which God sent unto the children of Israel, preaching peace by Jesus Christ: (he is Lord of all:) 37 That word, I say, ye know, which was published throughout all Judaea, and began from Galilee, after the baptism which John preached; 38 How God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Ghost and with power: who went about doing good, and healing all that were oppressed of the devil; for God was with him. 39 And we are witnesses of all things which he did both in the land of the Jews, and in Jerusalem; whom they slew and hanged on a tree: 40 Him God raised up the third day, and shewed him openly; 41 Not to all the people, but unto witnesses chosen before of God, even to us, who did eat and drink with him after he rose from the dead. 42 And he commanded us to preach unto the people, and to testify that it is he which was ordained of God to be the Judge of quick and dead. 43 To him give all the prophets witness, that through his name whosoever believeth in him shall receive remission of sins.*

Peter was not really ready for what happened next; an event ordained of God to help Peter better comprehend the intent of God, and to show him that yes, indeed, *...God is no respector of persons....* (see again verse 34). ACTS 10:44 *While Peter yet spake these words, the Holy Ghost fell on all them which heard the word. 45 And they of the circumcision (a term used of the Jews) which believed were astonished, as many as came with Peter, because that on the Gentiles also was poured out the gift of the Holy Ghost. 46 For they heard them speak with tongues, and magnify God. Then answered Peter, 47 Can any man forbid water, that these should not be baptized, which have received the Holy Ghost as well as we? 48 And he commanded them to be baptized in the name of the Lord.* {Study also ACTS 2:38; 8:16; and 19:4 & 5}. Then prayed they him to tarry certain days.

What happens next back in Jerusalem better explains some of the traditional thinking of the Jews, and these were Christian Jews spoken about here in ACTS 11. ACTS 11:1 *And the apostles and brethren that were in Judaea heard that the Gentiles had also received the word of God.* 2 *And when Peter was come up to Jerusalem, they that were of the circumcision (the Jew) contended (to determine, give judgment, decide a dispute) with him,* 3 *Saying, Thou wentest in to men uncircumcised (the Gentile), and didst eat with them.* Recall in ACTS 10:28 how that Peter had already expressed his concern about going unto the Gentile, stating: ...Ye know how that it is an unlawful thing for a man that is a Jew to keep company, or come unto one of another nation (a Gentile)...., and now Peter was going to have to defend his behaviour, and he was defending this behaviour before the Christian Jews. How much more then does the unbelieving Jew have this same standoffish attitude toward the Gentile? It was these kinds of attitudes that the Apostle Paul was facing once again here in Jerusalem in ACTS 22.

Now back to ACTS 11:4 to continue this story of Peter's explanation the Jews: *But Peter rehearsed the matter from the beginning, and expounded it by order unto them, saying,* 5 *I was in the city of Joppa praying: and in a trance I saw a vision, A certain vessel descend, as it had been a great sheet, let down from heaven by four corners; and it came even to me:* 6 *Upon the which when I had fastened mine eyes, I considered, and saw fourfooted beasts of the earth, and wild beasts, and creeping things, and fowls of the air.* 7 *And I heard a voice saying unto me, Arise, Peter; slay and eat.* 8 *But I said, Not so, Lord: for nothing common or unclean hath at any time entered into my mouth.* 9 *But the voice answered me again from heaven, What God hath cleansed, that call not thou common.* 10 *And this was done three times: and all were drawn up again into heaven.* 11 *And, behold, immediately there were three men already come unto the house where I was, sent from Caesarea unto me.* 12 *And the Spirit bade me go with them, nothing doubting. Moreover these six brethren accompanied me, and we entered into the man's house:* 13 *And he shewed us how he had seen an angel in his house, which stood and said unto him, Send men to Joppa, and call for Simon, whose surname is Peter;* 14 *Who shall tell thee words, whereby thou and all thy house shall be saved.* 15 *And as I began to speak, the Holy Ghost fell on them, as on us at the beginning.* 16 *Then remembered I the word of the Lord, how that he said, John indeed baptized with water; but ye shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost.* 17 *Forasmuch then as God gave them the like gift as he did unto us, who believed on the Lord Jesus Christ; what was I, that I could withstand God?* 18 *When they heard these things, they held their peace, and glorified God, saying, Then hath God also to the Gentiles granted repentance unto life.*

Note that these Christian Jews who were seriously questioning Peter about his going unto Gentiles ...*held their peace...* after accepting Peter's explanation of how all of this truly glorified God. But their deep seated mind set toward the Gentiles didn't change here, for we read in the very next verse: ACTS 11:19 *Now they which were scattered abroad upon the persecution that arose about Stephen travelled as far as Phenice, and Cyprus, and Antioch, preaching the word to none but unto the Jews only.* So we note that these centuries old Jewish attitudes toward the Gentiles hadn't really changed.

The Apostle Paul had been dealt with by the Lord Jesus Christ about his attitude toward the Gentile three times as we have already noted before he went unto the Gentiles with the gospel message the Lord wanted him to preach. The time table Conybeare and Howson give in their book on The Life and Epistles of St. Paul indicate that it may have been as long as eight years from the time Paul got saved until Barnabas sought him out and brought him unto Antioch, Syria, where we know he preached unto the Gentiles. ACTS 11:20-26 tell this story: *And some of them were men of Cyprus and Cyrene, which, when they were come to Antioch, spake unto the Grecians, preaching the Lord Jesus.* 21 *And the hand of the Lord was with them: and a great number believed, and turned unto the Lord.* 22 *Then tidings of these things came unto the ears of the church which was in Jerusalem: and they sent forth Barnabas, that he should go as far as Antioch.* 23 *Who, when he came, and had seen the grace of God, was glad, and exhorted them all, that with purpose of heart they would cleave unto the Lord.* 24 *For he was a good man, and full of the Holy Ghost and of faith: and much people was added unto the Lord.* 25 *Then departed Barnabas to Tarsus, for to seek Saul:* 26 *And when he had found him, he brought him unto Antioch. And it came to pass, that a whole year they assembled themselves with the*

church, and taught much people. And the disciples were called Christians first in Antioch. It was after these events of ACTS 10 & 11 that we find Paul being sent forth by the Holy Ghost unto the work that he was called unto, which was to be the Apostle unto the Gentiles. This starts in ACTS 13, after spending much time preaching, and teaching many Christian Gentiles at Antioch. Recall this statement of Paul's in ROMANS 11:13 *For I speak to you Gentiles, inasmuch as I am the apostle of the Gentiles, I magnify mine office.* Again in ROMANS 15:16 Paul writes: *That I should be the minister of Jesus Christ to the Gentiles, ministering the gospel of God,...*

