

Saul of Tarsus in 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, (their spiritual blind 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.* Realize as the Lord Jesus Christ spoke these words to Saul of Tarsus that he was now blind, blinded by the brilliant light of Jesus. We read this in ACTS 9:8 *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. 9 And he was three days without sight, and neither did eat nor drink.* Simply stated Saul of Tarsus was left blind for a three-day season. Let's finish this story, and see how our beloved Apostle Paul, who was at that time known as Saul of Tarsus, received his sight. ACTS 9:10 *And there was a certain disciple at Damascus, named Ananias; and to him said the Lord in a vision, Ananias. And he said, Behold, I am here, Lord. 11 And the Lord said unto him, Arise, and go into the street which is called Straight, and enquire in the house of Judas for one called Saul, of Tarsus: for, behold, he prayeth, 12 And hath seen in a vision a man named Ananias coming in, and putting his hand on him, that he might receive his sight. 13 Then Ananias answered, Lord, I have heard by many of this man, how much evil he hath done to thy saints at Jerusalem: 14 And here he hath authority from the chief priests to bind all that call on thy name. 15 But the Lord said unto him, Go thy way: for he is a chosen vessel unto me, to bear my name before the Gentiles, and kings, and the children of Israel: 16 For I will shew him how great things he must suffer for my name's sake. 17 And Ananias went his way, and entered into the house; and putting his hands on him said, Brother Saul, the Lord, even Jesus, that appeared unto thee in the way as thou camest, hath sent me, that thou mightest receive thy sight, and be filled with the Holy Ghost. 18 And immediately there fell from his eyes as it had been scales: and he received sight forthwith, and arose, and was baptized.* Here we find how Saul of Tarsus received the ...recovering of sight to the blind,... and he also received the Holy Ghost ...and arose, and was baptized... in water, an outward expression of an inward belief that he had accepted Jesus as his own personal Saviour; had received Jesus forgiveness of his sins, and was to be counted among those who believed in the resurrected Jesus Christ. That was the day he also received the gift of the Holy Ghost: his spiritual eyes were then opened, and scales then fell from his natural eyes, and he received the ...recovering of sight to the blind,... but more importantly he went on with the Lord from that day forward becoming our Apostle sent unto the Gentiles, the Apostle Paul. Later on in his life Paul wrote about the blinded minds of the unbeliever in 2 CORINTHIANS 4. 2 CORINTHIANS 4:3 *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.*

One more thought before we move on. We mentioned earlier how there is physical blindness, and that there is also spiritual blindness. The natural blind do not see the light, and the spiritual blind do not see the Light of Jesus. We are going to spend a few moments discussing the reality of having our spiritual eyes enlightened. The Apostle Paul made mention of praying for us in several places in his epistles, and one these places is in EPHESIANS 1. We were taught by Brother Hill that the epistle written unto the EPHESIANS is the high water mark of Paul's epistles. Brother Hill noted that the book of EPHESIANS gives us the loftiest levels of teaching found in the Bible, bringing the redeemed the great purpose of God in their lives. Brother Hill also noted that no one, regardless of how brilliant they may be, can ever hope to cope with the depths found written in EPHESIANS. With these profound thoughts in mind, let's look at part of the prayer Paul prayed for us in EPHESIANS 1, and we will start in the middle of his prayer beginning in verse 17. EPHESIANS 1:17 *That the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give unto you the spirit of*

wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of him: 18 The eyes of your understanding being enlightened; that ye may know what is the hope of his calling, and what the riches of the glory of his inheritance in the saints, 19 And what is the exceeding greatness of his power to us-ward who believe, according to the working of his mighty power, 20 Which he wrought in Christ, when he raised him from the dead, and set him at his own right hand in the heavenly places. Note in verse 18 how Paul prayed that the eyes of our understanding be enlightened, which can only completely happen by the power of the Holy Ghost. Our spiritual eyes of understanding being enlightened by the Holy Ghost is what will guide us to the finish line of our race course as we continually look unto our Lord and Saviour, who is the Author and Finisher of our faith. Simply stated, our Apostle Paul was praying that we have eyes of faith. The term “eyes of faith” is not found in scripture, yet the teaching of having “eyes of faith” is found all throughout scripture. So when the Apostle Paul prays in EPHESIANS 1:18 The eyes of your understanding being enlightened,.... he is asking the Lord that our spiritual “eyes of faith” be opened to behold the things of the Lord in the same Light God sees things. Stated another way, we are to “behold” the things of God with our spiritual “eyes of faith,” enlightened by the Holy Ghost, and without our spiritual eyes being enlightened we can not “behold” the deeper things of God.

Let's take this thought a step further. In HEBREWS 11:1 we read: *Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen.* This scripture defines “eyes of faith,” which ...*calleth those things which be not as though they were...* as Abraham did in ROMANS 4:17. Abraham is noted to be the father of those who also walk in the steps of faith in ROMANS 4:12. HEBREWS 11:10 explain to us that Abraham ...*looked for a city which hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God.* Abraham saw this heavenly city with his “eyes of faith.” All full overcomers will have these “eyes of faith.” These “eyes of faith” see things afar like the Old Testament worthies of faith did, which is recorded for us like this in HEBREWS 11:13 *These all died in faith, not having received the promises, but having seen them afar off, (by their eyes of faith) and were persuaded of them, and embraced them, and confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth.*

In THE SONG OF SOLOMON 1:15 we read this: *Behold, thou art fair, my love; behold, thou art fair; thou hast doves' eyes.* The doves' eyes symbolize discernment by the Holy Ghost. Doves' eyes are far seeing eyes. Again EPHESIANS 1:17 *That the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give unto you the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of him: 18 The eyes of your understanding being enlightened.* It is by the power of the Holy Ghost that spiritual eyes are opened, that ...*the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them...* 2 CORINTHIANS 4:4. Paul also writes 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.* The Holy Ghost empowers the full overcomer to take in the full portion of the glorious gospel of Christ, and guides the full overcomer to become the Bride of Christ. Furthermore it is the Holy Ghost whose job it is to reveal unto us the truth, which brings us to the point of becoming the full overcomer from this church age, who will be the Bride of Christ. Jesus taught about the Holy Ghost in the following verses from JOHN 16. JOHN 16:13 *Howbeit when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth: for he shall not speak of himself; but whatsoever he shall hear, that shall he speak: and he will shew you things to come.* 14 *He shall glorify me: for he shall receive of mine, and shall shew it unto you.* 15 *All things that the Father hath are mine: therefore said I, that he shall take of mine, and shall shew it unto you.* Thus we find the truth of what we said above, how that it is by the power of the Holy Ghost that spiritual eyes are opened, and made into those doves' eyes spoken about in THE SONG OF SOLOMON 1:15!

All of this discussion about doves' eyes, and eyes of faith, brings us to one final thought about our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ bringing to us the ...*recovering of sight to the blind...* (LUKE 4:18), and that takes us to the thought of the full overcomers from this church age who are “full of eyes.” This statement “full of eyes” is found in four scriptures, and these four scriptures describe the Bride of Christ. She is described in REVELATION 4 as four living ones, or four living creatures,

and in our King James Version as four beasts. In REVELATION 4:6 we read that these living ones were ...*full of eyes before and behind*, and in REVELATION 4:8 we read that ...*they were full of eyes within: and they rest not day and night, saying, Holy, holy, holy, Lord God Almighty, which was, and is, and is to come.* Yes they are worshippers, because the Bride of Christ is a worshipper. Notice their eyes, they were before, and behind, and within. This means that they could see the past, they could see the future, and they could see the present. More precisely they could see the Lord's handiwork in the past, both the distant past, and in the past in their own lives; they could see what is in store in our future with the Lord, His mighty eternal work; and just as important they can see the Lord's hand in the present. They latch on to such verse as 1 THESSALONIANS 5:18 *In every thing give thanks: for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus concerning you.* Here's another verse that drills down to the present spiritual eyesight of the full overcomer, a verse we are most familiar with. ROMANS 8:28 *And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose.* Notice also here in REVELATION 4:8 that ...*they rest not day and night, saying, Holy, holy, holy, Lord God Almighty, which was, and is, and is to come.* "Which was" tells of their eyes behind, "and is" tells of their eyes for this present time, and that which "is to come" tells of their eyes before. These are their "doves' eyes," their spiritual "eyes of faith" that we have been examining. The other two scriptures that mention "full of eyes" are found in EZEKIEL 1:18, and 10:12 where this same company of full overcomers are found "full of eyes round about."

Before we move on, and end this discussion about eyes of faith, let's also make note that our natural eyes need to focus in order to see things properly. The same is true with our spiritual eyes. So where is your focus? All of the worthies of faith found mentioned in the Old Testament had eyes of faith focused upon the things above, and the same will be true of the New Testament full overcomers. Simply put the Bride of Christ will be found looking unto Jesus the Author and Finisher of her faith as is noted in HEBREWS 12:2. We mentioned earlier in HEBREWS 11:10 where Abraham's focus was: *For he looked for a city which hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God.* Abraham saw this city by faith. Abraham had eyes of faith. What are you looking for? What has your attention? Where is your focus? What are you looking at? The full overcomers are looking up! Moses too was a man of faith. At the edge of the Red Sea ...*Moses said unto the people, Fear ye not, stand still, and see the salvation of the LORD, which he will shew to you to day: for the Egyptians whom ye have seen to day, ye shall see them again no more for ever. The LORD shall fight for you, and ye shall hold your peace...* EXODUS 14:13 & 14. Where was Moses focus? Was he looking up? What do you think? Read the rest of the story in EXODUS 14 and see that Moses did what the Lord told him to do. It was Moses job to believe God, and God's job to dry up the Red Sea. And God did. HEBREWS 11:29 records this of Moses and the children of Israel: *By faith they passed through the Red sea as by dry land: which the Egyptians assaying to do were drowned.*

Moses was in his eighties when this happened, but David was still a youth when he went up against that God defying giant named Goliath in 1 SAMUEL 17. You don't have to be old to trust God. Where was David's focus? God knew David was a man after God's own heart before this day in 1 SAMUEL 17. {Study ACTS 13:22, and 1 SAMUEL 16:7.} Are you like David seeking God's best in your life? A man after God's own heart looks up. Perhaps David wrote PSALMS 121:1 *I will lift up mine eyes unto the hills, from whence cometh my help.* These again are spiritual eyes of faith that David used to see before it happened his victory over Goliath. Let's read about this in 1 SAMUEL 17. 1 SAMUEL 17:45 *Then said David to the Philistine, Thou comest to me with a sword, and with a spear, and with a shield: but I come to thee in the name of the LORD of hosts, the God of the armies of Israel, whom thou hast defied. 46 This day will the LORD deliver thee into mine hand; and I will smite thee, and take thine head from thee; and I will give the carcases of the host of the Philistines this day unto the fowls of the air, and to the wild beasts of the earth; that all the earth may know that there is a God in Israel. 47 And all this assembly shall know that the LORD saveth not with sword and spear: for the battle is the LORD'S, and he will give you into our hands.* These are pretty strong words for a teenager wouldn't you say? Here in 1 SAMUEL 17 David wasn't trusting

in David, but by faith he believed that the Lord would give him this victory. David had eyes of faith to see the future, and the Lord gave him this victory over Goliath. 1 SAMUEL 17:50 says it like this: *So David prevailed over the Philistine with a sling and with a stone, and smote the Philistine, and slew him; ...*

Consider also the eyes of faith of Rahab in JOSHUA 2. She perished not with those of Jericho who believed not, and is recorded as one of the Old Testament hero's of faith in HEBREWS 11:30. Here is part of what she said in JOSHUA 2:11 *...the LORD your God, he is God in heaven above, and in earth beneath.* This confession of faith took her to the place where she became one of the grandmothers of Jesus. Did you also notice that she was looking up?

And last in this discussion concerning the eyes of faith of the Old Testament worthies of faith we need to recall the story in 2 KINGS 6 when Elisha was at Dothan. The king of Syria had sent forth horses and chariots with a great host, who came by night and surrounded the city of Dothan. Then we read in 2 KINGS 6:15 *And when the servant of the man of God was risen early, and gone forth, behold, an host compassed the city both with horses and chariots. And his servant said unto him, Alas, my master! how shall we do? 16 And he answered, Fear not: for they that be with us are more than they that be with them. 17 And Elisha prayed, and said, LORD, I pray thee, open his eyes, that he may see. And the LORD opened the eyes of the young man; and he saw: and, behold, the mountain was full of horses and chariots of fire round about Elisha.* Elisha first saw this with his eyes of faith.

We have spent much time with this fourth phase of Jesus ministry here in LUKE 4:18, the *...recovering of sight to the blind...* which led to the lengthy discussion concerning eyes of faith. We have not finished our race course yet, so we must continue running our race course laying aside every weight and the sin which doth so easily beset us, and continue running with patience the race that is set before us, continually looking with our eyes of faith unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith, the author and finisher of our race course. That is what we must do if we want to be a full overcomer. Look up.

The fifth point in Jesus sermon at His home Synagogue in Nazareth found in LUKE 4:18 is *...to set at liberty them that are bruised.* The Greek word "bruised" here again is unique to Luke, for this is the only time the Greek word *thrauo* {throw'-o}, number 2352 in The Strong's Greek Concordance, is used in scripture. *Thrauo* {throw'-o}, here translated "bruised" means: to break, or wreck, break in pieces, shatter, smite through, and broken by calamity. The thought points to what Satan has done to the human race through sin, and the yoke of bondage brought on because of sin. We read in ISAIAH 58:6 *Is not this the fast that I have chosen? to loose the bands of wickedness, to undo the heavy burdens, and to let the oppressed go free, and that ye break every yoke?* Only our Lord and Saviour Christ Jesus could set the oppressed free, and break the yoke of bondage of sin, which was exactly what He did upon the cross of Calvary. ROMANS 8:2 tells us: *For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death.* GALATIANS 5:1 also instructs us to: *Stand fast therefore in the liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free, and be not entangled again with the yoke of bondage.*

The whole point of this fifth part of Jesus sermon was to emphasize the grace of God! The number five is the number that points to GRACE, and here in His hometown Synagogue, Jesus was pointing out to them facts about the grace of God manifested in Christ Jesus, who was made flesh and dwelt among us, full of grace and truth, as we are told of Him in JOHN 1:14. In JOHN 1:17 we further read: *For the law was given by Moses, but grace and truth came by Jesus Christ.* Recall what Luke wrote in LUKE 2:40 about Christ growing up in Nazareth: *And the child grew, and waxed strong in spirit, filled with wisdom: and the grace of God was upon him.* Here in His hometown of Nazareth those at the Synagogue this particular Sabbath day service in LUKE 4 witnessed first hand grace, and truth being expounded unto them. Luke even mentioned in LUKE 4:22 *And all bare him witness, and wondered at the gracious words which proceeded out of his mouth.* In other words they experienced, and witnessed first hand the fact that not only was the grace of God upon Him, but in Him. Jesus here was telling those in His Synagogue the facts of TITUS 2:11 *For the grace of God*

*that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men.* Remember His theme this Sabbath Day service in LUKE 4 was, "I am HERE, HEAR me NOW!"