Again, the preaching unto the Gentiles by the Apostle Paul didn't start the day he got saved on the road to Damascus, and asked the Lord Jesus, "Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?" {ACTS 9:6; and 22:10}. We know from ACTS 26:16-18 that Jesus told him to rise, and stand upon his feet, for he was being made an Apostle, and being sent forth unto the people of Israel, and unto the Gentiles! ACTS 26:19 & 20 further explains in Paul's own words what happened next: *...I was not disobedient unto the heavenly vision: But shewed first unto them of Damascus, and at Jerusalem, and throughout all the coasts of Judaea, and then to the Gentiles, that they should repent and turn to God, and do works meet for repentance.* So even though Paul wasn't disobedient unto the heavenly vision, he didn't rush right out and start preaching unto the Gentiles either. Imagine the work the Lord had to do in Paul's heart, and mind, to get him to the point where he could preach unto the Gentiles some five to eight years later. No doubt Paul wrestled in his own heart and mind with the fact that he as a Pharisee, the son of a Pharisee, a very Kosher Jew, who had kept the law from his youth, and thus had ingrained prejudices toward the Gentiles, just like all of the Jews before him; that he was to go and preach unto the Gentiles. How could he do this with such a legal mind set? What did he need to learn in order to become the Apostle unto the Gentiles mentioned above? Simply put the Apostle Paul needed to learn grace, and truth. JOHN 1:17 tells us: *For the law was given by Moses, but grace and truth came by Jesus Christ.* JOHN 1:14 further tells us that Jesus Christ was full of grace and truth. Paul knew the law of Moses probably better than anyone before him, but after he got saved Paul knew very little about grace and truth. But Jesus Christ told Paul on that road to Damascus that He would teach him the things he needed to know to be the Apostle unto the Gentiles, and that He would appear unto him again and teach him about grace and truth. {Study ACTS 26:16}. In other words, Jesus Christ being full of grace and truth, taught, and revealed unto Paul the facts he needed to know about grace and truth, in order for the Apostle Paul to have a message he could preach unto the Gentiles; a gospel message full of grace and truth. GALATIANS 1:12 tells of how Jesus Christ revealed this gospel message unto Paul. Jesus had to teach Paul this fact found in ROMANS 10:4 *For Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth.*

Christ Jesus had to also reveal unto Paul these facts noted in ROMANS 3. 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.* 29 *Is he the God of the Jews only? is he not also of the Gentiles? Yes, of the Gentiles also:* 30 *Seeing it is one God, which shall justify the circumcision by faith, and uncircumcision through faith.*

So we note that the ingrained prejudices toward the Gentiles that Paul was taught from his youth, had to be dealt with before he could ever become the Apostle unto the Gentiles, and it was the Lord Jesus Christ through the power of the Holy Ghost who



taught Paul his gospel message, which Paul wrote about in many places, like COLOSSIANS 1, where we read in verse 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:...* . Keep in mind that it took several years before the Apostle Paul brought this gospel message unto the Gentiles. It took a marvelous working of the Holy Ghost in his life to get him to the point where he could deal with the Gentiles in grace and truth.

As the Apostle unto the Gentiles, Paul often faced opposition from the Jews about his preaching unto them. And this opposition was felt in every city that he came unto. A pattern sermon of Paul's is found in ACTS 13:14-42, and the results of that sermon are found in verse 42. In ACTS 13:42 we read: *And when the Jews were gone out of the synagogue, the Gentiles besought that these words might be preached to them the next sabbath.* The next Sabbath day came, and so did the whole town to hear Paul preach. The whole town meant that the Jewish synagogue here in Antioch in Pisidia was packed with both Jews and Gentiles, the Gentiles being the more numerous. The Jews here were envious and spoke against the words of the Apostle Paul, which was not really a smart thing to do in the eyes of God. ACTS 13:46-48 records what happened next: *Then Paul and Barnabas waxed bold, and said, It was necessary that the word of God should first have been spoken to you; but seeing ye put it from you, and judge yourselves unworthy of everlasting life, lo, we turn to the Gentiles.* 47 *For so hath the Lord commanded us, saying, I have set thee to be a light of the Gentiles, that thou shouldest be for salvation unto the ends of the earth.* 48 *And when the Gentiles heard this, they were glad, and glorified the word of the Lord: and as many as were ordained to eternal life believed.* This pattern of Paul's preaching continued everywhere he went. He would first visit a Jewish synagogue, if the town had one, and as a direct result of his gospel message, many Gentiles all over the world got saved. This happened everywhere he went, so much so that in ACTS 17:6 Paul was accused of turning the world upside down. Paul's accusers were usually the Jews, his fellow country men. Their problem with Paul was that he preached unto the Gentiles! And the Jews being raised under the law, didn't understand the grace message that Paul was preaching. They didn't understand ROMANS 10:4 *For Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth.* They didn't understand 1 CORINTHIANS 5:7 where we read that *...Christ our passover is sacrificed for us:...* . They didn't understand ROMANS 10:12, which tells us: *For there is no difference between the Jew and the Greek: for the same Lord over all is rich unto all that call upon him.*

Remember the conference in Jerusalem in ACTS 15 boiled down to this: were the believing Gentiles to follow the same customs as the Jews had observed for centuries, or not? Peter first addressed this conference and stated what he knew in ACTS 15:7 *...Men and brethren, ye know how that a good while ago God made choice among us, that the Gentiles by my mouth should hear the word of the gospel, and believe.* 8 *And God, which knoweth the hearts, bare them witness, giving them the Holy Ghost, even as he did unto us;* 9 *And put no difference between us and them, purifying their hearts by faith.* 10 *Now therefore why tempt ye God, to put a yoke upon the neck of the disciples, which neither our fathers nor we were able to bear?* 11 *But we believe that through the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ we shall be saved, even as they.* Paul and Barnabas spoke next at this conference, then their pastor James. ACTS 15:12 continues: *Then all the multitude kept silence, and gave audience to Barnabas and Paul, declaring what miracles and wonders God had wrought among the Gentiles by them.* 13 *And after they had held their peace, James answered, saying, Men and brethren, hearken unto me:* 14 *Simeon hath declared how God at the first did visit the Gentiles, to take out of them a people for his name.* 15 *And to this agree the words of the prophets; as it is written,* 16 *After this I will return, and will build again the tabernacle of David, which is fallen down; and I will build again the ruins thereof, and I will set it up:* 17 *That the residue of men might seek after the Lord, and all the Gentiles, upon whom my name is called, saith the Lord, who doeth all these things.* 18 *Known unto God are all his works from the beginning of the world.* 19 *Wherefore my sentence is, that we trouble not them, which from among the*

*Gentiles are turned to God: 20 But that we write unto them, that they abstain from pollutions of idols, and from fornication, and from things strangled, and from blood.*

After this conference at Jerusalem one would have thought that the difference between Jew and Gentile believers would be resolved, but even Peter had a hard time accepting these facts, even after preaching unto the Gentiles himself. We read what Peter did next in GALATIANS 2. Paul writes in GALATIANS 2:11 *But when Peter was come to Antioch, I withstood him to the face, because he was to be blamed. 12 For before that certain came from James, he did eat with the Gentiles: but when they were come, he withdrew and separated himself, fearing them which were of the circumcision. 13 And the other Jews dissembled likewise with him; insomuch that Barnabas also was carried away with their dissimulation. 14 But when I saw that they walked not uprightly according to the truth of the gospel, I said unto Peter before them all, If thou, being a Jew, livest after the manner of Gentiles, and not as do the Jews, why compellest thou the Gentiles to live as do the Jews? 15 We who are Jews by nature, and not sinners of the Gentiles, 16 Knowing that a man is not justified by the works of the law, but by the faith of Jesus Christ, even we have believed in Jesus Christ, that we might be justified by the faith of Christ, and not by the works of the law: for by the works of the law shall no flesh be justified.*

Later Peter did go on and preach to some more Gentiles, for we read of him going unto those in Corinth (see 1 CORINTHIANS 1:12; 3:22 and 9:5). But for the most part the Jews all over the world had a hard time accepting the fact that Peter knew from ACTS 10:34 *...that God is no respecter of persons...*. So we shouldn't be surprised that a few short days before the events of ACTS 22 unfold in Paul's life, that we find him again before James, the Pastor of the Christian Church there at Jerusalem, and note again the attitude of James and the elders concerning the Gentiles as Paul came unto them with a wonderful testimony of how the Lord had worked in many lives of the Gentiles on his most recent third missionary journey. ACTS 21:18 *And the day following Paul went in with us unto James; and all the elders were present. 19 And when he had saluted them, he declared particularly what things God had wrought among the Gentiles by his ministry. 20 And when they heard it, they glorified the Lord, and said unto him, Thou seest, brother, how many thousands of Jews there are which believe; and they are all zealous of the law: 21 And they are informed of thee, that thou teachest all the Jews which are among the Gentiles to forsake Moses, saying that they ought not to circumcise their children, neither to walk after the customs.* And that was the mind set Paul was up against here at Jerusalem, where even the Christian Jews were wrongly informed about the Apostle Paul.

Having reviewed once again all of this information about the Apostle Paul being the Apostle unto the Gentiles, and seeing how even the Christian Jews struggled accepting the fact that *...God is no respecter of persons: But in every nation he that feareth him, and worketh righteousness, is accepted with him...* (ACTS 10:34 & 35), we shouldn't be too surprised to see their reaction that we do in ACTS 22:22 after Paul uses the word "Gentiles." ACTS 22:22 *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.*

Having now noted the Jewish mind set concerning the Gentiles that still existed during this time frame of ACTS 22, let's review some things the Apostle Paul knew about this from his very first epistle, 1 THESSALONIANS. And as we read some things from 1 THESSALONIANS 2, realize again that the Apostle Paul's gracious attitude toward the Gentiles didn't just happen overnight. It took some months, and years of training, and retraining by the Holy Ghost; some serious overcoming of his own ingrained heart attitudes, before the Apostle Paul could bring his gospel message of grace and truth unto the Gentiles. The Jewish mind set displayed above in ACTS 22, was a mind set of legality, a product of the keeping of the law of Moses, which they were all brought up under. Paul's gospel message of grace and truth was a message revealed unto him by Jesus Christ, who was full of grace and truth, as we noted above. {Review page 750 of these notes}. Before we read a portion from 1 THESSALONIANS, note in your own thinking, and studies, that Paul began most all of his epistles with a salutation of grace, and ended all of his epistles with a exhortation of grace. Again it took some years of yielding to the

teaching of the Holy Ghost to overcome things of early learning about the law; some serious teaching by the Holy Ghost, and great revelations by Jesus Christ, before the Apostle Paul could bring his gospel message of grace and truth unto the Gentiles. What a wonder, and what a wonderful work the Holy Ghost accomplished in Paul's life! May such a work be taking place in our own hearts also! Now let's note the grace and truth brought forth in the following text from Paul's first epistle written unto Gentiles, who had *...turned to God from idols to serve the living and true God...* 1 THESSALONIANS 1:9.

1 THESSALONIANS 2 (from Conybeare's translation): 1 For, you know yourselves, brethren, that my coming amongst you was not fruitless; 2 But after I had borne suffering and outrage (as you know) at Philippi, I trusted in my God, and boldly declared to you God's Glad-tidings, in the midst of great contention. 3 For my exhortations are not prompted by imposture, nor by lasciviousness, nor do I speak in guile. 4 But as God has proved my fitness for the charge of the Glad-tidings, so I speak, not seeking to please men but God, who proves our hearts. 5 For never did I use flattering words, as ye know, nor hide covetousness under fair pretences (God is witness); 6 Nor did I seek honour from men, either from you or others; although I might have been burdensome, as Christ's apostle. 7 But I behaved myself among you with gentleness; and as a nurse cherishes her own children, 8 so in my fond affection it was my joy to give you not only the Glad-tidings of God, but my own life also, because you were dear to me. 9 For you remember, brethren, my toilsome labours; how I worked both night and day, that I might not be burdensome to any of you, while I proclaimed to you the message which I bore, the Glad-tidings of God. 10 Ye are yourselves witnesses, and God also is witness, how holy, and just, and unblamable, were my dealings towards you that believe. 11 You know how earnestly, as a father his own children, 12 I exhorted, and entreated, and adjured each one among you to walk worthy of God, by whom you are called into His own kingdom and glory.