So Jesus declares at His home Synagogue in Nazareth here in LUKE 4:18 that He came *...to set at liberty them that are bruised.* One translation of this fifth point of Jesus sermon reads: *...setting the shattered free.* Again only our Lord and Saviour Christ Jesus could set the oppressed free, and break the yoke of bondage of sin, which was exactly what He did upon the cross of Calvary. We just talked a little about GRACE being the number associated with the number five. GRACE times GRACE, (five times five), equals twenty-five, which is the number that is associated with THE FORGIVENESS OF SINS. There are twenty-five verses of scripture where we find the word "liberty," and in total the word "liberty" is used twenty-seven times in scripture. Twenty-seven is the number associated with THE PREACHING OF THE GOSPEL, which is exactly what Jesus was doing here in LUKE 4, that is PREACHING THE GOSPEL of the FORGIVENESS OF SINS! The Greek word for "liberty" found in LUKE 4:18 is aphasis {af-es-is}, number 859 in The Strong's Greek Concordance. Aphasis {af-es-is} translates into the following words of our King James Version: "remission" 9 times, "forgiveness" 6 times, "deliverance" 1 time here in LUKE 4:18, and "liberty" 1 time also here in LUKE 4:18 for a total usage of seventeen times. Seventeen is the number which means VICTORY IN CHRIST JESUS. Another way of saying this is in LUKE 4:18 is that Jesus came *...to preach... VICTORY IN CHRIST JESUS ...to the captives,...* and VICTORY IN CHRIST JESUS to *...them that are bruised!* In other words Jesus came *...to set at liberty...* through the VICTORY IN CHRIST JESUS all whose lives are broken in pieces, shattered by sin, and crushed. ROMANS 5:12 tells us: *Wherefore, as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned,...* thus through Adam's transgression, all of mankind has been wrecked, broken in pieces, and shattered. But the good news is that our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ came into this world, not only to deliver us from the bondage of sin, but to remedy the damage that sin has done, and to set *...the shattered free.* Praise the Lord for His so great salvation! There is no way we can thank Him enough for His so great salvation!

The sixth point of Jesus sermon here in LUKE 4 is a stand-alone verse. LUKE 4:19 *To preach the acceptable year of the Lord.* Christ Jesus came to earth to fulfill all the prophetic Old Testament promises, which He did. This was the time, and still is the time to remember *...that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners...* as Paul wrote us in 1 TIMOTHY 1:15. ROMANS 15:8 tells us: *Now I say that Jesus Christ was a minister of the circumcision for the truth of God, to confirm the promises made unto the fathers.* Israel should have known who He was because they had been taught all the prophetic Old Testament promises. Jesus, by the time frame of His reading this verse from ISAIAH 61:2 in the Synagogue of Nazareth, had become famous. We find this in LUKE 4:14 *And Jesus returned in the power of the Spirit into Galilee: and there went out a fame of him through all the region round about. 15 And he taught in their synagogues, being glorified of all.* Israel should have known who He was, especially those of Nazareth where He grew up, but unbelief kept their eyes blind as to who He was. Jesus preached *...the acceptable year of the Lord...* and that it was their accepted time to receive Him as Messiah. He went about presenting Himself with His own valid credentials of miracles, and signs, and wonders. But in the end He was despised and rejected of men as ISAIAH 53:3 tells us. Nevertheless Christ Jesus came *...To preach the acceptable year of the Lord...* as LUKE 4:19 states.

Jesus the Master Teacher quit reading in the middle of ISAIAH 61:2, and closed the book. The last half of ISAIAH 61:2 reads: *...and the day of vengeance of our God; to comfort all that mourn.* The reason Jesus quit reading here was because the first advent opened the day of grace, *"...the acceptable year of Jehovah..."* but does not fulfil "the day of vengeance," which will be fulfilled at a future time, after His second coming. Several scriptures point this out, and we will read a couple portions, which you can further study out on your own, but as we read these verse remember this was not a part of Jesus sermon that day at Nazareth. 2 THESSALONIANS 1:6 *Seeing it is a righteous thing with God to recompense tribulation to them that trouble you; 7 And to you who are troubled rest with us, when the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with his mighty angels, 8 In*

*flaming fire taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ: 9 Who shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power; 10 When he shall come to be glorified in his saints, and to be admired in all them that believe (because our testimony among you was believed) in that day. Next spend some of your time studying 2 PETER 3. 2 PETER 3:1 This second epistle, beloved, I now write unto you; in both which I stir up your pure minds by way of remembrance: 2 That ye may be mindful of the words which were spoken before by the holy prophets, and of the commandment of us the apostles of the Lord and Saviour: 3 Knowing this first, that there shall come in the last days scoffers, walking after their own lusts, 4 And saying, Where is the promise of his coming? for since the fathers fell asleep, all things continue as they were from the beginning of the creation. 5 For this they willingly are ignorant of, that by the word of God the heavens were of old, and the earth standing out of the water and in the water: 6 Whereby the world that then was, being overflowed with water, perished: 7 But the heavens and the earth, which are now, by the same word are kept in store, reserved unto fire against the day of judgment and perdition of ungodly men. 8 But, beloved, be not ignorant of this one thing, that one day is with the Lord as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day. 9 The Lord is not slack concerning his promise, as some men count slackness; but is longsuffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance.*

Brother Hawkins points out that there was a seventh obscure point to Jesus scripture reading here in His hometown Synagogue of Nazareth, which is found in the first part of LUKE 4:20 *And he closed the book, and he gave it again to the minister, and sat down.* The seventh part of Jesus sermon was that He closed the book (of ISAIAH), and sat down! This seventh point is symbolic. Seven shows Divine SPIRITUAL PERFECTION or SPIRITUAL COMPLETION. We could spend a month going over all the number sevens in scripture. REVELATION is full of sevens, 54 in total, and GENESIS also has 54 sevens! There are seven days in a week; seven notes in a musical scale; seven colors in a complete rainbow, and the list of “sevens” that points to the SPIRITUAL PERFECTION of God will take us ages to fully appreciate. When Jesus sat down after reading these verses it signified a time of completion and rest. The seventh day is the Sabbath day, the Sabbath of rest, holy unto the LORD according to EXODUS 31:15. Two verses later we read in part EXODUS 31:17 *...for in six days the LORD made heaven and earth, and on the seventh day he rested, and was refreshed.* We read this in GENESIS 2:2 *And on the seventh day God ended his work which he had made; and he rested on the seventh day from all his work which he had made. 3 And God blessed the seventh day, and sanctified it: because that in it he had rested from all his work which God created and made.* The first part of PSALMS 37:7 tells us to: *Rest in the LORD, and wait patiently for him:...* . The Lord by His Holy Spirit is doing a work in our lives to bring us to the point of SPIRITUAL PERFECTION.

The whole point of Jesus reading this particular portion of scripture from ISAIAH 61:1 & 2 was to highlight these seven points about His ministry to mankind. Recall that we gave this sermon a title, calling it “I am HERE, HEAR me NOW.” Except for His mother, no one there at this Nazareth Synagogue service realized that the great “I AM” of Bible fame was right there in their midst, and had just read a little scripture concerning Himself! His sermon really said “**I am** HERE, HEAR me NOW.” Jesus was the same “**I AM**” who appeared unto Abram in GENESIS 15:1, and said: *...Fear not, Abram: I am thy shield, and thy exceeding great reward.* This same pre-incarnate Christ Jesus, the great “**I AM**,” appeared unto Isaac in GENESIS 26:24 and stated: *I am the God of Abraham thy father: fear not, for I am with thee, and will bless thee, and multiply thy seed for my servant Abraham’s sake.* Isaac’s son Jacob saw the Lord in a dream in GENESIS 28, and we read once again this very same “**I AM**” telling him in GENESIS 28:13 *...I am the LORD God of Abraham thy father, and the God of Isaac: the land whereon thou liest, to thee will I give it, and to thy seed; 14 And thy seed shall be as the dust of the earth, and thou shalt spread abroad to the west, and to the east, and to the north, and to the south: and in thee and in thy seed shall all the families of the earth be blessed. 15 And, behold, I am with thee, and will keep thee in all places whither thou goest, and will bring thee again into this land; for I will not leave thee, until I have done that which I have spoken to thee*



of. In EXODUS 3 we read the story of the call of Moses by this same great “I AM,” who also appeared unto Moses out of a burning bush. Study EXODUS 3 on your own, and you will find pre-incarnate Christ Jesus telling Moses in EXODUS 3:6 *...I am the God of thy father, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob.* EXODUS 3:8 *...And I am come down to deliver them out of the hand of the Egyptians,...* . EXODUS 3:14 *And God said unto Moses, I AM THAT I AM: and he said, Thus shalt thou say unto the children of Israel, I AM hath sent me unto you.* This same “I AM” announced to Gideon in JUDGES 6:10 *...I am the LORD your God...* .

Now jump ahead to REVELATION and notice the eight “I AM” verses that further describe our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. He says in REVELATION 1:8 *I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the ending, saith the Lord, which is, and which was, and which is to come, the Almighty.* Our second verse is REVELATION 1:11 *...I am Alpha and Omega, the first and the last: and, What thou seest, write in a book, and send it unto the seven churches which are in Asia; unto Ephesus, and unto Smyrna, and unto Pergamos, and unto Thyatira, and unto Sardis, and unto Philadelphia, and unto Laodicea.* Third we find in REVELATION 1:17 (b) *...And he laid his right hand upon me, saying unto me, Fear not; I am the first and the last.* Our fourth verse is the next verse, REVELATION 1:18 *I am he that liveth, and was dead; and, behold, I am alive for evermore, Amen; and have the keys of hell and of death.* The fifth verse referencing to the great “I AM” speaking of Jesus in REVELATION is this most important statement written unto the church of Thyatira in REVELATION 2:23 *...and all the churches shall know that I am he which searcheth the reins and hearts: and I will give unto every one of you according to your works.* Our sixth REVELATION verse is REVELATION 21:6 *...I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end. I will give unto him that is athirst of the fountain of the water of life freely.* The Seventh “I AM” verse spoken by Jesus in REVELATION is REVELATION 22:13 *I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end, the first and the last.* Verse number eight is REVELATION 22:16 *I Jesus have sent mine angel to testify unto you these things in the churches. I am the root and the offspring of David, and the bright and morning star.*

Yes indeed this is the very same “I AM” reading scripture in the Nazareth Synagogue in LUKE 4, so we need to realize that His message that day truly was: “I am HERE, HEAR me NOW.” And this day in LUKE 4 at the Synagogue in Nazareth, Jesus the great “I AM” was not yet done speaking. They needed to hear the rest of what He had to say.

Earlier in this portion we talked about “eyes of faith,” a phrase not found in scripture, but a concept taught all throughout scripture. We are now going to spend a little time discussing another truth found all throughout scripture, yet not in these exact words: “ears of faith.” The closest statement I could find related to “ears of faith” is this statement Paul wrote both in GALATIANS 3:2, and 3:5 – “the hearing of faith.” Our ears are how we hear, as you all know, and some hear better than others. In PROVERBS 1:2 we find that our ears of hears is one way we get *...To know wisdom and instruction; to perceive the words of understanding.* Jesus, in His sermon at the Nazareth Synagogue, was trying to open their “ears of faith,” as well as their “eyes of faith.” This is why the sermon title “I am HERE, HEAR me NOW” is an appropriate label for His sermon at the Nazareth Synagogue. “Ears of faith” is really defined by ROMANS 10:17, our go to scripture on FAITH, which reads: *So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.* Let’s examine this verse a little closer. Twice here in ROMANS 10:17 we find the word “hearing,” and we probably never really paid that much attention to this before. Two is the number of SUFFICIENT TESTIMONY, or SUFFICIENT WITNESS, so we find in ROMANS 10:17 SUFFICIENT WITNESS to the fact that *...faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.* “Ears of faith” then drills down to this *...faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.* Again we are reminded that REVELATION 19:13 states this about Christ Jesus, that *...His name is called The Word of God.* Expressed another way, Jesus Christ is “The Word of God,” and paraphrasing JOHN 1:14 *...The Word of God was made flesh, and dwelt among us full of grace and truth!* It get’s even better. There is a number that points to The Word of God, and that is the number thirty-seven. Note this: there are thirty-seven verses of scripture where we find the word “hearing.” ROMANS 10:17

again is one of these thirty-seven verses, thus the concept of hearing “ears of faith” is kind of like triple emphasized here: *So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.*

One more thing about ROMANS 10:17, a verse that all full overcomers experience, for this is the shoes of faith we walk in. ROMANS 10:17 starts out “*So then...*” The phrase “so then” is found fifteen times in scripture. Fifteen is the number of REST. We can rest in the fact that ...*faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.* We need to hear with “ears of faith” what the Word of God speaks to our hearts, so that we get ...*To know wisdom and instruction; to perceive the words of understanding...*...PROVERBS 1:2.

Now let's put ourselves back in this Nazareth Synagogue Sabbath day service in LUKE 4, where The Word of God has just read from The Word of God. Then we read in LUKE 4:20 *And he closed the book, and he gave it again to the minister, and sat down. And the eyes of all them that were in the synagogue were fastened on him.* This is the first of fourteen times in New Testament scripture where we find the Greek word *atenizo* {at-en-id'-zo}, which here is translated “fastened.” (Fourteen is the number associated with DELIVERANCE or SALVATION). *Atenizo* {at-en-id'-zo} is number 816 in The Strong's Greek Concordance, and Luke uses this word twelve of the fourteen times we find it in scripture. *Atenizo* {at-en-id'-zo} always has a strongly intensive meaning, indicating steadfastly beholding, or looking earnestly. This is how we are to be found looking earnestly, and intensively upon our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ the Author and Finisher of our faith; and we do so with our “eyes of faith.” Furthermore we are to be found looking earnestly, and intensively for the immediate twinkling of an eye coming of our heavenly Bridegroom. If we were in this Nazareth Synagogue Sabbath day service we would see all in attendance with their eyes riveted upon Jesus. They all kind of knew who He was, having grown up with Him, and His family in attendance most all Sabbath Day services. Did all of these eyes that were “fastened” upon Him realize that He was their DELIVERANCE and SALVATION? LUKE 4:21 *And he began to say unto them, This day is this scripture fulfilled in your ears.* Jesus was encouraging them to open their ears, and receive “ears of faith,” and “eyes of faith” to behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world, and to do so this day! {Study JOHN 1:29 and 36.} Did they have the kind of ears ...*to perceive the words of understanding...*...PROVERBS 1:2?

Perhaps a minute or two went by before the events of LUKE 4:22 took place. LUKE 4:22 *And all bare him witness, and wondered at the gracious words which proceeded out of his mouth.* We mentioned this previously that the word “wondered” here means that they truly were struck with the truth, and the Holy Ghost inspired force of His words. And they further “wondered” at Him when they remembered that he was a native of their own place, and that they had long been acquainted with Him, and all bare witness of this fact. They further “wondered” on how He should now, after all of these years having been in their midst, claim to be the Messiah, after giving so much evidence from scripture that He was the Christ! They also “wondered” at His gracious words. However also note this: “wondered” isn't believing.

For a moment let us also “wonder” at this scene. We see this from the perspective of an appreciative believer knowing that Christ Jesus is the Son of God, and the Word of God. And like the Apostle John wrote in JOHN 1:14 ...*(and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father,)*... . Imagine how that was. Later in his life the Apostle John wrote in 1 JOHN 1:1 this about our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ: *That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked upon, and our hands have handled, of the Word of life.* This same Apostle John tells of laying his head upon Jesus breast at the last supper in JOHN 13:25, no doubt hearing His heart beat. What a “wonder!” So back here at the Synagogue at Nazareth this particular Sabbath day let's consider Jesus perspective. His whole thirty years on this earth so far has been a “wonder” for Him, but not a surprise. The friendly heavenly environment He had dwelt in from the eternities past was sin free, unbelief free, and full of unspeakable Godly love. And now ever since He came to earth full of grace and truth, He has been surround by sin and unbelief, and has had encounters ever since He was two years old with those intent on killing Him. Of course that is why He came to earth in the first place, to give ...*Himself for our sins, that he might*



*deliver us from this present evil world, according to the will of God and our Father...* ...GALATIANS 1:4. We will talk more about this shortly, how that Jesus often marveled at the unbelief He found everywhere He went, and this was simply because He came from a perfect sin free heavenly environment. His gracious words He spoke that day was just typical heavenly language, packed with Holy Spirit inspired energy. When we finally get to verses 21 through 27 of LUKE 4, we will see how He responded to this moment of “wonderment” by those in the Nazareth Synagogue that particular Sabbath day. The short version is that He responded in love.

Next we will examine this last part of LUKE 4:22 *And they said, Is not this Joseph's son?* We are going to spend a little time discussing this part of LUKE 4:22. They were questioning that He was the Messiah. They were full of unbelief. If you have studied the rest of this story in LUKE 4 you know that they ran Jesus out of town that same day. So yes they were full of unbelief. We are going to compare some verses in MATTHEW 13, and MARK 6 with what we find here in LUKE 4. In MATTHEW 13:14 & 15 Jesus quotes from ISAIAH 6:9 & 10, and He says in MATTHEW 13:14 *And in them is fulfilled the prophecy of Esaias, which saith, By hearing ye shall hear, and shall not understand; and seeing ye shall see, and shall not perceive: 15 For this people's heart is waxed gross, and their ears are dull of hearing, and their eyes they have closed; lest at any time they should see with their eyes, and hear with their ears, and should understand with their heart, and should be converted, and I should heal them.* The Apostle Paul also quoted this same scripture to the Jews at Rome when he first spoke to them in ACTS 28:25-27. ACTS 28:25 *And when they agreed not among themselves, they departed, after that Paul had spoken one word, Well spake the Holy Ghost by Esaias the prophet unto our fathers, 26 Saying, Go unto this people, and say, Hearing ye shall hear, and shall not understand; and seeing ye shall see, and not perceive: 27 For the heart of this people is waxed gross, and their ears are dull of hearing, and their eyes have they closed; lest they should see with their eyes, and hear with their ears, and understand with their heart, and should be converted, and I should heal them.* Obviously these to whom Jesus spoke, and those to whom Paul spoke didn't have “ears of faith,” nor “eyes of faith.”

Though both Matthew and Mark didn't record the sermon of Jesus that Luke did in LUKE 4, they both referenced this time when Jesus came to His home town of Nazareth, and spoke at the Synagogue. Let's start reading in MATTHEW 13:54 *And when he was come into his own country, he taught them in their synagogue, insomuch that they were astonished, and said, Whence hath this man this wisdom, and these mighty works? 55 Is not this the carpenter's son? is not his mother called Mary? and his brethren, James, and Joses, and Simon, and Judas? 56 And his sisters, are they not all with us? Whence then hath this man all these things? 57 And they were offended in him. But Jesus said unto them, A prophet is not without honour, save in his own country, and in his own house. 58 And he did not many mighty works there because of their unbelief.* Note here again that they were full of unbelief, and as verse 58 states: *And he did not many mighty works there because of their unbelief.* Remember the secret of faith Paul revealed in HEBREWS 11:6 *But without faith it is impossible to please him: (God) for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him.* Unbelief is not faith, and as ROMANS 14:23 tells us: *...whatsoever is not of faith is sin,...* thus unbelief is sin! Again MATTHEW 13:58 tells us: *And he did not many mighty works there because of their unbelief.*

Let me interject a quick thought here. The word “unbelief” is found sixteen times in scripture. And the number sixteen points to LOVE. “Unbelief” and LOVE are opposites, and so is “unbelief” and believe. *Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and thou shalt be saved...* (ACTS 16:31). This cures “unbelief.” Faith in God cancels “unbelief.”

Look at MARK 6 for Mark's telling of this same event that we just looked at in MATTHEW 13. MARK 6:1 *And he went out from thence, and came into his own country; and his disciples follow him. 2 And when the sabbath day was come, he began to teach in the synagogue: and many hearing him were astonished, saying, From whence hath this man these things? and what wisdom is this which is given unto him, that even such mighty works are wrought by his hands? 3 Is not this the carpenter, the son of Mary, the brother of James, and Joses, and of Juda, and Simon? and are not his*

*sisters here with us? And they were offended at him. 4 But Jesus said unto them, A prophet is not without honour, but in his own country, and among his own kin, and in his own house. 5 And he could there do no mighty work, save that he laid his hands upon a few sick folk, and healed them. 6 And he marvelled because of their unbelief.* Note again how Jesus ...*marvelled because of their unbelief.* The Greek word translated “marvelled” here is *thau-mazo* {thou-mad'-zo}, number 2296 in The Strong’s Greek Concordance, and means: to wonder at; to be amazed; to marvel. And no wonder Jesus ...*marvelled because of their unbelief..* for there was no sin in Him, and HEBREWS 12:1 informs us that unbelief is the sin that so easily besets us. Unbelief is the exact opposite of faith.

In both MATTHEW 13:57 and MARK 6:3 we find that they were “offended at Him.” The meaning of this statement is that they were perplexed as to how Jesus came by His wisdom, and power, since he had seemingly come from an uneducated family, whose family members they all knew. In their minds they all felt that Jesus, because of His seemingly lack of education, was inferior to them. Thus because of their haughty attitude they had a hard time receiving instructions from one, whom they felt superior too. This is how they were “offended at Him.” The James Moffatt translation states: “So they were repelled by him.”

Note also both here in MARK 6:3, and MATTHEW 13:55 & 56 that we read of Jesus’ brothers and sisters. We find His brothers were named James, and Joses, and Simon, and Judas, and that He also had sisters. Surly His siblings believed that Jesus was the Messiah, but the scripture tells us otherwise. JOHN 7:5 states it this way: *For neither did his brethren believe in him.* The word “brethren” here means: children of the same Mother. Since Jesus brothers and sisters didn’t believe in Him, while on the cross Jesus turned the care of His Mother Mary over to the Apostle John, saying to him in JOHN 19:26 *When Jesus therefore saw his mother, and the disciple standing by, whom he loved, he saith unto his mother, Woman, behold thy son! 27 Then saith he to the disciple, Behold thy mother! And from that hour that disciple took her unto his own home.* Imagine the care of your own Mother being turned over to someone outside the family. Jesus was the firstborn of Mary, and had basically taken care of her since Joseph had died probably since before the time of Jesus ministry. James the next oldest would be the one in line to take care of his Mother, but since James wasn’t a believer at the time of Jesus death, Jesus entrusted the care of His Mother over to one of His disciples, who it turns out to be the Apostle John. Study ACTS 1:3 and see that Jesus spent forty days of time after His resurrection showing Himself alive by many infallible proofs. In 1 CORINTHIANS 15:7 Paul writes that one of these who saw Jesus alive after His resurrection was James the Lord’s brother. In GALATIANS 1:19 Paul writes of himself also seeing “James the Lord’s Brother” upon his first visit back to Jerusalem after getting saved. Probably that is when James the Lord’s Brother told Paul that he too saw Jesus after His resurrection. So we next read in ACTS 1:14 of some events that took place between when Jesus was taken up with a great cloud of witnesses in ACTS 1:8, and the day of Pentecost in ACTS 2. Here is what ACTS 1:14 says: *These all continued with one accord in prayer and supplication, with the women, and Mary the mother of Jesus, and with his brethren.* “His brethren” were Jesus brothers, who became believers after Jesus death and resurrection. Taking this one step further we find Jesus brother James becoming the Pastor of the church at Jerusalem, and James was the Pastor of the church at Jerusalem when Paul first met him in GALATIANS 1:19. James the Lord’s brother was the Pastor in charge in Jerusalem during the famous conference held in Jerusalem in ACTS 15. James the Lord’s brother after Jesus appeared unto him after His resurrection spent one hundred percent of his time and effort focused upon doing the Lord’s will, and with the guiding help of the Holy Ghost in his life, he devoted the rest of his life to doing the will of the Lord, which it turns out to be was being the Pastor of the church at Jerusalem. If the Lord could take the chiefest of sinners, and make him the Apostle Paul the chiefest Apostle, how hard would it be for the Lord to take Jesus brother James, and make him the Pastor of the church at Jerusalem? Once again we see that with God nothing is impossible. And this is the same James, the Lord’s brother, who wrote the Epistle of JAMES! And in the book of JAMES, James wrote much about patience. One such verse is JAMES 5:11 *Behold, we count them happy which endure. Ye have heard of the patience of Job, and have seen the end of the Lord; that the Lord is very pitiful, (full of*

affectionate pity) *and of tender mercy*. Certainly our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ was very patient with His brother James, as he also is with you and me.

And before we move on in LUKE 4, Jesus brother Jude, (Jude) is the guy who wrote that 25 verse epistle of JUDE, found just before REVELATION in our King James Bible. Now look at JUDE 1:1 *Jude, the servant of Jesus Christ, and brother of James,...* . This younger brother of Jesus, and James also wrote an epistle where some unique things are mentioned in this short book of 25 verses. Jude mentions in verse 9 of Michael the archangel contending with the devil as he disputed about the body of Moses. In verses 14 & 15 Jude writes: *And Enoch also, the seventh from Adam, prophesied of these, saying, Behold, the Lord cometh with ten thousands of his saints, 15 To execute judgment upon all, and to convince all that are ungodly among them of all their ungodly deeds which they have ungodly committed, and of all their hard speeches which ungodly sinners have spoken against him.* Since we don't read these statements anywhere else in scripture, where do you suppose Jude came up with this information? Jesus when growing up with His brothers could have very easily revealed to His own brothers the words spoken by Enoch, and facts about Michael the archangel contending with the devil as he disputed about the body of Moses, even though at the time He made known these facts His brothers didn't believe in Him. However Jesus knowing the end from the beginning, also knew that after His resurrection His brothers would become believers, and the Holy Ghost would remind them of the words they heard from Jesus as He carried on conversations with them during His many years growing up with them. I believe that is where Jude came up with the information he wrote in his little epistle of JUDE. Thus we find a very happy ending to our story of Jesus brothers reaffirming what is said in ISAIAH 55:11 *So shall my word be that goeth forth out of my mouth: it shall not return unto me void, but it shall accomplish that which I please, and it shall prosper in the thing whereto I sent it.*

Returning to LUKE 4, we now get into what becomes the second part of Jesus sermon at the Nazareth Synagogue. We have just looked at LUKE 4:22, which again reads: *And all bare him witness, and wondered at the gracious words which proceeded out of his mouth. And they said, Is not this Joseph's son?* They had wondered at Jesus gracious words as He read the scriptures concerning Himself, and they also questioned how this seemingly uneducated son of a lowly carpenter really could be the Messiah. Jesus, who is before all things, and by whom all things consist (COLOSSIANS 1:17), also knew their thoughts, and their next questions. But before they could ask Him, Jesus began to further expounded unto them about Himself, enlarging upon the fact that He was both a Physician, and a Prophet. He had read in verse 18 some things about Him being The Physician who only could *...heal the brokenhearted,...* *...and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty them that are bruised.* As a Prophet verse 19 records that He preached *...the acceptable year of the Lord.* But this teaching was not received by open "ears of faith," rather Jesus words of instruction was received just like is recorded in ZECHARIAH 7:11, which reads: *But they refused to hearken, and pulled away the shoulder, and stopped their ears, that they should not hear.* That's the quick overview of Jesus next words, and here is how Luke records this in LUKE 4:23-27. LUKE 4:23 *And he said unto them, Ye will surely say unto me this proverb, Physician, heal thyself: whatsoever we have heard done in Capernaum, do also here in thy country.* 24 *And he said, Verily I say unto you, No prophet is accepted in his own country.* 25 *But I tell you of a truth, many widows were in Israel in the days of Elias, when the heaven was shut up three years and six months, when great famine was throughout all the land;* 26 *But unto none of them was Elias sent, save unto Sarepta, a city of Sidon, unto a woman that was a widow.* 27 *And many lepers were in Israel in the time of Eliseus the prophet; and none of them was cleansed, saving Naaman the Syrian.*

Let's examine verses 23-27 a little closer for there is a lot in here. We briefly mentioned above the fact that Jesus was both a Physician, and a Prophet. LUKE 4:23 deals with Jesus being the Great Physician, which is exactly what He was doing here. In this same sentence Jesus mentions Capernaum. Capernaum became the headquarters of Jesus ministry while here on earth. We find this first recorded in MATTHEW 4:13-16. MATTHEW 4:13 *And leaving Nazareth, he came and dwelt in Capernaum, which is upon the sea coast, in the borders of Zabulon and Nephthalim:* 14 *That it*

might be fulfilled which was spoken by Esaias the prophet, saying, 15 The land of Zabulon, and the land of Nephthalim, by the way of the sea, beyond Jordan, Galilee of the Gentiles; 16 The people which sat in darkness saw great light; and to them which sat in the region and shadow of death light is sprung up. The quote Matthew referenced in verses 15 & 16 we have examined twice before in this study, and is found in ISAIAH 42:6 & 7. ISAIAH 42:6 *I the LORD have called thee in righteousness, and will hold thine hand, and will keep thee, and give thee for a covenant of the people, for a light of the Gentiles; 7 To open the blind eyes, to bring out the prisoners from the prison, and them that sit in darkness out of the prison house.* The inheritance of Zebulun (Zabulon) and Naphtali (Nephthalim) can be found in JOSHUA 19:10-16, and 32-39. The location of Capernaum is on the Northwest corner of The Sea of Galilee, which is also called in scripture The Sea of Tiberias in JOHN 6:1, and The Lake of Gennesaret in LUKE 5:1. Gennesaret means “harps,” and speaks to the beautiful music that the gospel of Jesus brings to those with the “ears of faith” we have been discussing. Capernaum means: “village of comfort,” and this village is where Jesus established His headquarters during the time of His ministry. Capernaum is where Matthew the tax collector began to follow Jesus, becoming one of His disciples. Capernaum had a population of about 1500, and a Synagogue, which measured about 75 feet, by 57 feet. Capernaum is found mentioned sixteen times in the New Testament, all in the four gospel records. Sixteen is the number of LOVE, so no marvel that Jesus Galilean ministry was headquartered here.