13 Wherefore I also give continual thanks to God, because, when you heard from me the spoken word of God, you received it not as the word of man, but, as it is in truth, the word of God; who Himself works effectually in you that believe. 14 For you, brethren, followed in the steps of the churches of God in Judaea, which are in Christ Jesus, inasmuch as you suffered the like persecution from your own countrymen, which they endured from the Jews; 15 who killed both the Lord Jesus, and the prophets, and who have driven me forth [from city to city]; a people displeasing to God, and enemies to all mankind, 16 who would hinder me from speaking to the Gentiles for their salvation: continuing always to fill up the measure of their sins; but the wrath [of God] has overtaken them to destroy them.

This is a wonderful portion of scripture that expounds Paul's own thoughts concerning the Gentiles. He recalls his suffering for the gospel, and the great contention he faced for preaching the gospel to the Gentiles in verse 2. In verse 4 he tells his motivation for preaching the gospel of Christ was not to please men, but to please God, who knows what is in a man's heart, and tries and proves what is in a man's heart. In verse 6 he further tells of how he didn't seek glory or honour from men. He describes himself not only as Christ's Apostle (verse 6), but as a nurse (verse 7), and as a father to his own children (verse 11). He also notes of behaving himself with gentleness in verse 7, of speaking from his heart in a fond and affectionate manner in verse 8 because these Saints of Thessalonica were dear unto him. In verse 9 Paul described how he toiled with his own hands so as not to be a financial burden unto anyone. In verse 10 Paul mentions that his behaviour was holy and just and unblameable, showing that he didn't harbor any prejudices towards the Gentiles. In verse 12 through 16 Paul expresses his thankfulness for these Thessalonians in receiving his gospel, and walking worthy of the vocation to which they had been called, and even suffering many things from their own countrymen for the furtherance of the gospel.



Perhaps you may have noted in the above portion of scripture from 1 THESSALONIANS the words and phrases Paul used that would especially grab the attention of the women readers of this epistle; phrases such as *...we were gentle among you...* (verse 7), and *...as a nurse cherisheth her children...*(verse 7), and *...being affectionately desirous of you...*(verse 8), and a phrase all mothers could relate to: *...labour and travail...*(verse 9). Recall from ACTS 17:4 that a great number of Greek believed, *...and of the chief women not a few*. So it may have been the tender hearts of the women who first received Paul's gospel here at Thessalonica, and these very same chief women then got the attention of the men at Thessalonica, and caused them to pay closer attention to the gospel message of Paul. Thus Paul used phrases like we noted above to specifically address the women readers of his epistle.

There is one thought mentioned above we will examine a little closer, the thought of a nurse in verse 7. This is the only time in the New Testament where we find the word "nurse" used, and it has deep spiritual significance, especially in relationship to the importance of Paul's gospel message.

The word "nurse" is found ten times in scripture, ten being the number that points to responsibility, or being accountable for ones actions. We have found in our meaning of the Bible numbers study that the number ten is the number of RESPONSIBILITY ACCORDING TO ABILITY. The Christians ability is only limited by his faith, for *"without faith it is impossible to please" God*, (HEBREWS 11:6), and *"the just shall live by faith,"* (HEBREWS 10:38).

The first mention of a "nurse" in scripture is in GENESIS 24:59 where we find reference to Rebekah's "nurse," whose name is noted to be Deborah in GENESIS 35:8. GENESIS 24:59 reads: *And they sent away Rebekah their sister, and her nurse, and Abraham's servant, and his men.* (Interestingly the name "Deborah" is also found only ten times in scripture, the number of RESPONSIBILITY ACCORDING TO ABILITY). GENESIS 24:59 and 35:8 indicate that Deborah was Rebekah's life time nurse. Deborah was a great aid or assistant to Rebekah, and had many responsibilities revolving around the care of others. Rebekah was Deborah's responsibility according to her ability. Deborah's name means "a bee;" "her speaking;" "the word;" and carries with it the thought of being a spokesman or a teacher, someone who will declare or pronounce something. In Webster's Dictionary under "nurse" we find a definition that references a "...worker bee that cares for the young." This is essentially who Deborah was: a worker bee who not only cares for the young, but also instructs them and teaches them from their earliest years "the word."

Keep in mind as we consider the word "nurse" here, that Rebekah in GENESIS 24 is typical of the Bride of Christ. Knowing all of this, who then does Deborah represent, or who is she typical of? Simply put, she represents the Apostle Paul, and his gospel message, a grace message for us Christians during this church age. Rebekah needed to take her nurse with her in order to be prepared to be wife to Isaac is the lesson here. To be prepared to be in the Bride of Christ, one must know Paul's gospel message of grace and truth! Note the comparison between nurse Deborah, and nurse Paul in the following scriptures: 1 THESSALONIANS 2:7 *But we were gentle among you, even as a nurse cherisheth her children: 8 So being affectionately desirous of you, we were willing to have imparted unto you, not the gospel of God only, but also our own souls, because ye were dear unto us. 9 For ye remember, brethren, our labour and travail: for labouring night and day, because we would not be chargeable unto any of you, we preached unto you the gospel of God.* The Apostle Paul is the Apostle to the Gentiles {see ROMANS 11:13}, and as such, he, like Deborah, was a worker bee who not only cared for the young in Christ, but also instructed them, and us, as he taught "the word." Paul wrote the following: ROMANS 1:11 *For I long to see you, that I may impart unto you some spiritual gift, to the end ye may be established;...* . 1 CORINTHIANS 4:15 *For though ye have ten thousand instructors in Christ, yet have ye not many fathers: for in Christ Jesus I have begotten you through the gospel. GALATIANS 6:6 Let him that is taught in the word communicate unto him that teacheth in all good things. 1 TIMOTHY 2:7 Whereunto I am ordained a preacher, and an apostle, (I speak the truth in Christ, and lie not;) a teacher of the Gentiles in faith and verity. 2 TIMOTHY 1:11 Whereunto I am appointed a preacher, and an apostle, and a teacher of the Gentiles. 2 TIMOTHY 2:24 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; if God peradventure will give them repentance to the acknowledging of the truth; 26 And that they may recover themselves out of the snare of the devil, who are taken captive by him at his will. 2 TIMOTHY 3:14 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. Probably Rebekah's nurse, Deborah, had been with her from her childhood, possibly even since she was born! No doubt Deborah had well instructed Rebekah all along the way, even after she married Isaac. Deborah stayed with Rebekah until her death in GENESIS 35:8. No doubt Deborah's services surely were appreciated when the twin boys Esau and Jacob were born some twenty years plus beyond the time frame of GENESIS 24.

To conclude our thoughts here about the Apostle Paul's relationship with the Gentiles, we need to keep the following facts in the back of our mind. Paul never set out on his own to be the Apostle unto the Gentiles. He among all his Jewish piers would have been the least likely to ever be charged with associating with the Gentiles. His attitude toward the Gentiles was the same as those we read about in Jerusalem in ACTS 22 until he met Jesus on the road to Damascus. At that point in time in his life Jesus personally told him *...I have appeared unto thee for this purpose, to make thee a minister and a witness both of these things which thou hast seen, and of those things in the which I will appear unto thee; Delivering thee from the people, and from the Gentiles, unto whom now I send thee, 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 26:16-18}. Simply put, Jesus was here telling Paul that He was making him the Apostle unto the Gentiles. This Apostleship unto the Gentiles wasn't something that happened overnight in the life of Paul. Paul had to wrestle in his mind how this was ever going to happen, and there was some serious overcoming of old ingrained Pharisee legal attitudes that had to be dealt with by the Holy Ghost before Paul could ever preach or teach his first lesson unto the Gentiles. Perhaps this was the greatest miracle of his own life, overcoming his prejudices toward the Gentiles, but overcome this attitude he did by the wonderful working of the Holy Spirit in his own life as he yielded unto His guidance. Paul accepted this calling of being the Apostle unto the Gentiles, and let the Lord work out the details of how this was to happen. To king Agrippa Paul stated in ACTS 26:19 & 20 -- *Whereupon, Cking Agrippa, I was not disobedient unto the heavenly vision: 20 But shewed first unto them of Damascus, and at Jerusalem, and throughout all the coasts of Judaea, and then to the Gentiles, that they should repent and turn to God, and do works meet for repentance.* In this portion of scripture we see that Paul didn't immediately go out and start preaching unto the Gentiles, but that he preached his gospel message in several places, and then he got to preach unto the Gentiles. The Gentiles were the more receptive to his gospel message, having open hungry hearts to receive the truth. Thus Paul, in time, embraced his calling as the Apostle unto the Gentiles, making mention of the Gentiles some seventy plus times in his gospel record, which includes the things Paul said in ACTS also.

Some of these scriptures are: ROMANS 11:13 *For I speak to you Gentiles, inasmuch as I am the apostle of the Gentiles, I magnify mine office:...* ROMANS 15:15 *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.* EPHESIANS 3:1 *For this cause I Paul, the prisoner of Jesus Christ for you Gentiles, 2 If ye have heard of the dispensation of the grace of God which is given me to you-ward: 3 How that by revelation he made known unto me the mystery; (as I wrote afore in few words, 4 Whereby, when ye read, ye may understand my knowledge in the mystery of Christ) 5 Which in other ages was not made known unto the sons of men, as it is now revealed unto his holy apostles and prophets by the Spirit; 6 That the Gentiles should be fellowheirs, and of the same body, and partakers of his promise in Christ by the gospel: 7 Whereof I was made a minister, according to the gift of the grace of God given unto me by the effectual working of his*

power. 8 Unto me, who am less than the least of all saints, is this grace given, that I should preach among the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ; 9 And to make all men see what is the fellowship of the mystery, which from the beginning of the world hath been hid in God, who created all things by Jesus Christ... . 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 every man, and teaching every man in all wisdom; that we may present every man perfect in Christ Jesus: 29 Whereunto I also labour, striving according to his working, which worketh in me mightily. 1 TIMOTHY 2:7 Whereunto I am ordained a preacher, and an apostle, (I speak the truth in Christ, and lie not;) a teacher of the Gentiles in faith and verity. 2 TIMOTHY 1:11 Whereunto I am appointed a preacher, and an apostle, and a teacher of the Gentiles.

What we should have noticed in these few of seventy plus references that Paul makes unto the Gentiles is that Paul was so used to the fact that he was the Apostle unto the Gentiles, that the word "Gentiles" just flowed out of his mouth with out impunity. But his Jewish audience here in ACTS 22 wasn't impressed. We don't read the word "Gentiles" in the book of HEBREWS. Paul learned his lesson here in ACTS 22 concerning the Hebrew speaking Jews, and their reaction to this one word "Gentiles."

ACTS 22:22 *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. 23 And as they cried out, and cast off their clothes, and threw dust into the air,....*

Let's use this scripture to revisit a few thoughts about the voice. The out rage that caused this Jewish audience to raise their voices against the Apostle Paul here in Jerusalem was because they didn't like, or agree with the words of his voice. So they *...lifted up their voices...* said: *...Away with such a fellow from the earth: for it is not fit that he should live.* Obviously this religious multitude was not in tune with the voice of the Apostle Paul, nor were they in tune with the voice of the Lord. And think for your self for a minute how quick we are to raise our voice, and voice our opinion about things we don't like, or agree with, and how slow we are to raise our voice and speak the wonderful things of the Lord! The full overcomer must be in tune with the voice of the Lord, and I don't think you will find the voice of the Lord saying *...Away with such a fellow from the earth: for it is not fit that he should live.* And some of these crying out these words were Christians! The Pastor of the church at Jerusalem later wrote in JAMES 3:10 these words: *Out of the same mouth proceedeth blessing and cursing. My brethren, these things ought not so to be.* Perhaps, in part, this day of Paul's arrest here in Jerusalem was the inspiration of James words.

The voice of the Lord, and the voice of the crowd are contrasted here. In ACTS 22 we find the word "voice" used three times, and the word "voices" once. ACTS 22:7 & 9 reference the voice of the Lord, which spoke directly unto Paul while he was blinded by the light of the Lord on the road to Damascus. ACTS 22:14 tells the Holy Ghost inspired words of Ananias of Damascus as he ministered unto Paul some three days later, where he spoke: *...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.* This phrase *...hear the voice of his mouth...* is only found this one time in scripture, and is a thought provoking scripture.