Jesus mentions in LUKE 4:23 *...whatsoever we have heard done in Capernaum, do also here in thy country.* Obviously Jesus had performed some miracles that preceded His visit to His home Synagogue at here at Nazareth in LUKE 4. Luke has only briefly mentioned this by stating earlier in LUKE 4:14 *And Jesus returned in the power of the Spirit into Galilee: and there went out a fame of him through all the region round about. 15 And he taught in their synagogues, being glorified of all.* Let's fill in the details missing here in LUKE by going back and read some more from MATTHEW 4. MATTHEW 4:13 *And leaving Nazareth, he came and dwelt in Capernaum, which is upon the sea coast, in the borders of Zabulon and Nephthalim: 14 That it might be fulfilled which was spoken by Esaias the prophet, saying, 15 The land of Zabulon, and the land of Nephthalim, by the way of the sea, beyond Jordan, Galilee of the Gentiles; 16 The people which sat in darkness saw great light; and to them which sat in the region and shadow of death light is sprung up. 17 From that time Jesus began to preach, and to say, Repent: for the kingdom of heaven is at hand. 18 And Jesus, walking by the sea of Galilee, saw two brethren, Simon called Peter, and Andrew his brother, casting a net into the sea: for they were fishers. 19 And he saith unto them, Follow me, and I will make you fishers of men. 20 And they straightway left their nets, and followed him. 21 And going on from thence, he saw other two brethren, James the son of Zebedee, and John his brother, in a ship with Zebedee their father, mending their nets; and he called them. 22 And they immediately left the ship and their father, and followed him. 23 And Jesus went about all Galilee, teaching in their synagogues, and preaching the gospel of the kingdom, and healing all manner of sickness and all manner of disease among the people. 24 And his fame went throughout all Syria: and they brought unto him all sick people that were taken with divers diseases and torments, and those which were possessed with devils, and those which were lunatick, and those that had the palsy; and he healed them. 25 And there followed him great multitudes of people from Galilee, and from Decapolis, and from Jerusalem, and from Judaea, and from beyond Jordan. Obviously this is what Luke was referring to when he wrote: LUKE 4:14 *And Jesus returned in the power of the Spirit into Galilee: and there went out a fame of him through all the region round about. 15 And he taught in their synagogues, being glorified of all.**

In LUKE 4:24 Jesus, the Master Teacher, continues expounding about Himself *...And he said, Verily I say unto you, No prophet is accepted in his own country.* As we noted previously Jesus here is announcing Himself to be a Prophet, which is just one more thing among His many titles. Earlier we went over many of the “I AM” titles of Jesus found in scripture, and here we find that He is also announcing “I AM a Prophet.” Remember all of this that we are currently studying is included in the sermon at the Nazareth Synagogue, which we have entitled “I am HERE, HEAR me NOW.” Moses wrote of Messiah the Prophet in DEUTERONOMY 18. DEUTERONOMY 18:15 *The LORD*

*thy God will raise up unto thee a Prophet from the midst of thee, of thy brethren, like unto me; unto him ye shall hearken; 16 According to all that thou desiredst of the LORD thy God in Horeb in the day of the assembly, saying, Let me not hear again the voice of the LORD my God, neither let me see this great fire any more, that I die not. 17 And the LORD said unto me, They have well spoken that which they have spoken. 18 I will raise them up a Prophet from among their brethren, like unto thee, and will put my words in his mouth; and he shall speak unto them all that I shall command him.* The Apostle Peter in his second sermon quoted these verses, as he noted that Jesus Christ was this Prophet, and we find this in ACTS 3. ACTS 3:22 *For Moses truly said unto the fathers, A prophet shall the Lord your God raise up unto you of your brethren, like unto me; him shall ye hear in all things whatsoever he shall say unto you. 23 And it shall come to pass, that every soul, which will not hear that prophet, shall be destroyed from among the people.* In ACTS 7 in the sermon Luke recorded of Stephen we find these words of DEUTERONOMY also referenced. ACTS 7:37 *This is that Moses, which said unto the children of Israel, A prophet shall the Lord your God raise up unto you of your brethren, like unto me; him shall ye hear.*

After explaining about Himself being a Prophet, Jesus then makes reference to two of the more famous prophet's of Israel; Elijah and Elisha. Here is how Jesus stated it in LUKE 4:25-27. LUKE 4:25 *But I tell you of a truth, many widows were in Israel in the days of Elias, when the heaven was shut up three years and six months, when great famine was throughout all the land; 26 But unto none of them was Elias sent, save unto Sarepta, a city of Sidon, unto a woman that was a widow. 27 And many lepers were in Israel in the time of Eliseus the prophet; and none of them was cleansed, saving Naaman the Syrian.* Elias is the Greek way of writing Elijah, and the successor of Elijah was Elisha, which is found written in the Greek as Eliseus here in LUKE 4:27.

Two we know as the number of SUFFICIENT WITNESS, or SUFFICIENT TESTIMONY, and here we find Jesus giving SUFFICIENT WITNESS that these two famous Old Testament prophets of Israel were also not exactly accepted in their own country either. Jesus here points out that that the recipients of God's mercy were not fellow countrymen. Elijah was sent unto a lone Gentile widow in Sarepta, and Elisha only was used of the Lord to cleanse Naaman the Syrian, another Gentile, even though there were plenty of lepers in Israel at that time. Again Jesus here by these two Old Testament examples explained His words of LUKE 4:24 *...No prophet is accepted in his own country.*

We mentioned earlier about Jesus brothers, and sisters being at this Synagogue service in Nazareth, and that they were non-believers also until after Jesus death and resurrection. I myself wonder how many times at a dinner table while growing up with Jesus that they heard their oldest brother talking about Elijah, or even Elisha. Perhaps they heard much discussion about both of these prophets from Jesus mouth many times before. I am also glad to report that Jesus words finally registered with them. Jesus brother James wrote about Elijah in JAMES 5. JAMES 5:17 *Elias was a man subject to like passions as we are, and he prayed earnestly that it might not rain: and it rained not on the earth by the space of three years and six months. 18 And he prayed again, and the heaven gave rain, and the earth brought forth her fruit.* Jesus words of LUKE 4:25 *But I tell you of a truth, many widows were in Israel in the days of Elias, when the heaven was shut up three years and six months, when great famine was throughout all the land;...* were finally heard, and believed by James' now open ears of faith!

The story told in LUKE 4:25 and JAMES 5:17 & 18 can be found in 1 KINGS 18, which you can study further on your own. The rest of LUKE 4:25 and 26 completes the story of the widow of Sarepta (called Zarephath in the Old Testament), which can be found in 1 KINGS 17, which we will read. 1 KINGS 17:8 *And the word of the LORD came unto him, (Elijah) saying, 9 Arise, get thee to Zarephath, which belongeth to Zidon, and dwell there: behold, I have commanded a widow woman there to sustain thee. 10 So he arose and went to Zarephath. And when he came to the gate of the city, behold, the widow woman was there gathering of sticks: and he called to her, and said, Fetch me, I pray thee, a little water in a vessel, that I may drink. 11 And as she was going to fetch it, he called to her, and said, Bring me, I pray thee, a morsel of bread in thine hand. 12 And she said, As the LORD*

*thy God liveth, I have not a cake, but an handful of meal in a barrel, and a little oil in a cruse: and, behold, I am gathering two sticks, that I may go in and dress it for me and my son, that we may eat it, and die. 13 And Elijah said unto her, Fear not; go and do as thou hast said: but make me thereof a little cake first, and bring it unto me, and after make for thee and for thy son. 14 For thus saith the LORD God of Israel, The barrel of meal shall not waste, neither shall the cruse of oil fail, until the day that the LORD sendeth rain upon the earth. 15 And she went and did according to the saying of Elijah: and she, and he, and her house, did eat many days. 16 And the barrel of meal wasted not, neither did the cruse of oil fail, according to the word of the LORD, which he spake by Elijah.*

Jesus, the Master Teacher, knew those in the Jewish Synagogue here in Nazareth were familiar with the accounts of both Elijah, and Elisha. And He could have gone into a lengthy discussion about both of these Old Testament prophets, but He didn't at this time, only here wishing to point out how the children of Israel in their day that listened unto the Lord with hearing "ears of faith" were few and far between also. Jesus didn't exactly say here in His hometown Synagogue: "You are not hearing me; you are not listening to me," but that was a big part of His message in referencing these two Old Testament prophets. Elijah in 1 KINGS 19 also felt that he was the only one left in Israel who worshipped the Lord, but as we study this story we find that was not the case. And I know Jesus didn't reference this account in 1 KINGS 19 as He spoke in the Synagogue at Nazareth this particular Sabbath day, but again they were familiar with what took place in Elijah's life time, and certainly we too can learn several important lessons from this account in 1 KINGS 19; lessons that not only was appropriate for those at Nazareth, but lessons that also speaks to the New Testament race-course runner. So we will spend a little time in 1 KINGS 19 refreshing our own memories about Elijah.

We are not going to read the whole chapter of 1 KINGS 19 even though there are many valuable lessons in this chapter, but we will look at some highlights. In this chapter Elijah has fled that wicked woman Jezebel, who sought to kill him, and Elijah came to Beer-sheba in verse 3. Beer-sheba means the well of an oath, and here figures the word of God. The phrase "the word of God" is found forty-six times in scripture, and is most often used in the writings of Luke, and the Apostle Paul. Akin to this is the phrase "the word of the Lord," which is found 258 times in scripture, mostly in the Old Testament. It is interesting here to note that scripture records "the word of the Lord came" to, or unto Elijah seven times during his life-time. So in 1 KINGS 19:3 we find Elijah has fled to Beer-sheba, the well of an oath, which here figures the word of God. But rather than staying here, he left, and went a day's journey into the wilderness in verse 4. One lesson we can learn here is once we get away from the word of God, we find ourselves in a wilderness, because as we learned previously "...*faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God...*" ...ROMANS 10:17.

Elijah then had a pity party in verse 4 ...*and requested for himself that he might die.* Please note this statement, for we will get back to it in a moment. Furthermore he added ...*It is enough; now, O LORD, take away my life; for I am not better than my fathers.* With these words it seems that Elijah already knew he was going to be translated, and not die!!! Think about that for a moment. We know Elijah was one of two men in the Old Testament who were translated. So part of the battle Elijah faced here in 1 KINGS 19 was to teach us lessons about the tests, and trials that we too can expect before we are translated. Of course Elijah knew nothing about our prospect of also being translated when Jesus comes to catch His Bride away, but the Lord left him as an example to us of what it takes to be a full overcomer. So I think we also should see how "the word of God," and most importantly believing "the word of God" is mandatory in the life of a full overcomer. The letter written unto the church of Philadelphia in REVELATION 3:7-13 tells us the same thing, stating in REVELATION 3:8 ...*thou hast kept my word...* and in verse 10 ...*thou hast kept the word of my patience...*

Now let's pick up the story of Elijah in 1 KINGS 19:5 *And as he lay and slept under a juniper tree, behold, then an angel touched him, and said unto him, Arise and eat.* The juniper tree here figures Christ Jesus, who never leaves us nor forsakes us. While sleeping under the juniper tree,



...behold, then an angel touched him, and said unto him, Arise and eat. 6 And he looked, and, behold, there was a cake baken on the coals, and a cruse of water at his head. And he did eat and drink, and laid him down again. 7 And the angel of the LORD came again the second time, and touched him, and said, Arise and eat; because the journey is too great for thee. The cake in verse 6 also figures the word of God, and in particular a specific message just for you! The cruse of water also speaks of the refreshing water of the word of God. 1 KINGS 19:8 *And he arose, and did eat and drink, and went in the strength of that meat forty days and forty nights unto Horeb the mount of God.* Forty we all know is the number of PERFECT TESTING, and certainly Elijah was in a very testing time of his life. Horeb, the mount of God, is found mentioned in seventeen verses of scripture, and seventeen again is the number associated with VICTORY IN CHRIST JESUS. Let's read on: 1 KINGS 19:9 *And he came thither unto a cave, and lodged there; and, behold, the word of the LORD came to him, and he said unto him, What doest thou here, Elijah?* The word of the Lord came to Elijah, and the word of the Lord is Jesus, who already knew the answer, but asks Elijah for Elijah's own benefit: ...*What doest thou here, Elijah?* In one respect the Lord here was asking Elijah to take inventory. As a prophet of the Lord sent unto the children of Israel, what was the point of Elijah fleeing to Horeb, a barren place in the wilderness? This wasn't the place the Lord wanted Elijah to be, nor the place He wished Elijah to stay. But until Elijah got his eyes off of himself, and back upon the Lord, this question was left for Elijah to answer: ...*What doest thou here, Elijah?* 1 KINGS 19:10 was Elijah's answer: *And he said, I have been very jealous for the LORD God of hosts: for the children of Israel have forsaken thy covenant, thrown down thine altars, and slain thy prophets with the sword; and I, even I only, am left; and they seek my life, to take it away.* Note this last statement for nearly these same words are repeated in verse 14, but before we get there let's look at verses 11-13.