We have referenced many times in this study how Jesus, the Just One, appeared unto Paul at various times, and places along his journey, and personally revealed Himself, and taught Paul his gospel message. The first time this happened was on the road to Damascus where Jesus told Paul the following words, which stuck with him the rest of his life: 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 again in ACTS 26:16 that Jesus told Paul *...I have*

appeared unto thee... and ...I will appear unto thee... . In other words just like Ananias had said 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. In GALATIANS 1:11 & 12 Paul writes a little about how "that Just One" revealed Himself unto Paul: 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. How Jesus revealed Paul's gospel message unto him isn't really told here, but again in ACTS 26:16 Jesus told him ...I will appear unto thee... and I choose to believe this statement. Of course we know that the Holy Ghost is a gift of the Lord used to testify of Jesus (JOHN 15:26), to bring all things to your remembrance, that is the things which Jesus said, (JOHN 14:26), and to show you things to come (JOHN 16:13-15). But again the Lord told Paul ...I will appear unto thee... and He did so in many fashions. On the road to Damascus the Lord appeared unto Paul in a bright light. In ACTS 18:9 the Lord spoke to Paul in the night by a vision. In ACTS 23:11 the Lord stood by him, in 2 TIMOTHY 4:17 the Lord stood with him, and in ACTS 27:23 the angel of God, whom I believe was Jesus Himself once again stood by Paul. In each of these instances Paul distinctly heard the voice of his mouth. The same fact is true also in 1 CORINTHIANS 15:8 where Paul tells this about seeing Jesus: *And last of all he was seen of me also, as of one born out of due time.*

The purpose of reviewing the above information was to show that Paul was in tune with, and had often times seen the Lord in one fashion or another, just like Jesus told him he would, and that Paul had many times heard, and listened unto ...the voice of his mouth. The phrase "hear the voice" in ACTS 22:14 is found eight times total in scripture. As a quick review, eight is the number that has to do with NEW CREATION, NEW BIRTH, NEW BEGINNING, RESURRECTION, and the BRIDE. JOHN 5:25 tells us: *Verily, verily, I say unto you, The hour is coming, and now is, when the dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God: and they that hear shall live.* EPHESIANS 2:1 tells us that as sinners we were all dead in trespasses and sins, but the verse before JOHN 5:25 explains how ...when the dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God: and they that hear shall live. JOHN 5:24 *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.* In other words they that believe upon Jesus, receive NEW BIRTH, start a NEW BEGINNING, and are found a NEW CREATION in Christ Jesus.

Another portion of scripture that records the statement "hear the voice" is in DEUTERONOMY 4. This is Moses speaking unto the children of Israel in these verses, and actually makes reference to the voice of the Lord God five times in this chapter. So to catch the drift of what is being said here in this chapter let's read from verse 9 through 40, and see the wise instructions Moses gave the children of Israel concerning their hearing the voice of the Lord.

DEUTERONOMY 4:9 *Only take heed to thyself, and keep thy soul diligently, lest thou forget the things which thine eyes have seen, and lest they depart from thy heart all the days of thy life: but teach them thy sons, and thy sons' sons; 10 Specially the day that thou stoodest before the LORD thy God in Horeb, when the LORD said unto me, Gather me the people together, and I will make them hear my words, that they may learn to fear me all the days that they shall live upon the earth, and that they may teach their children. 11 And ye came near and stood under the mountain; and the mountain burned with fire unto the midst of heaven, with darkness, clouds, and thick darkness. 12 And the LORD spake unto you out of the midst of the fire: ye heard the voice of the words, but saw no similitude; only ye heard a voice. 13 And he declared unto you his covenant, which he commanded you to perform, even ten commandments; and he wrote them upon two tables of stone. 14 And the LORD commanded me at that time to teach you statutes and judgments, that ye might do them in the land whither ye go over to possess it. 15 Take ye therefore good heed unto yourselves; for ye saw no manner of similitude on the day that the LORD spake unto you in Horeb out of the midst of the fire: 16 Lest ye corrupt yourselves, and make you a graven image, the similitude of any figure, the likeness of male or female, 17 The likeness of any beast that is on the earth, the likeness of any winged fowl that flieth in the air, 18 The likeness of any thing that creepeth on the ground, the likeness of any fish that is in the waters beneath the earth: 19 And lest*

thou lift up thine eyes unto heaven, and when thou seest the sun, and the moon, and the stars, even all the host of heaven, shouldest be driven to worship them, and serve them, which the LORD thy God hath divided unto all nations under the whole heaven. 20 But the LORD hath taken you, and brought you forth out of the iron furnace, even out of Egypt, to be unto him a people of inheritance, as ye are this day. 21 Furthermore the LORD was angry with me for your sakes, and sware that I should not go over Jordan, and that I should not go in unto that good land, which the LORD thy God giveth thee for an inheritance: 22 But I must die in this land, I must not go over Jordan: but ye shall go over, and possess that good land. 23 Take heed unto yourselves, lest ye forget the covenant of the LORD your God, which he made with you, and make you a graven image, or the likeness of any thing, which the LORD thy God hath forbidden thee. 24 For the LORD thy God is a consuming fire, even a jealous God. 25 When thou shalt beget children, and children's children, and ye shall have remained long in the land, and shall corrupt yourselves, and make a graven image, or the likeness of any thing, and shall do evil in the sight of the LORD thy God, to provoke him to anger: 26 I call heaven and earth to witness against you this day, that ye shall soon utterly perish from off the land whereunto ye go over Jordan to possess it; ye shall not prolong your days upon it, but shall utterly be destroyed. 27 And the LORD shall scatter you among the nations, and ye shall be left few in number among the heathen, whither the LORD shall lead you. 28 And there ye shall serve gods, the work of men's hands, wood and stone, which neither see, nor hear, nor eat, nor smell. 29 But if from thence thou shalt seek the LORD thy God, thou shalt find him, if thou seek him with all thy heart and with all thy soul. 30 When thou art in tribulation, and all these things are come upon thee, even in the latter days, if thou turn to the LORD thy God, and shalt be obedient unto his voice: 31 (For the LORD thy God is a merciful God;) he will not forsake thee, neither destroy thee, nor forget the covenant of thy fathers which he sware unto them. 32 For ask now of the days that are past, which were before thee, since the day that God created man upon the earth, and ask from the one side of heaven unto the other, whether there hath been any such thing as this great thing is, or hath been heard like it? 33 Did ever people hear the voice of God speaking out of the midst of the fire, as thou hast heard, and live? 34 Or hath God assayed to go and take him a nation from the midst of another nation, by temptations, by signs, and by wonders, and by war, and by a mighty hand, and by a stretched out arm, and by great terrors, according to all that the LORD your God did for you in Egypt before your eyes? 35 Unto thee it was shewed, that thou mightest know that the LORD he is God; there is none else beside him. 36 Out of heaven he made thee to hear his voice, that he might instruct thee: and upon earth he shewed thee his great fire; and thou heardest his words out of the midst of the fire. 37 And because he loved thy fathers, therefore he chose their seed after them, and brought thee out in his sight with his mighty power out of Egypt; 38 To drive out nations from before thee greater and mightier than thou art, to bring thee in, to give thee their land for an inheritance, as it is this day. 39 Know therefore this day, and consider it in thine heart, that the LORD he is God in heaven above, and upon the earth beneath: there is none else. 40 Thou shalt keep therefore his statutes, and his commandments, which I command thee this day, that it may go well with thee, and with thy children after thee, and that thou mayest prolong thy days upon the earth, which the LORD thy God giveth thee, for ever.

Perhaps you also noticed in the above portion of scripture the phrase "the midst of the fire." {See DEUTERONOMY 4:12; 4:15; and 4:36 above.} Have you ever been in a fiery trial? Did you "hear the voice" of the Lord out of "the midst of the fire?" I bet you did. In DANIEL 3 we find Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego tossed into "the midst of the fire" because they would not worship Nebuchadnezzar's gods. In their hearts they had heard the voice of the Lord, and believed God's word, and trusted Him to deliver them from whatever fiery trial they faced. And they faced a literal fiery furnace heated seven times hotter than it was supposed to be heated. They told king Nebuchadnezzar that their God *...is able to deliver us from the burning fiery furnace, and he will deliver us out of thine hand, O king. But if not, be it known unto thee, O king, that we will not serve thy gods, nor worship the golden image which thou hast set up.* {DANIEL 3:17 & 18}. You know the rest of the story, how this exceeding hot fiery furnace was no match for the power of God, and in "the midst of the fire" Shadrach,



Meshach, and Abednego were seen walking around loose with a fourth man, ...and the form of the fourth is like the Son of God... DANIEL 3:25 tells us. Our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ was right there with Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego in "the midst of the fire!" Do you think they heard the voice of the Lord out of "the midst of the fire?" I bet they did.

The phrase "the midst of the fire" is found fifteen times in scripture, the number associated with REST. Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego RESTed in the Lord.

The full overcomer learns to REST in the Lord, and they "hear the voice" of the Lord out of "the midst of the fire." This may seem like a pretty bold statement until we study EZEKIEL 1:4 & 5 a little closer. EZEKIEL 1:4 & 5 reads: *And I looked, and, behold, a whirlwind came out of the north, a great cloud, and a fire infolding itself, and a brightness was about it, and out of the midst thereof as the colour of amber, out of the midst of the fire. 5 Also out of the midst thereof came the likeness of four living creatures.* EZEKIEL 1 and REVELATION 4 show that these four living creatures are indeed the full overcomers, the Bride of Christ, from this church age! And note here in EZEKIEL 1 that they come forth ...out of the midst of the fire. 1 PETER 1:7 reads: *That the trial of your faith, being much more precious than of gold that perisheth, though it be tried with fire, might be found unto praise and honour and glory at the appearing of Jesus Christ:...* Do you think the Bride of Christ knows the voice of the Lord? Does she even "hear the voice" of the Lord out of "the midst of the fire?" Study the above portions of scripture again, and tie all of these thoughts together, and see the association with the phrase "hear the voice" in ACTS 22:14, a phrase found eight times in scripture; eight being a number that also has to do with the BRIDE, and see how she "hear(s) the voice" of the Lord, even out of "the midst of the fire."

ACTS 22:22 *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. 23 And as they cried out, and cast off their clothes, and threw dust into the air,....*

We noted above how this particular assembly of Hebrews raised their voices against Paul, who spoke words of truth about what the Just One had done in his life. We were comparing facts concerning hearing the voice of the Lord, and the raising of voices against the word of God. This assembly of Jews didn't like the fact that Paul mentioned the word "Gentiles," so they ...*lifted up their voices, and said, Away with such a fellow from the earth: for it is not fit that he should live. And as they cried out, and cast off their clothes, and threw dust into the air,....* Though this very same assembly of people had never all been together before, (as is the case in all assemblies), their reaction to Paul's words were the same as several groups before them who had also heard words of truth by devout men of God. There are many examples in scripture where unruly mobs raised their voices, and cried out against the words of God. All four gospel accounts record how the mobs cried out against Jesus.

MATTHEW 27 tells this of Jesus before Pilate: 22 *Pilate saith unto them, What shall I do then with Jesus which is called Christ? They all say unto him, Let him be crucified. 23 And the governor said, Why, what evil hath he done? But they cried out the more, saying, Let him be crucified.* The gospel according to MARK records it this way in chapter 15:12 *And Pilate answered and said again unto them, What will ye then that I shall do unto him whom ye call the King of the Jews? 13 And they cried out again, Crucify him. 14 Then Pilate said unto them, Why, what evil hath he done? And they cried out the more exceedingly, Crucify him.* LUKE 23:18 states: *And they cried out all at once, saying, Away with this man, and release unto us Barabbas:...* The Apostle John pens two instances where the crowd cried out against Jesus. JOHN 19:5 *Then came Jesus forth, wearing the crown of thorns, and the purple robe. And Pilate saith unto them, Behold the man! 6 When the chief priests therefore and officers saw him, they cried out, saying, Crucify him, crucify him. Pilate saith unto them, Take ye him, and crucify him: for I find no fault in him. ...JOHN 19:12 And from thenceforth Pilate sought to release him: but the Jews cried out, saying, If thou let this man go, thou art not Caesar's friend: whosoever maketh himself a king speaketh against Caesar. 13 When Pilate therefore heard that saying, he brought Jesus forth, and sat down in the judgment seat in a place that is called the Pavement, but in the Hebrew, Gabbatha. 14 And it was the preparation*

of the passover, and about the sixth hour: and he saith unto the Jews, Behold your King!  
15 But they cried out, Away with him, away with him, crucify him.