1 KINGS 19:11 *And he (the Lord) said, Go forth, and stand upon the mount before the LORD. And, behold, the LORD passed by, and a great and strong wind rent the mountains, and brake in pieces the rocks before the LORD; but the LORD was not in the wind: and after the wind an earthquake; but the LORD was not in the earthquake: 12 And after the earthquake a fire; but the LORD was not in the fire: and after the fire a still small voice.* Here the Lord reveals to Elijah a time of exceeding turmoil in the world. Loud, boisterous, overwhelming and spectacular events are put on display before Elijah. Have you ever been there? The Lord used these events to get Elijah's undivided attention. The Lord was demonstrating to Elijah that He was in control of the wind, the earthquakes, and fire, and could use such events if he wished to destroy the enemies of God. But it wasn't these events that spoke to Elijah's ears of faith, it was His still small voice. This divine display of earthquakes, wind and fire made Elijah aware of a certainty that it was the Lord, who spoke unto him. The most important things that are revealed unto our hearts are spoken unto us with a calming still small loving voice, by the Lord, and His Holy Spirit, even amidst turbulent times! 1 KINGS 19:13 *And it was so, when Elijah heard it, that he wrapped his face in his mantle, and went out, and stood in the entering in of the cave. And, behold, there came a voice unto him, and said, What doest thou here, Elijah?* It was the same question the Lord previously had asked him in verse 9. And Elijah's answer was the same as we read in verse 10. 1 KINGS 19:14 *And he said, I have been very jealous for the LORD God of hosts: because the children of Israel have forsaken thy covenant, thrown down thine altars, and slain thy prophets with the sword; and I, even I only, am left; and they seek my life, to take it away.* The reason for Elijah's despondency was again expressed here: *I have been very jealous for the LORD God of hosts: because the children of Israel have forsaken thy covenant, thrown down thine altars, and slain thy prophets with the sword; and I, even I only, am left; and they seek my life, to take it away.* The famous prophet Elijah felt all alone; he felt like he was the only one in all of Israel going on with the Lord. 1 KINGS 19:15 *And the LORD said unto him, Go, return on thy way to the wilderness of Damascus: and when thou comest, anoint Hazael to be king over Syria: 16 And Jehu the son of Nimshi shalt thou anoint to be king over Israel: and Elisha the son of Shaphat of Abelmeholah shalt thou anoint to be prophet in thy room. 17 And it shall come to pass, that him that escapeth the sword of Hazael shall Jehu slay: and him that escapeth from the sword of Jehu shall Elisha slay. 18 Yet I have left me seven thousand in Israel, all the knees*

*which have not bowed unto Baal, and every mouth which hath not kissed him.* In verse 18 Elijah learns from the Lord that He wasn't the only one in Israel, who had not bowed unto Baal, and that there were left in Israel seven thousand others, who hadn't bowed the knee unto Baal either. The population of Israel in those days is unknown to us, but is thought to have been at least two million. Seven thousand out of two million would be about a third of one percent!!! In our day the percentage of racecourse running bridal Saints may be even less. Nevertheless we are still encouraged to *...lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset us, and let us run with patience the race that is set before us, Looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith...* HEBREWS 12:1 & 2. If we are running our race looking unto Jesus we might feel all alone, like Elijah did, but nevertheless we are to *...run, that ye may obtain...* the prize that is set before us, as we are encouraged to do by the Apostle Paul in 1 CORINTHIANS 9:24. Paul write this same encouragement later in his life in PHILIPPIANS 3:14 *I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus.* Back to Elijah, in verses 15 through 17 of 1 KINGS 19 that we just read, the Lord is telling Elijah that He plans on dealing with those who have forsaken the Lord's covenant by the hands of Hazeel, Jehu, and Elisha.

I want to point out one more thing we just read here about Elijah, and that is Elijah's mantle. A mantle according to Webster's Dictionary can be a symbol of royalty, responsibility, or authority, and certainly Elijah's mantle falls into this description as it was the Lord, who anointed Elijah a prophet. Elijah's mantle to us is a picture of Paul's gospel, the cloak of the gospel of grace that brings us to God's royal best. To best appreciate the meaning of Elijah's mantle let's read what Isaiah wrote in ISAIAH 61:10 the very same chapter from which Jesus read in LUKE 4. ISAIAH 61:10 *I will greatly rejoice in the LORD, my soul shall be joyful in my God; for he hath clothed me with the garments of salvation, he hath covered me with the robe of righteousness, as a bridegroom decketh himself with ornaments, and as a bride adorneth herself with her jewels.*

We find mention of Elijah's mantle five times in scripture; three times in the hands of Elijah, and twice in the hands of Elisha. We all know five is the number of GRACE. We learned earlier in this study that the phrase "the grace of God" is found in twenty verses of scripture, all of which were written by either Luke or Paul. Twenty is the number that points to REDEMPTION, and certainly the phrase "the grace of God" speaks to REDEMPTION, for our Apostle Paul wrote to Apostle Titus in TITUS 2:11 *For the grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men,...* . The phrase "the grace of God" is Pauline teaching, and the Apostle Paul encouraged us in HEBREWS 4:16 with these words: *Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need.* Our Pastor referenced this verse on Wednesday night's Bible Study, and Ray Quintana referenced this verse in his Friday Night Bible Study! This is again double witness of the fact that we can *... come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need.* Paul tells us in HEBREWS 13:9 that *...it is a good thing that the heart be established with grace...* . In COLOSSIANS 4:6 Paul further tells us that our speech is to *...be alway with grace, seasoned with salt, that ye may know how ye ought to answer every man.* And further we are told in COLOSSIANS 3:16 to sing *...with grace in your hearts to the Lord.* In ACTS 20:32 we read of "the word of His grace," where Paul himself stated: *And now, brethren, I commend you to God, and to the word of his grace, which is able to build you up, and to give you an inheritance among all them which are sanctified.* We are told in 2 PETER 3:18 to *...grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. To him be glory both now and for ever. Amen.* So we find Elijah's mantle is a mantle of grace.

Elijah's mantle is first mentioned here in 1 KINGS 19:13 *And it was so, when Elijah heard it, that he wrapped his face in his mantle, and went out, and stood in the entering in of the cave.* Covered in this mantle of grace the Lord answered Elijah, as we read above. In 1 KINGS 19:15 one of the things *...the LORD said unto him, Go, return on thy way to the wilderness of Damascus.* Recall in GALATIANS 1 how the Lord Jesus Christ revealed unto the Apostle Paul the gospel of the grace of God that he preached. And Paul's gospel message was revealed unto him while he was in Arabia, the very same region where Elijah was here in 1 KINGS 19. When the Lord was answering

Elijah He told him to *...Go, return on thy way to the wilderness of Damascus.* The Apostle Paul also was encouraged by the Lord to return unto Damascus after he was given the gospel of the grace of God that he preached, thus Paul walked on Elijah's path. When Elijah returned to Israel, he was equipped to finish his course with joy. When the Apostle Paul returned from the very same region, he was fully equipped with his gospel message of grace and glory that teaches us about having God's best. One of the things the Lord told Elijah in 1 KINGS 19:15 was as follows: *...and Elisha the son of Shaphat of Abelmeholah shalt thou anoint to be prophet in thy room.* Elijah found Elisha in 1 KINGS 19:19 *...and Elijah passed by him, and cast his mantle upon him.* This was the second time we find Elijah's mantle mentioned in scripture. Elijah was God's messenger to reveal truth unto Elisha. We too should follow God's messengers who are sent to reveal truth unto us. Thus we note here in verse 21 that, as one translation puts it, Elisha went after Elijah and became his disciple, his attendant. Verse 16 tells us that Elisha was to be anointed to be the replacement prophet of Elijah. This wasn't Elijah's choosing, nor was it Elisha's choosing, but rather it was the choice of the Lord that Elisha would take over when Elijah was gone. Elisha was one of the seven thousand in Israel who hadn't bowed down unto Baal. Read the rest of the chapter and see that Elisha followed Elijah. Let me say it this way, Elisha followed Elijah as Elijah followed the Lord, and in so doing Elisha in time became the prophet, who succeeded Elijah. Our Apostle Paul encouraged us in 1 CORINTHIANS 11:1 *Be ye followers of me, even as I also am of Christ.* Paul went on to have God's best, and we can too if we follow Paul as he followed Christ!

The next three times we read of the mantle of Elijah is in 2 KINGS 2, the chapter that tells of the translation of Elijah. And as we look at some verses from this chapter note again that Elisha followed Elijah as Elijah followed the Lord even though Elisha was given three different occasions to stay behind. Had Elisha tarried behind he never would have been given the opportunity to have the double portion of the spirit of Elijah, or wear Elijah's mantle. Elijah certainly enjoyed the fellowship of Elisha, but offered Elisha the opportunity to tarry behind. The sons of the prophets in 2 KINGS 2:1-15 knew that Elijah was going to be translated on this day, yet only Elisha walked with Elijah. What does that tell us? Many believers, most in fact, are really not interested in going on with the Lord. They will only go so far, and then no more. They tarry behind, and in so doing they miss God's best.

In 2 KINGS 2:1-15 we find a good picture in this portion of scripture on the life of a full overcomer, if we will only see it, for it mirrors experiences that all full overcomers must face in their lives. Both Elijah and Elisha are Old Testament full overcomers, heroes of faith. Elisha followed the example set by Elijah. There was an opportunity of Elisha to dwell at each of the places we will find in 2 KINGS 2, but had Elisha done so, he would not have continued to follow Elijah, and would have missed out on the best place that God had ordained for him. We too will come to places in our Christian lives that are wonderful places to come to, even hard places to come to, but these places are meant as places to visit, learn something from, grow in grace and knowledge of the Lord, and move on; not places to dwell, and cease walking with the Lord. In 2 KINGS 2:1-15 we find that it is graduation day for Elijah, and in a sense, it is also graduation day for Elisha too, for this is the day that Elisha will take over as the anointed replacement prophet of Elijah, and wear Elijah's mantle.

2 KINGS 2:1 *And it came to pass, when the LORD would take up Elijah into heaven by a whirlwind, that Elijah went with Elisha from Gilgal.* Gilgal is found 41 times in scripture, and is the first place Israel camped after crossing the Jordan. Gilgal means a "rolling away." All Christians have come to Gilgal, the place where all their sins were rolled away, but God does not want us to dwell there, just like He didn't allow the children of Israel to dwell there. Elijah told Elisha to *...Tarry here, I pray thee; for the LORD hath sent me to Bethel.* Had Elisha tarried at Gilgal he wouldn't have gone on with Elijah, nor would he have gone on to become the great prophet that he was. There are in our lives many things to overcome especially if we want to be a full overcomer, and even though Gilgal was a wonderful place to come to, there is more beyond.

2 KINGS 2:2 *And Elijah said unto Elisha, Tarry here, I pray thee; for the LORD hath sent me to Bethel. And Elisha said unto him, As the LORD liveth, and as thy soul liveth, I will not leave*

*thee. So they went down to Bethel.* Elisha wanted the fellowship of Elijah. Those that go on with the Lord from their experience at Gilgal, go on because they want more fellowship with the Lord. Elijah certainly enjoyed the fellowship of Elisha, but offered Elisha the opportunity to tarry behind. Again the sons of the prophets in 2 KINGS 2:1-15 knew that Elijah was going to be translated on this day, yet only Elisha walked with Elijah.

We see that Elijah went on to Bethel, and Elisha went with him. Bethel is about four miles from Gilgal. Bethel means “house of God.” It speaks of the deeper fellowship that we can have with God. How many Christians, people who are saved, even visit the “house of God?” I don’t know. However the “house of God” does not totally mean the building that we have church in. The “house of God” is the place we come to in our lives where we have close fellowship with the Lord, and we have this close fellowship constantly. We first read of Bethel in GENESIS 12:8, a place that Old Testament full overcomer Abram came to before he was called Abraham. GENESIS 12:8 *And he removed from thence unto a mountain on the east of Bethel, and pitched his tent, having Bethel (House of God) on the west, and Hai (House of ruins) on the east: and there he builded an altar unto the LORD, and called upon the name of the LORD.* It seems Abraham made a choice here, and like all full overcomers must do, he chose the House of God over the house of ruins; to walk in the path of the Lord rather than follow the paths of the flesh.

2 KINGS 2:3 *And the sons of the prophets that were at Bethel came forth to Elisha, and said unto him, Knowest thou that the LORD will take away thy master from thy head to day? And he said, Yea, I know it; hold ye your peace. 4 And Elijah said unto him, Elisha, tarry here, I pray thee; for the LORD hath sent me to Jericho. And he said, As the LORD liveth, and as thy soul liveth, I will not leave thee. So they came to Jericho.* Jericho is five miles west of Jordan. Jericho means the place of fragrance. It speaks of fragrance over the world. Jericho was the first city that Israel conquered after crossing the river Jordan. Jericho figures the attractiveness of the world, a place, which has confining walls around it. A full overcomer cannot have the confining walls of Jericho in our lives holding us in bondage to the world. Once we allow God to tear down these confining walls in our lives, Jericho becomes a fragrant place in our lives. Rahab lived in Jericho, and had the marks on her of the best that the world could offer. However she put her faith in the God of Israel when she said in JOSHUA 2:9 and 11: *...I know that the LORD hath given you the land,... ...for the LORD your God, he is God in heaven above, and in earth beneath.* Rahab by putting her faith in God became, to us, one of the examples of an Old Testament full overcomer. She also became one of the grandmothers to the Lord Jesus Christ. Once we get the victory over the world, we are not to stop there, but continue walking with the Lord.

2 KINGS 2:5 *And the sons of the prophets that were at Jericho came to Elisha, and said unto him, Knowest thou that the LORD will take away thy master from thy head to day? And he answered, Yea, I know it; hold ye your peace.* The sons of the prophets at Jericho told Elisha the very same words that the sons of the prophets at Bethel in verse 3 had told him: *...Knowest thou that the LORD will take away thy master from thy head to day?* There are nineteen verses of scripture that contain the phrase “knowest thou.” Nineteen is the number of faith. Both Elijah, and Elisha are Old Testament worthies of faith, and by faith Elisha knew Elijah would be translated that day, even though he had never witnessed a translation, nor had anyone else before him. Elisha’s answer to the sons of the prophets of Jericho was identical to his answer to the sons of the prophets of Bethel: *...Yea, I know it; hold ye your peace.* In other words, “hold your tongues, I am after a double portion.” (I know it doesn’t exactly say that here, but that is the inference.)

2 KINGS 2:6 *And Elijah said unto him, Tarry, I pray thee, here; for the LORD hath sent me to Jordan. And he said, As the LORD liveth, and as thy soul liveth, I will not leave thee. And they two went on.* Elisha leaves the place of fragrance over the world, and Elisha goes on with Elijah as Elijah followed the leading of the Lord. Jordan speaks of life out of death. Contrast Jordan with the Red Sea. God had the children of Israel cross both the Red Sea, and the Jordan River on dry ground. However there is a difference between these two crossings that we need to see spiritually speaking. At the crossing of the Red Sea there was death everywhere. EXODUS 14:27 *And Moses stretched*

*forth his hand over the sea, and the sea returned to his strength when the morning appeared; and the Egyptians fled against it; and the LORD overthrew the Egyptians in the midst of the sea. 28 And the waters returned, and covered the chariots, and the horsemen, and all the host of Pharaoh that came into the sea after them; there remained not so much as one of them. 29 But the children of Israel walked upon dry land in the midst of the sea; and the waters were a wall unto them on their right hand, and on their left. 30 Thus the LORD saved Israel that day out of the hand of the Egyptians; and Israel saw the Egyptians dead upon the sea shore.* What is emphasized at the Red Sea is our death with Christ. Some Christians never get beyond that stage in life of being saved from death. The crossing of the Jordan emphasized our new life that we have in Christ Jesus. Those that go on with Christ, and that walk with Him, learn to appreciate our new life that we have in Christ Jesus. They feed on the old corn of the land, a meal not fit for babes, a meal that was only enjoyed after crossing the river Jordan ...see JOSHUA 5:11.

2 KINGS 2:7 *And fifty men of the sons of the prophets went, and stood to view afar off: and they two stood by Jordan.* The majority of Christian's are just like these fifty sons of the prophets, who wish to view the best things of the Lord from "afar off." Elisha didn't want to view from "afar off," and he went on with Elijah. Furthermore Elisha's journey with Elijah didn't end at the river Jordan.

2 KINGS 2:8 *And Elijah took his mantle, and wrapped it together, and smote the waters, and they were divided hither and thither, so that they two went over on dry ground.* This is the third time we read of Elijah's mantle in scripture. As a side note here ask yourself how many times can God part the waters? God is only limited by our lack of faith. By faith Moses parted the Red Sea. By faith Joshua parted the river Jordan. By faith Elijah parted the river Jordan, and by faith Elisha too parted the river Jordan. Each of these four men we just mentioned are examples to us of Old Testament full overcomers, men of faith. What was Elijah's, and Elisha's destination after crossing Jordan? No destination is given. We are also to come to the place in our lives that we walk with Jesus by blind faith. Where He goes we will go. Where he wants to take us we will go, and we will go by faith. As we learned when studying HEBREWS 12:2, we are to be ...*Looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith.*

2 KINGS 2:9 *And it came to pass, when they were gone over, that Elijah said unto Elisha, Ask what I shall do for thee, before I be taken away from thee. And Elisha said, I pray thee, let a double portion of thy spirit be upon me. 10 And he said, Thou hast asked a hard thing: nevertheless, if thou see me when I am taken from thee, it shall be so unto thee; but if not, it shall not be so.*

Elijah here had asked Elisha what he wanted, and Elisha had wisely chosen a double portion of the spirit that was upon Elijah. Elisha knew that his leader Elijah would no longer be with him, and that if he was going to be the same kind of leader that Elijah was, he would need a double portion of Elijah's spirit upon his life. We too as we walk with the Lord are to request of Him wisdom, His wisdom. Now Elijah told Elisha that if he saw him when he was taken away, then his request would be granted.

We find next mentioned the translation of Elijah. What took him? A chariot of fire; horses of fire; or a whirlwind? Let's read our scripture, and see the answer, which was already given us in 2 KINGS 2:1 *And it came to pass, when the LORD would take up Elijah into heaven by a whirlwind...* Now read KINGS 2:11 *And it came to pass, as they still went on, and talked, that, behold, there appeared a chariot of fire, and horses of fire, and parted them both asunder; and Elijah went up by a whirlwind into heaven.* The first mention of a whirlwind in scripture is here in these verses. It was the whirlwind that took Elijah. The chariot of fire, and the horses of fire were there too, but here were given as a distraction to Elisha. However Elisha had his eyes fixed on Elijah, not on the chariot of fire and the horses of fire, so Elisha got to witness the translation of Elijah, and then he further got to see the chariot of fire, and the horses of fire. For we read in verse 12 *And Elisha saw it, and he cried, My father, my father, the chariot of Israel, and the horsemen thereof. And he saw him no more: and he took hold of his own clothes, and rent them in two pieces.* The eyes of the full overcomer are

focused on Jesus, and not on the distractions, thus when Jesus comes they who have been looking for Him, see Him, their eyes having been fixed on Him, and they too will be translated.

2 KINGS 2:13 *He took up also the mantle of Elijah that fell from him, and went back, and stood by the bank of Jordan; 14 And he took the mantle of Elijah that fell from him, and smote the waters, and said, Where is the LORD God of Elijah? and when he also had smitten the waters, they parted hither and thither: and Elisha went over.* This is the fourth, and fifth, and final time we read of the mantle of Elijah in scripture. Elijah's mantle became a priceless treasured possession of Elisha, which he no doubt wore the rest of his life. And also remember that Elisha had stated by faith that he wanted a double portion of the spirit of Elijah, and Elijah in essence told him to pay attention, and if Elisha truly did witness that briefest of moments, in the twinkling of an eye, when he was translated, then he would receive the double portion of Elijah's spirit. Wow!!! Elisha did witness this translation up close and personal, not from "afar off" like the sons of the prophets, and the scripture records that Elisha performed exactly twice as many miracles as did Elijah. Truly Elisha, like Elijah before him, had the kind of faith in God that all full overcomers must have to believe it "possible" with God to do the "impossible."

Before we get back to Jesus sermon at Nazareth Synagogue in Luke 4 let's finish our quick refresher course about some of the things that we know about Elijah, and Elisha. And as we mentioned previously, those in attendance at the Nazareth Synagogue Sabbath day service where Jesus spoke would have been very familiar with these two Old Testament prophets, whom they held in high esteem. We too have briefly mentioned Elisha earlier in this study when we noted the story in 2 KINGS 6 when Elisha was at Dothan. The king of Syria had sent forth horses and chariots with a great host, who came by night and surrounded the city of Dothan. Then we read in 2 KINGS 6:15 *And when the servant of the man of God was risen early, and gone forth, behold, an host compassed the city both with horses and chariots. And his servant said unto him, Alas, my master! how shall we do? 16 And he answered, Fear not: for they that be with us are more than they that be with them. 17 And Elisha prayed, and said, LORD, I pray thee, open his eyes, that he may see. And the LORD opened the eyes of the young man; and he saw: and, behold, the mountain was full of horses and chariots of fire round about Elisha.* Elisha first saw this with his eyes of faith. Elisha first saw with his own eyes the chariots of fire, and the horses of fire in the whirlwind that took Elijah at his translation. A double portion, and more of the heavenly chariots of fire, and the heavenly horses of fire are found round about Elisha. And let me add this, all full overcomers are surrounded by this heavenly fire, for it is a fire of the Holy Ghost, which is exactly what Ezekiel was trying to describe in EZEKIEL 1, describing the four living creatures. EZEKIEL 1:13 *As for the likeness of the living creatures, their appearance was like burning coals of fire, and like the appearance of lamps: it went up and down among the living creatures; and the fire was bright, and out of the fire went forth lightning.*

The discussion we have doing concerning Elijah, and Elisha was because of what Jesus said in His sermon at the Nazareth Sabbath day service where they failed to believe that He indeed was the Messiah; their Messiah! And because of their unbelief Jesus was using Elijah, and Elisha as examples of the fact that "No prophet is accepted in his own country" as He stated in LUKE 4:24. In using Elijah and Elisha as examples Jesus said: LUKE 4:25 *But I tell you of a truth, many widows were in Israel in the days of Elias, (Elijah) when the heaven was shut up three years and six months, when great famine was throughout all the land; 26 But unto none of them was Elias sent, save unto Sarepta, a city of Sidon, unto a woman that was a widow. 27 And many lepers were in Israel in the time of Eliseus (Elisha) the prophet; and none of them was cleansed, saving Naaman the Syrian.* These two famous Old Testament prophets of Israel were also not exactly accepted in their own country either. Jesus here points out that the recipients of God's mercy at the hands of Elijah, and Elisha were not fellow countrymen. Elijah was sent unto a lone Gentile widow in Sarepta, and Elisha only was used of the Lord to cleanse Naaman the Syrian, another Gentile, even though there were plenty of lepers in Israel at that time. We previously reviewed Elijah being sent to the Gentile



widow in Sarepta, called Zarephath in the Old Testament, and next we will review the account of Elisha being used of the Lord to heal Naaman the Syrian.

2 KINGS 5:1 *Now Naaman, captain of the host of the king of Syria, was a great man with his master, and honourable, because by him the LORD had given deliverance unto Syria: he was also a mighty man in valour, but he was a leper. 2 And the Syrians had gone out by companies, and had brought away captive out of the land of Israel a little maid; and she waited on Naaman's wife. 3 And she said unto her mistress, Would God my lord were with the prophet that is in Samaria! for he would recover him of his leprosy. (This little Israelite maid had a lot of faith didn't she?) 4 And one went in, and told his lord, saying, Thus and thus said the maid that is of the land of Israel. 5 And the king of Syria said, Go to, go, and I will send a letter unto the king of Israel. And he departed, and took with him ten talents of silver, and six thousand pieces of gold, and ten changes of raiment. 6 And he brought the letter to the king of Israel, saying, Now when this letter is come unto thee, behold, I have therewith sent Naaman my servant to thee, that thou mayest recover him of his leprosy. 7 And it came to pass, when the king of Israel had read the letter, that he rent his clothes, and said, Am I God, to kill and to make alive, that this man doth send unto me to recover a man of his leprosy? wherefore consider, I pray you, and see how he seeketh a quarrel against me. 8 And it was so, when Elisha the man of God had heard that the king of Israel had rent his clothes, that he sent to the king, saying, Wherefore hast thou rent thy clothes? let him come now to me, and he shall know that there is a prophet in Israel. 9 So Naaman came with his horses and with his chariot, and stood at the door of the house of Elisha. 10 And Elisha sent a messenger unto him, saying, Go and wash in Jordan seven times, and thy flesh shall come again to thee, and thou shalt be clean. 11 But Naaman was wroth, and went away, and said, Behold, I thought, He will surely come out to me, and stand, and call on the name of the LORD his God, and strike his hand over the place, and recover the leper. (Our thinking sometimes can get us in so much trouble. We imagine how it should be in our minds eye, yet the Lord ways are far above what we can imagine. We read in ISAIAH 55:8 *For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, saith the LORD. 9 For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways, and my thoughts than your thoughts.* Naaman had his mind made up in the way it should be, but God had a better plan.) 12 *Are not Abana and Pharpar, rivers of Damascus, better than all the waters of Israel? may I not wash in them, and be clean?* So he turned and went away in a rage. 13 *And his servants came near, and spake unto him, and said, My father, if the prophet had bid thee do some great thing, wouldest thou not have done it? how much rather then, when he saith to thee, Wash, and be clean?* 14 *Then went he down, and dipped himself seven times in Jordan, according to the saying of the man of God: and his flesh came again like unto the flesh of a little child, and he was clean. 15 And he returned to the man of God, he and all his company, and came, and stood before him: and he said, Behold, now I know that there is no God in all the earth, but in Israel:...**

Leprosy is a type of sin in the Old Testament. Only the Lord Jesus Christ can forgive sins, and heal the broken hearted, and set at liberty them that are bruised, which was the lesson Jesus was preaching to those in the Nazareth Synagogue in LUKE 4. Naaman the Gentile Syrian was cleansed from his leprosy after humbling himself, and following the instruction of Elisha the prophet in Israel. After being cleansed, Naaman acknowledged unto Elisha ...*Behold, now I know that there is no God in all the earth, but in Israel...* 2 KINGS 5:15.

We have spent considerable time reviewing the references Jesus made in His hometown synagogue about Elijah, and Elisha, and how Jesus referenced two Gentiles that were the recipient of God's grace. And since Luke himself was a Gentile (as we noted when we first began this study), it is no wonder that the Holy Ghost had him be the only gospel writer who noted Jesus speaking of these particular events. Again we named this sermon found in LUKE 4 "I AM here, hear me now," which was the main point Jesus was emphasizing to those in attendance at the Nazareth Synagogue that particular Sabbath day. Jesus was trying to get them to hear with their hearts. ROMANS 10:10 tells us: *For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made*

*unto salvation. But those assembled at the Nazareth Synagogue that day displayed hardened hearts very similar to what we read about in 2 KINGS 17. 2 KINGS 17:7 For so it was, that the children of Israel had sinned against the LORD their God, which had brought them up out of the land of Egypt, from under the hand of Pharaoh king of Egypt, and had feared other gods, 8 And walked in the statutes of the heathen, whom the LORD cast out from before the children of Israel, and of the kings of Israel, which they had made. 9 And the children of Israel did secretly those things that were not right against the LORD their God, and they built them high places in all their cities, from the tower of the watchmen to the fenced city. 10 And they set them up images and groves in every high hill, and under every green tree: 11 And there they burnt incense in all the high places, as did the heathen whom the LORD carried away before them; and wrought wicked things to provoke the LORD to anger: 12 For they served idols, whereof the LORD had said unto them, Ye shall not do this thing. 13 Yet the LORD testified against Israel, and against Judah, by all the prophets, and by all the seers, saying, Turn ye from your evil ways, and keep my commandments and my statutes, according to all the law which I commanded your fathers, and which I sent to you by my servants the prophets. 14 Notwithstanding they would not hear, but hardened their necks, like to the neck of their fathers, that did not believe in the LORD their God.*

Here in LUKE 4 Jesus was face-to-face with those of the same heart attitude. They did not believe Jesus was their Messiah, their Saviour, the Son of God, thus they didn't believe Him to be the Creator, and they certainly didn't recognize Him to be before all things, and that by Him all things consist ...COLOSSIANS 1:17. They certainly did figure that Jesus was the heart examiner that we read about in the following verses. JEREMIAH 17:10 *I the LORD search the heart, I try the reins, even to give every man according to his ways, and according to the fruit of his doings.* Jesus quotes Himself saying this in REVELATION 2:23 *...and all the churches shall know that I am he which searcheth the reins and hearts: and I will give unto every one of you according to your works.* Before the creation of man Jesus knew that the prevalent heart attitude of man would be one of unbelief, so He wasn't surprised to find this very same heart attitude in His hometown Synagogue.