Recall also in ACTS 7 during the sermon of Stephen, whom Paul has just referenced hearing in ACTS 22:20, how the assembly of the Sanhedrin had also cried out against the words of Stephen. We read in ACTS 7:57 Then they cried out with a loud voice, and stopped their ears, and ran upon him with one accord, 58 And cast him out of the city, and stoned him: and the witnesses laid down their clothes at a young man's feet, whose name was Saul. Just prior to this Stephen had asked this assembly in verses 51-54: Ye stiffnecked and uncircumcised in heart and ears, ye do always resist the Holy Ghost: as your fathers did, so do ye. 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: Who have received the law by the disposition of angels, and have not kept it. When they heard these things, they were cut to the heart, and they gnashed on him with their teeth. {ACTS 7:51-54}.

A few year previously a similar question was asked by Jesus to the Scribes and Pharisee's assembled with a multitude in MATTHEW 23. MATTHEW 23:34 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! Jesus was pointing out to the Jews here a pattern that had continued from generation unto generation. How that they were sent over the centuries past prophets, wise men and scribes, all who proclaimed the word of God in one fashion or another, and were persecuted, and some were even killed and crucified.

Back to our text: ACTS 22:22 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. 23 And as they cried out, and cast off their clothes, and threw dust into the air,.... . This mob's reaction to Paul's testimony boils down to this: These Jews in Jerusalem, who reacted like they were possessed, were really rejecting the word of God. They despised the words of Paul, and chose to believe not the truth Paul was bringing forth unto them. This was the same pattern that had been manifest in the children of Israel for centuries, as we also noted above!

Recall a portion of scripture from 1 SAMUEL 8. The children of Israel were given judges to deliver them from the hands of their enemies according to the word of the Lord, but they weren't happy with this arrangement after a few hundred years, so they came to Samuel, who happened to be their judge, and prophet, and priest at the time, and requested this of him in 1 SAMUEL 8. 1 SAMUEL 8:4 Then all the elders of Israel gathered themselves together, and came to Samuel unto Ramah, 5 And said unto him, Behold, thou art old, and thy sons walk not in thy ways: now make us a king to judge us like all the nations. 6 But the thing displeased Samuel, when they said, Give us a king to judge us. And Samuel prayed unto the LORD. 7 And the LORD said unto Samuel, Hearken unto the voice of the people in all that they say unto thee: for they have not rejected thee, but they have rejected me, that I should not reign over them. 8 According to all the works which they have done since the day that I brought them up out of Egypt even unto this day, wherewith they have forsaken me, and served other gods, so do they also unto thee. 9 Now therefore hearken unto their voice: howbeit yet protest solemnly unto them, and shew them the manner of the king that shall reign over them. 10 And Samuel told all the words of the LORD unto the people that asked of him a king. ...19 Nevertheless the people refused to obey the voice of Samuel; and they said, Nay; but we will have a king over us; 20 That we also may be like all the nations; and that our king may judge us, and go out before us, and fight our battles. 21 And Samuel heard all the words of the people, and he rehearsed them in the ears of the LORD. 22 And the LORD said to Samuel, Hearken unto their voice, and make them a king. And Samuel said unto the men of Israel, Go ye every man unto his city. Note the words of the Lord in verse 7 ...they have not rejected

thee, but they have rejected me, that I should not reign over them. This pattern in the majority of the children of Israel continues on even today.

Note these words concerning the history of Israel, and their attitude toward hearing the voice of the Lord in Paul's sermon unto those in Antioch in Pisidia found in ACTS 13. ACTS 13:17 *The God of this people of Israel chose our fathers, and exalted the people when they dwelt as strangers in the land of Egypt, and with an high arm brought he them out of it. 18 And about the time of forty years suffered he their manners in the wilderness. 19 And when he had destroyed seven nations in the land of Chanaan, he divided their land to them by lot. 20 And after that he gave unto them judges about the space of four hundred and fifty years, until Samuel the prophet. 21 And afterward they desired a king: and God gave unto them Saul the son of Cis, a man of the tribe of Benjamin, by the space of forty years. 22 And when he had removed him, he raised up unto them David to be their king; to whom also he gave testimony, and said, I have found David the son of Jesse, a man after mine own heart, which shall fulfil all my will. 23 Of this man's seed hath God according to his promise raised unto Israel a Saviour, Jesus: 24 When John had first preached before his coming the baptism of repentance to all the people of Israel. 25 And as John fulfilled his course, he said, Whom think ye that I am? I am not he. But, behold, there cometh one after me, whose shoes of his feet I am not worthy to loose. 26 Men and brethren, children of the stock of Abraham, and whosoever among you feareth God, to you is the word of this salvation sent. 27 For they that dwell at Jerusalem, and their rulers, because they knew him not, nor yet the voices of the prophets which are read every sabbath day, they have fulfilled them in condemning him.*

One of the scriptures read in a sabbath day service would have been ISAIAH 53. ISAIAH 53:3 records these words concerning Jesus: *He is despised and rejected of men; a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief: and we hid as it were our faces from him; he was despised, and we esteemed him not.*

No doubt some of these very same people who condemned, and rejected Jesus also heard the testimony of the Apostle Paul here in ACTS 22. Perhaps they even were his former friends. Yet as he spoke words of truth they still didn't recognize them as the word of God, just like the words of the prophets which were read every sabbath day in Jewish synagogue services.

We noted that this assembly who heard Paul speak here in Jerusalem really chose to "believe not" what he was telling them, thus their violent reaction to his using the word "Gentiles." The phrase "believed not" is found it nineteen times total in scripture. Nineteen is the number that has to do with FAITH. However the phrase "believed not" is exactly the opposite of FAITH. In HEBREWS 11:6 we read that without faith it is impossible to please God. The exact words from the King James version reads: *But without faith it is impossible to please him: for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him.* Without faith equates to "believed not." JOHN 3:36 states it like this: *He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life: and he that believeth not the Son shall not see life; but the wrath of God abideth on him.* This scripture probably best defines what it means to "believe not."

To conclude our thoughts here about hearing the voice of the Lord, consider this: JOHN 10:3 tells us that Jesus calls His sheep by name. Later we read these words of Jesus in JOHN 10:27 *My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me:...* Furthermore in JOHN 18:37 Jesus states: *...Every one that is of the truth heareth my voice.* What we should note in these passages of scripture is that it is important for we Christians to hear the voice of the Lord. I guarantee all full overcomers are in tune with the voice of the Lord. 1 THESSALONIANS 4:16-18 tells us: *For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first: 17 Then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord. 18 Wherefore comfort one another with these words.* Are you listening to the voice of the Lord?