Remember of all those who crossed the Red Sea that only Joshua and Caleb, who were over the age of twenty at this crossing, went on to enter the promise land of Canaan. There were about three million people who crossed the Red Sea. Let's read two verses from DEUTERONOMY that explains what unbelief can do. DEUTERONOMY 1:2 *(There are eleven days' journey from Horeb by the way of mount Seir unto Kadeshbarnea.)* DEUTERONOMY 2:14 *And the space in which we came from Kadeshbarnea, until we were come over the brook Zered, was thirty and eight years; until all the generation of the men of war were wasted out from among the host, as the LORD swore unto them.* Unbelief caused the children of Israel to spend a lifetime on an eleven days journey! We also read earlier in Elijah's day that only 7000 out of all of Israel had not bowed the knee to worship Baal. The Lord has been searching the hearts of men since Adam was created to find those few who would be found to be worthies of faith. Again and again we come back to that often quoted verse of ROMANS 10:17 *So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.* Imagine what it would be like hearing the word of God from The Word of God Himself, who was full of grace and truth, and still not believing that He was the Saviour!!! This happened in His hometown Synagogue in Nazareth! One of the last things Luke wrote was a quote from the Apostle Paul, who was referencing ISAIAH 6:9 & 10 in his statement to the Jews at Rome found in ACTS 28. ACTS 28:25 *And when they agreed not among themselves, they departed, after that Paul had spoken one word, Well spake the Holy Ghost by Esaias the prophet unto our fathers, 26 Saying, Go unto this people, and say, Hearing ye shall hear, and shall not understand; and seeing ye shall see, and not perceive: 27 For the heart of this people is waxed gross, and their ears are dull of hearing, and their eyes have they closed; lest they should see with their eyes, and hear with their ears, and understand with their heart, and should be converted, and I should heal them. 28 Be it known therefore unto you, that the salvation of God is sent unto the Gentiles, and that they will hear it.*

Knowing that He was dealing with this kind of heart attitude in the Synagogue at Nazareth this Particular Sabbath day, Jesus said what He said in LUKE 4:25-27. LUKE 4:25 *But I tell you of a*

*truth, many widows were in Israel in the days of Elias, when the heaven was shut up three years and six months, when great famine was throughout all the land; 26 But unto none of them was Elias sent, save unto Sarepta, a city of Sidon, unto a woman that was a widow. 27 And many lepers were in Israel in the time of Eliseus the prophet; and none of them was cleansed, saving Naaman the Syrian.* This ended His sermon that Sabbath day, and we read the results in the next verses. LUKE 4:28 *And all they in the synagogue, when they heard these things, were filled with wrath, 29 And rose up, and thrust him out of the city, and led him unto the brow of the hill whereon their city was built, that they might cast him down headlong.* We find why this happened in JOHN 1:11 *He came unto his own, and his own received him not.* Unbelief puts you in a rough crowd. They were filled with wrath because they felt from His examples that the Gentiles were more precious in the sight of the God than the Jews, not knowing or realizing that God is no respecter of persons. But God is a respecter of faith, and as HEBREWS 11:6 explains: *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.*

This rough crowd that gathered in the Synagogue at Nazareth that Sabbath day interrupted the service, as we just read in LUKE 4:29 *And rose up, and thrust him out of the city, and led him unto the brow of the hill whereon their city was built, that they might cast him down headlong.* These were the very same people, who a few minutes earlier ...*wondered at the gracious words which proceeded out of his mouth.* The indications are (if you read this whole story very carefully) was that these very same people wanted to see some miracles, which Jesus had now become famous for. But as we also noted previously in MATTHEW 13:58 *Jesus ...did not many mighty works there because of their unbelief.* Furthermore we know from HEBREWS 4:12 *For the word of God is quick, and powerful, and sharper than any twoedged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discernor of the thoughts and intents of the heart.* Jesus, who is The Word of God, knew the intentions of their heart, and their intentions were revealed in LUKE 4:29 *...and led him unto the brow of the hill whereon their city was built, that they might cast him down headlong.* This wasn't Jesus time to die, nor the method by which He was to die for our sins, so in LUKE 4:30 we find Jesus did indeed perform a miracle right before their eyes: LUKE 4:30 *But he passing through the midst of them went his way.*

Ponder this verse for a moment: LUKE 4:30 *But he passing through the midst of them went his way.* We would have liked a few more words of explanation here, but this is what the Holy Spirit left us. Brother Hill once preached a sermon from this verse, and I am sure that over the centuries several Pastors have preached a sermon from this verse. Perhaps this is the most important verse of this story we have been studying in LUKE 4. Jesus simply let them thrust Him out of the city, and lead Him to the brow of the hill to prove to them that He was who he said He was. Recall from LUKE 4:1 that Jesus was full of the Holy Ghost (a Luke term), and was led by the Holy Spirit. They were powerless to stop Him from passing through the midst of them as he was led by the Holy Spirit to pass through the midst of them, and went His way. We read in MATTHEW 18:20 *For where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them.* Every church service I have been in has had at least two people in it, and we always open the gathering by praying in Jesus name. So Jesus is in our midst. For any unbeliever in attendance Jesus is passing through, and as REVELATION 3:20 tells us in Jesus own words: *Behold, I stand at the door, and knock: if any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with me.* Brother Fuller used this verse to lead over two hundred boys to accept the Lord Jesus Christ as their personal Saviour up at Golden Gate Youth Camp over the years he went there. JOHN 1:12 *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.* These that had led Jesus to the brow of the hill at Nazareth didn't receive Him did they? They that day had opportunity to receive Him, but they didn't thus ...*he passing through the midst of them went his way* ...LUKE 4:30. Jesus doesn't force Himself on anyone, or make anyone receive Him, but the fact remains: JOHN 3:15 *That whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have eternal life. 16 For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in*

*him should not perish, but have everlasting life. 17 For God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world; but that the world through him might be saved. 18 He that believeth on him is not condemned: but he that believeth not is condemned already, because he hath not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God.*

Consider this also as you ponder LUKE 4:30. Jesus was the ultimate full overcomer, and He told us in JOHN 16:33 *These things I have spoken unto you, that in me ye might have peace. In the world ye shall have tribulation: but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world.* Jesus overcame this unbelieving rough crowd here in LUKE 4. In JOHN 8 Jesus overcame the unbelieving Jews in the temple in verse 59, which reads: *Then took they up stones to cast at him: but Jesus hid himself, and went out of the temple, going through the midst of them, and so passed by.* Here in LUKE 4:30 Jesus didn't hide, but just passed through the midst of them, and went his way. They indeed were powerless to do any harm to Him until God allowed Him to be crucified, but in this story it wasn't yet His time to die for our sins.

Recall that David, though a youth, faced the giant Goliath in 1 SAMUEL 17 counting upon the Lord to give him the victory, which he did. In defeating Goliath the army of the Philistines was also defeated that day. Certainly we wouldn't expect anything less of the Lord Jesus Christ than victory in facing the unbelievers of Nazareth. Jesus faced the same kind of tests and trials as a man that we also face. Sometimes it seems we face a giant, sometimes a Red Sea, and we can call on the Lord, who delivers us out of all our giant tests. PSALMS 34:19 tells us this: *Many are the afflictions of the righteous: but the LORD delivereth him out of them all.* Jesus as a man faced the very same kinds of tests, and trials that we too face. HEBREWS 4:14-16 is probably a very familiar portion of scripture to most of us, and we will read it now as further encouragement. HEBREWS 4:16 *Seeing then that we have a great high priest, that is passed into the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold fast our profession. 15 For we have not an high priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin. 16 Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need.* Jesus wasn't overcome by those who led Him to the brow of the hill at Nazareth, but rather as LUKE 4:30 tells us: *But he passing through the midst of them went his way.* God delivered Him from this test; from this time of need.

I found the following in Adam Clarke's Commentary on the Bible in his comments of LUKE 4:30. "The following relation of a fact presents a scene something similar to what I suppose passed on this occasion: A missionary, who had been sent to a strange land to proclaim the Gospel of the kingdom of God, and who had passed through many hardships, and was often in danger of losing his life, through the persecutions excited against him, came to a place where he had often before, at no small risk, preached Christ crucified. About fifty people, who had received good impressions from the word of God, assembled: he began his discourse; and, after he had preached about thirty minutes, an outrageous mob surrounded the house, armed with different instruments of death, and breathing the most sanguinary purposes. Some that were within shut the door; and the missionary and his flock betook themselves to prayer. The mob assailed the house, and began to hurl stones against the walls, windows, and roof; and in a short time almost every tile was destroyed, and the roof nearly uncovered, and before they quitted the premises scarcely left one square inch of glass in the five windows by which the house was enlightened. While this was going forward, a person came with a pistol to the window opposite to the place where the preacher stood, (who was then exhorting his flock to be steady, to resign themselves to God, and trust in him), presented it at him, and snapped it; but it only flashed in the pan! As the house was a wooden building, they began with crows and spades to undermine it, and take away its principal supports. The preacher then addressed his little flock to this effect: "These outrageous people seek not you, but me; if I continue in the house, they will soon pull it down, and we shall be all buried in its ruins; I will therefore, in the name of God, go out to them, and you will be safe." He then went towards the door; the poor people got round him, and entreated him not to venture out, as he might expect to be instantly massacred; he went calmly forward, opened the door, at which a whole volley of stones and dirt was that instant discharged; but

he received no damage. The people were in crowds in all the space before the door, and filled the road for a considerable way, so that there was no room to pass or repass. As soon as the preacher made his appearance, the savages became instantly as silent and as still as night: he walked forward; and they divided to the right and to the left, leaving a passage of about four feet wide for himself and a young man who followed him, to walk in. He passed on through the whole crowd, not a soul of whom either lifted a hand, or spoke one word, till he and his companion had gained the uttermost skirts of the mob! The narrator, who was present on the occasion, goes on to say: "This was one of the most affecting spectacles I ever witnessed; an infuriated mob, without any visible cause, (for the preacher spoke not one word), became in a moment as calm as lambs! They seemed struck with amazement bordering on stupefaction; they stared and stood speechless; and, after they had fallen back to right and left to leave him a free passage, they were as motionless as statues! They assembled with the full purpose to destroy the man who came to show them the way of salvation; but he, passing through the midst of them, went his way. Was not the God of missionaries in this work? The next Lord's day, the missionary went to the same place, and again proclaimed the Lamb of God, who taketh away the sin of the world!" (End of quote.)

One final thought on what we have been studying about in LUKE 4 concerning Jesus speaking at the Nazareth Synagogue this particular Sabbath day. Were there any future overcomers in that Nazareth assembly that day? We have noted earlier that Jesus brothers and sisters no doubt were in attendance that day, yet we also noted what was written in JOHN 7:5, where we read: *For neither did his brethren believe in him.* The word "brethren" here means children of the same mother. It wasn't until after Jesus death and resurrection that Jesus brothers and sisters believed in Him. And it is Luke, who pointed this out to us in scripture, and again he did so in ACTS 1 where he notes in verse 14 that Jesus brothers were among the one hundred and twenty gathered together waiting for the day of Pentecost. ACTS 1:14 *These all continued with one accord in prayer and supplication, with the women, and Mary the mother of Jesus, and with his brethren.* The word "brethren" here again means the children of the same mother, and the reference is to Jesus brothers, and no doubt His sisters. Jesus brothers, and sisters did believe on Him after His resurrection. Luke had learned from the Apostle Paul the facts of what Paul wrote in 1 CORINTHIANS 15. 1 CORINTHIANS 15:1 *Moreover, brethren, I declare unto you the gospel which I preached unto you, which also ye have received, and wherein ye stand; 2 By which also ye are saved, if ye keep in memory what I preached unto you, unless ye have believed in vain. 3 For I delivered unto you first of all that which I also received, how that Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures; 4 And that he was buried, and that he rose again the third day according to the scriptures: 5 And that he was seen of Cephas, then of the twelve: 6 After that, he was seen of above five hundred brethren at once; of whom the greater part remain unto this present, but some are fallen asleep. 7 After that, he was seen of James; then of all the apostles.* This James was the Lord brother, unto who Jesus appeared much like He did unto Saul of Tarsus on the road to Damascus. Jesus brothers, and sisters were among the hundred and twenty who got filled with the Holy Ghost on the day of Pentecost. And after being filled with the Holy Ghost, Jesus then became the focal point, the very center of their lives too. Jesus brothers and sisters went on to become prominent in the early church founded upon the day of Pentecost. And as we noted previously also it was Jesus brother James who wrote the book of JAMES, and His brother Jude who wrote the book of JUDE. So to answer the question I just asked, were there any overcomers in the Nazareth Synagogue that day when Jesus spoke to them that Sabbath day. The answer is a qualified yes, but it wasn't until after Jesus death and resurrection that they became believers. All believers are overcomers, and 1 JOHN 5 points this out. 1 JOHN 5:4 *For whatsoever is born of God overcometh the world: and this is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith. 5 Who is he that overcometh the world, but he that believeth that Jesus is the Son of God?* Also please recall that to each of the seven churches in REVELATION 2 & 3 that Jesus promised certain rewards to those that "overcometh." To the lukewarm church of Laodicea in REVELATION 3:21 we find this statement of Jesus: *To him that overcometh will I grant to sit with me in my throne, even as I also overcame, and am set down with my Father in his throne.*

One more thought about overcomers. There are overcomers, which we have just discussed, and have noted that all believers are overcomers as 1 JOHN 5:4 & 5 told us. Then there are what we call “full overcomers,” a term we commonly use, but not a term found in scripture as such. The term “full overcomer(s)” is what the Old Testament worthies of faith were. They 100% put their faith and trust and confidence in the Lord God, and are categorized in the 11<sup>th</sup> chapter of HEBREWS, and highlighted in that chapter for having their faith in God. Then we read in HEBREWS 11:39 & 40 -- *And these all, having obtained a good report through faith, received not the promise: 40 God having provided some better thing for us, that they without us should not be made perfect.* The “better thing” for us of this yet present church age is the opportunity to qualify to be in the Bride of Christ. Those from this church age that we term “full overcomers” will be the Bride of Christ. Make no mistake that the whole church is not going to be in the Bride of Christ as is taught in the majority of assemblies today. Only the Apostle Paul was revealed this truth out of all of the Apostles. And even knowing that only the Apostle Paul was revealed this truth, most believers still don’t see it. Think about it like this for a minute, if the whole church were the Bride of Christ, then how do you explain the innumerable multitude of REVELATION 7? How did they get saved if all the church was in the Bride of Christ, and caught up to heaven, and found in the midst of the throne in REVELATION 4:6? How was left to tell the innumerable multitude of REVELATION 7 how to get saved? God didn’t make Eve out of the whole body of Adam, but he made Adam a bride out of only one rib of Adam, the rib closest to his heart. So too will be the Bride of Christ, a rib portion company from out of the church will be made into the Bride of Christ! The majority of Christians are not filled with the Holy Ghost, and it takes the power of the Holy Spirit to reveal this truth to our hearts. Narrowing this down to those who are filled with the Holy Ghost, and have spoken with tongues as a sign and an evidence of having received the Holy Ghost; even the majority of these Holy Ghost filled Saints fail to see this truth of Paul’s gospel, that the whole church is not the Bride of Christ, but only a rib portion. And as we have stated many times before, the whole purpose of this Church Age is to take out a Bride for Christ. This was in essence the message that was given unto Paul to preach, that Jesus Christ will have a joint-heir [sugkleronomos, {number 4789 in The Strong’s Greek Concordance}], Bride to reign with Him in the Millennium, the Kingdom Age, and for eternities to come after that. This is how Paul wrote it in ROMANS 8:16 *The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God: 17 And if children, then heirs; {kleronomos (2818)} heirs of God, and (sugkleronomos) joint-heirs with Christ; if so be that we suffer with him, that we may be also glorified together. 18 For I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us.* Our Pastor O’Dorisio has repeatedly gone over this numerous times, and so did Brother Hill. There is a big difference between children, and spouses; between heirs, and joint-heirs. The most profound, and complete meaning of the Greek word sugkleronomos is joint-heir, or co-inheritor as of a wife with her husband! The Bride of Christ is the ultimate better thing Paul spoke of in HEBREWS 11:40 *God having provided some better thing for us, that they without us should not be made perfect.* Furthermore the Bride of Christ is the ultimate joy that was set before Christ as He endured the cross, a point noted in HEBREWS 12:2. The Bride of Christ achieves full overcoming sugkleronomos joint-heir status by knowing Paul’s gospel. There were “full overcomers” in the Old Testament as HEBREWS 11 highlights, but to none of them was offered “some better thing.” To be a sugkleronomos joint-heir with Christ, His Bride, is the “better thing” Paul’s gospel reveals, and is available to us of this church age if we are willing to be a racecourse running winner, which we also call a full overcomer.

A joint-heir is a fellow heir, an heir together, an heir with, or a joint participant with some other heir or heirs. In this case we are discussing joint-heir-ship with Jesus Christ our Lord and Saviour. HEBREWS 1:1 & 2 tells us that God has appointed Jesus Christ heir of all things. HEBREWS 1:1 *God, who at sundry times and in divers manners spake in time past unto the fathers by the prophets, 2 Hath in these last days spoken unto us by his Son, whom he hath appointed heir {kleronomos (2818)} of all things, by whom also he made the worlds.* As spoken of here “*heir of all*”



*things*” doesn’t leave out anything that is God’s. In other words a ...joint-heir with Christ... will be someone who shares with Christ Jesus His heir-ship of all things appointed to Him by God, which doesn’t leave out anything that is God’s either. This someone who shares with Christ Jesus His heir-ship of all things appointed to Him by God, called in ROMANS 8:17 a ...joint-heir with Christ... will actually be an elite group of sugkleronomos Saints collectively known as the Bride of Christ, the full overcomers, who are made one with Christ.

There is another place where Paul explains what a “full overcomer” is, and what this “better thing” of HEBREWS 11:40 is, and that is found in EPHESIANS 3. 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.* The “better thing” Paul wrote about in HEBREWS 11:40 is the mystery found in EPHESIANS 3:6 ...*That the Gentiles should be fellowheirs, and of the same body, and partakers of his promise in Christ by the gospel.* This verse has a depth to it that incorporates the other mysteries revealed unto Paul, which very few Christians ever grasp, or ever see, mainly because the vast majority of Christian pastors and teachers don’t know, and haven’t been properly taught what it means to be fellowheirs with Christ. The Kingdom Apostle didn’t know this, or teach this because this was Paul’s gospel message to teach, which is “the mystery of Christ” referenced in EPHESIANS 3:4. The Greek word translated “fellowheirs” here in EPHESIANS 3:6 is again sugkleronomos {soong-klay-ron-om'-os}, number 4789 in The Strong’s Greek Concordance, and sugkleronomos elevates the word “fellowheirs” to it’s highest levels. Sugkleronomos also translates to “heirs with him” in HEBREWS 11:9; “heirs together” in 1 PETER 3:7; and “joint-heirs with Christ” in ROMANS 8:17. All believers won’t be “joint-heirs with Christ” even though this provision is made for all believers during this church age. But all believers are not filled with the Holy Ghost, thus they are missing the dunamis {doo'-nam-is} power that is required to qualify as a “joint-heirs with Christ.” The most profound, and complete meaning of the Greek word sugkleronomos is joint-heir, or co-inheritor as of a wife with her husband! The Bride of Christ is the ultimate “better thing” Paul spoke of in HEBREWS 11:40 *God having provided some better thing for us, that they without us should not be made perfect.* The point being emphasized here in HEBREWS 11:40 is that God has given us everything to the end that we may be joint-heirs {sugkleronomos -- number 4789 in The Strong’s Greek Concordance} with His Son Jesus, which is a far “better thing” than was offered the Old Testament worthies of faith! This then defines what it is to be a “full overcomer.”

We are going to shift gears for a few minutes, and discuss one more thing concerning Luke before we move on with the uniqueness of Luke, and what he wrote. This is going to be a short refresher on who Luke was. One of the things about Luke that I keep getting questions about is why do I say he was a Gentile? When we began this study we noted the following from COLOSSIANS 4. COLOSSIANS 4:7 *All my state shall Tychicus declare unto you, who is a beloved brother, and a faithful minister and fellowservant in the Lord: 8 Whom I have sent unto you for the same purpose, that he might know your estate, and comfort your hearts; 9 With Onesimus, a faithful and beloved brother, who is one of you. They shall make known unto you all things which are done here. 10 Aristarchus my fellowprisoner saluteth you, and Marcus, {Mark} sister’s son to Barnabas, (touching whom ye received commandments: if he come unto you, receive him;) 11 And Jesus, which is called Justus, who are of the circumcision. These only are my fellowworkers unto the kingdom of God, which have been a comfort unto me.* Pausing here for a moment we find that the above-mentioned men are all noted to be Jews (Israelites) because there were of the circumcision. As we read on here in COLOSSIANS 4 we find some more people listed not of the circumcision, thus they would be

Gentiles, and equally important to Paul, and the gospel of Christ. COLOSSIANS 4:12 *Epaphras, who is one of you, a servant of Christ, saluteth you, always labouring fervently for you in prayers, that ye may stand perfect and complete in all the will of God. 13 For I bear him record, that he hath a great zeal for you, and them that are in Laodicea, and them in Hierapolis. 14 Luke, the beloved physician, and Demas, greet you.* Take note that Luke was a Gentile. Also take note that Luke here was noted to be the beloved physician to Paul, and we know that the Apostle Paul had many physical difficulties, thus the knowledge Luke had as a physician was also a benefit to Paul because Luke could give Paul some special attention in his physical care. And Paul acknowledges that Luke was with him, and that he was beloved. Furthermore when Paul writes in 2 TIMOTHY 4:11 *Only Luke is with me...* don't you suppose that this Gentile follower of Paul's was even more beloved, and appreciated?

I also know that Scofield in his notes states that tradition records that Luke was a Jew of Antioch, Syria. And others argue that Luke had to be a Jew because of what the Apostle Paul wrote in ROMANS 3:1 & 2. ROMANS 3:1 *What advantage then hath the Jew? or what profit is there of circumcision? 2 Much every way: chiefly, because that unto them were committed the oracles of God.* The oracles of God spoken of here have to do with the law of Moses, and the words of the Old Testament prophets. The Gentiles were never under the law, and the Apostle Paul explains this in several places, and writes in GALATIANS 5:18 *But if ye be led of the Spirit, ye are not under the law.* Again the Gentiles were never under the law, and Paul writes in ROMANS 2:14 *For when the Gentiles, which have not the law, do by nature the things contained in the law, these, having not the law, are a law unto themselves.* Luke never once wrote about Gentiles keeping the law, and that was the whole point of his explaining what took place in the conference at Jerusalem in ACTS 15, which we will look at in a minute. The oracles of God look back to Old Testament scripture, and we being Gentiles know that *...All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness...* 2 TIMOTHY 3:16, and certainly we Gentiles benefit much from the Old Testament scripture. Furthermore we know that all of the New Testament writers of scripture were Jewish, except for Luke, who we are pointing out was a Gentile.

Using the chronological table of Conybeare and Howson we find that the Apostle Paul wrote his epistles to ROMANS in the Spring of 58 A.D. before he went to Jerusalem, and was arrested later that year. Scofield gives the date of 60 A.D. when ROMANS was written. I myself have adopted the time-line of Conybeare and Howson as being a little more accurate, and I certainly very much appreciate their extensive research on this subject. Scofield also writes in his introductory note of LUKE that Luke penned The Gospel According to LUKE between 63 and 68 A.D., and the book of ACTS in 65 A.D. Obviously The Gospel According to LUKE was written prior to the book of ACTS, for ACTS 1:1 starts out referencing the book of LUKE as "The former treatise." So when Paul writes the above scripture we looked at a moment ago in ROMANS 3 about the oracles of God being committed unto the Jew, he was correct because it was written prior to Luke have penned any New Testament scripture. But after that time the Holy Spirit inspired Gentile Luke to write two "treatise" as Luke calls them, which have now become scripture, the book of LUKE, and the book of ACTS, which were written to "O Theophilus" a high Roman official, and perhaps the Pastor at the church in Antioch, Syria where they were first called Christians in ACTS 11:26. The assembly at Antioch, Syria was a mixture of both Jews and Gentiles, and was the place where both Luke and Titus apparently were born again.

Furthermore the Apostle Paul wrote in ROMANS 11:13 *For I speak to you Gentiles, inasmuch as I am the apostle of the Gentiles, I magnify mine office.* After Paul wrote his ROMANS epistle he made the journey recorded in ACTS 20 & 21 to Jerusalem, where he was arrested. Study carefully the men who accompanied Paul in ACTS 20:4, and note several Gentiles in this crowd. One of the fellows that accompanied Paul to Jerusalem was Luke, a Gentile, and as we have pointed out several times before in this study, Luke remained with Paul for the rest of Paul's life. Paul was the one who noted this in 2 TIMOTHY 4:11 when he wrote: *Only Luke is with me.* Do you find it odd in any way that the Apostle of the Gentiles, had as traveling companions Gentiles?

When did this Gentile Luke become a traveling companion of the Apostle Paul? The simple answer is sometime after the time-frame of ACTS 15, which events are also recorded by Paul in GALATIANS 2. ACTS 15:1 *And certain men which came down from Judaea (to Antioch, Syria) taught the brethren, and said, Except ye be circumcised after the manner of Moses, ye cannot be saved. 2 When therefore Paul and Barnabas had no small dissension and disputation with them, they determined that Paul and Barnabas, and certain other of them, should go up to Jerusalem unto the apostles and elders about this question.* Read and study the rest of ACTS 15, and learn that the end result of that conference between the Apostles at Jerusalem with Paul and Barnabas ended with a letter written back to the Gentiles of Antioch, Syria, and everywhere else in the world, that the Gentiles were never under the law in the first place, and that circumcision had nothing to do with one's salvation. On your own time study the whole context of ACTS 15, and GALATIANS 2 to completely connect the dots. In the first ten verses of GALATIANS 2 Paul is filling in the details of what took place at that conference in Jerusalem. GALATIANS 2:1 *Then fourteen years after I went up again to Jerusalem with Barnabas, and took Titus with me also. 2 And I went up by revelation, and communicated unto them that gospel which I preach among the Gentiles, but privately to them which were of reputation, lest by any means I should run, or had run, in vain. 3 But neither Titus, who was with me, being a Greek, was compelled to be circumcised: 4 And that because of false brethren unawares brought in, who came in privily to spy out our liberty which we have in Christ Jesus, that they might bring us into bondage: 5 To whom we gave place by subjection, no, not for an hour; that the truth of the gospel might continue with you. 6 But of these who seemed to be somewhat, (whatsoever they were, it maketh no matter to me: God accepteth no man's person:) for they who seemed to be somewhat in conference added nothing to me: 7 But contrariwise, when they saw that the gospel of the uncircumcision was committed unto me, as the gospel of the circumcision was unto Peter; 8 (For he that wrought effectually in Peter to the apostleship of the circumcision, the same was mighty in me toward the Gentiles:) 9 And when James, Cephas, and John, who seemed to be pillars, perceived the grace that was given unto me, they gave to me and Barnabas the right hands of fellowship; that we should go unto the heathen, and they unto the circumcision. 10 Only they would that we should remember the poor; the same which I also was forward to do.* Note here that Paul and Barnabas took with them to this conference in Jerusalem Titus, this Gentile Greek, who refused to be circumcised. Luke only mentioned in ACTS 15:2 that *...certain other of them, should go up to Jerusalem unto the apostles and elders...* never mentioning Titus by name. Note this point: Luke never even one time mentions Titus by name in his writing scripture! Titus went on to become one of the Church Apostles. Paul writes Titus name some thirteen times in his epistles, and as we also know wrote Titus a three-chapter epistle late in life. One of Paul's epistles where he mentions Titus is 2 CORINTHIANS, which was written from Macedonia, probably Philippi, after Paul departed Ephesus in the latter stages of his third missionary journey. When you read the word "Macedonia" in scripture think of Philippi, for the two are synonymous, and Philippi was a chief city of Macedonia according to ACTS 16:12. Conyebear and Howson have the Apostle Paul writing 2 CORINTHIANS from Macedonia (Philippi) in the fall of 57 A.D. toward the end of his third missionary journey, about six to nine months before his arrest at Jerusalem.

Now let's back up for a moment. After the conference at Jerusalem where it was put in writing that the Gentiles need not be circumcised in order to be saved, Paul then went on a second missionary journey with Silas this time, because Paul and Barnabas had split up. Luke writes (in passing) of joining Paul on this second missionary journey in ACTS 16:10 when Paul was at Troas. Paul and company go to Philippi, which story is completed in ACTS 16. We don't read of Luke again writing of "we," and "us" again until ACTS 20:5. Six years pass between these verses, and the conclusion we have to come to is that Luke stayed at Philippi this whole time. Luke writes of Silas, and Timothy, and Paul, and Erastus visiting Macedonia (Philippi) during this time, {study ACTS 18:5; 19:21 & 22}, and also Luke mentions Gaius and Aristarchus being from Macedonia {ACTS 19:29}, but not once does Luke ever mention Titus being there. But Paul writes in 2 CORINTHIANS 7:6 of Titus coming to him at that time when he was in Macedonia (Philippi).

Again Luke makes no mention of this when he records Paul's third missionary journey. Some over the centuries since that time have speculated that Luke and Titus were brothers. We cannot say this to be a fact because scripture does not so state this to be a fact. Luke and Titus were indeed brothers in the Lord, and certainly they knew each other. And Luke and Titus, if not brothers, must have become acquainted in Antioch, Syria. We certainly know from scripture that both Titus and Luke were close followers of the Apostle Paul, and are both also mentioned in Paul's last written words of 2 TIMOTHY 4. If indeed Luke and Titus were brothers, then Luke would have been Greek, but again we are not told this in scripture. We do know that Luke traveled with Paul from the timeframe of ACTS 20:5 until the end of Paul's life!

One final comment about Luke being a Gentile. None of us can come up with Luke's birth certificate, thus the argument as to whether Luke was a Jew, or a Gentile will continue, especially for those who don't agree with what Paul said in COLOSSIANS 4 concerning those of the uncircumcision, which references the Gentiles. COLOSSIANS 4:12 *Epaphras, who is one of you, a servant of Christ, saluteth you, always labouring fervently for you in prayers, that ye may stand perfect and complete in all the will of God. 13 For I bear him record, that he hath a great zeal for you, and them that are in Laodicea, and them in Hierapolis. 14 Luke, the beloved physician, and Demas, greet you.* Smith's Bible Dictionary states this concerning Luke: "Combining the traditional element with the scriptural, we are able to trace the following dim outline of the evangelist's life: he was born at Antioch in Syria, and was taught the science of medicine. ...He was not born a Jew, for he is not reckoned among those "of the circumcision" by Paul." {End of quoting from Smith's Bible Dictionary.} Note here that Smith called Luke an evangelist, which I suppose he was if you give it some thought. The Bible Cyclopaedia by A. R. Fausset 1903 edition states this concerning Luke: "A slave name, as Luke was a "physician," a profession often exercised by slaves and freedman. Eusebius states that Antioch was his native city. He was of Gentile parentage before he became a Christian; as appears from COLOSSIANS 4:11, 14 Luke ...is distinguished from those "of the circumcision." {End of quoting from The Bible Cyclopaedia by A. R. Fausset.} Unger's Bible Dictionary also gives the same above reasons why Luke was a Gentile, stating "that Luke was of Gentile origin." So contrary to Scofield, the above reasons state why Brother Hawkins, and myself also believe Luke was a Gentile.