

# A MINISTRY FOR HUNGRY SAINTS

UNDER THE EXALTED CHRIST, THE GOSPEL BEGINS TO SPREAD

# THE ACTS

† THE BOOK OF ACTS

## OF THE APOSTLES

WORD OF TRUTH MINISTRIES, Associated

*An overview of the Book of Acts, by Given O. Blakely*

### ACTS 5:31-32

*"Him hath God exalted with His right hand to be a Prince and a Savior, for to give repentance to Israel, and forgiveness of sins. And we are His witnesses of these things; and so is also the Holy Ghost, whom God hath given to them that obey Him."*

"Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved." (Acts 4:12)

### Lesson # 100

### COMMENTARY ON: 26:13-23

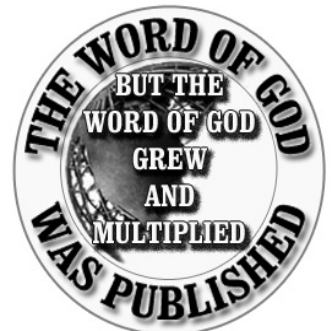
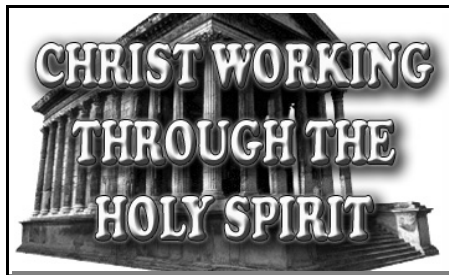
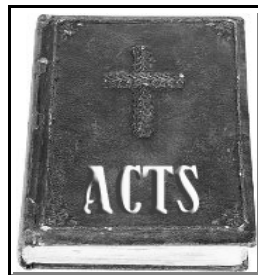
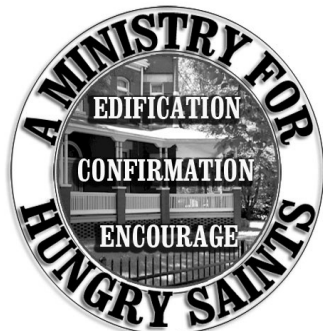
#### PAUL'S DEFENSE BEFORE AGRIPPA, #2

In his defense, Paul relates the Lord's appearance to him on the road to Damascus. He spells out the commission that was delivered to him, and boldly declares that he was not disobedient to the heavenly vision. In relating the details of his calling and commission, Paul also affirms that this is what he was found doing when the Jews "caught" him "in the Temple." He was not causing dissension, or inciting to riot those who were in the Temple. Instead, he about serving the Lord. Notwithstanding, he tells Agrippa and those with him that he had obtained help from God, and was witnessing to both small and great, declaring only what the prophets and Moses said would come to pass. This was in stark contrast with the charges that he was speaking against the Jews and their customs. If they were sincere, they would have paid attention to, and recognized, the truth of what he was saying. Thus, the spotlight has been turned on his accusers,

### ACTS 17:26-27

*"And hath made of one blood all nations of men for to dwell on all the face of the earth, and hath determined the times before appointed, and the bounds of their habitation; that they should seek the Lord, if haply they might feel after Him, and find Him, though He be not far from every one of us."*

"... and ye shall be witnesses unto Me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judaea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth." (Acts 1:8)

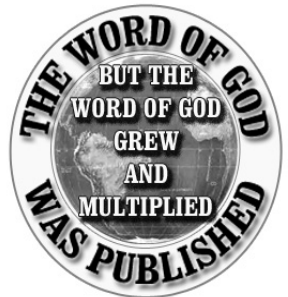


Since May, 1993, a ministry instituted for the encouragement of believers in Christ



# The Book of Acts

## Lesson Number 100



A MINISTRY INITIATED IN MAY 1993, AND DEDICATED TO STRENGTHENING THOSE WHO ARE IN CHRIST, BY BUILDING THEIR FAITH, ENHANCING THEIR JOY, AND STABILIZING THEIR HOPE, ENABLING THEM TO WORK OUT THEIR SALVATION WITH FEAR AND TREMBLING.

**TRANSLATION LEGEND:** ALT=Analytical-Literal Translation (2005), AMPLIFIED =Amplified Bible (1965), ASV=American Standard Version (1901), BBE=Bible in Basic English (1949), DRA=Douay-Rheims (1899), ERV =English Revised Version (1885), ESV=English Stand Version (2001), GNB=Good News (1966), GWN=God's Word (1995), IE= International English (1973), ISV=International Standard Version (1967), JPS=Jewish Publication Society (1917), KJV=King James Version (1611), LITV= Literal Translation of the Bible (1976), LIVING=Living Bible (1971), MESSAGE=The Message (1993), MKJV= Modern KJV (1962), MONTGOMERY=Montgomery's New Testament (2001), MRD=Peshitta-James Murdock Translation (1852), NAB=New American Bible (2002), NASB=New American Standard Bible (1977), NAU=New American Standard Bible (1995), NIB=New International Bible, NIV=New International Version (1984), NJB=New Jerusalem Bible (1985), NKJV=New King James Version (1979), NLT=New Living Translation (1996), NRSV=New Revised Standard Version (1989), PHILLIPS=J B Phillips New Testament (1962), PNT=Bishop's New Testament (1595), RSV=Revised Standard Version (1952), TNK=JPS Tanakj (1985), WEB=Webster Bible (1833), WEYMOUTH=Weymouth's New Testament (1903), WILLIAMS=William's New Testament (1937), TYNDALE=Tyndale's Bible (1526), WYCLIFFE=Wycliffe New Testament (1382), YLT =Young's Literal Translation (1862).

### GREEK LEXICON LEGEND

LEXICON LEGEND: FRIEBERG = Friberg Lexicon, UBS = UBS Lexicon, LOUW-NIDA = Louw-Nida Lexicon, LIDDELL SCOTT = Liddell Scott Lexicon, THAYER = Thayer's Greek Lexicon, LEH = LEH Lexicon, GINGRICH = Gingrich Lexicon

THE INSPIRED RECORD OF HOW THE ENTHRONED CHRIST, BY MEANS OF THE HOLY SPIRIT, WORKED THROUGH HIS HOLY APOSTLES AND GODLY MEN, TO SPREAD THE WORD OF THE GOSPEL THROUGHOUT THE WHOLE WORLD, AND TO BRING EDIFICATION AND STABILITY TO MEMBERS OF CHRIST'S BODY.

DISCLAIMER: The quoting of other translations is not to be taken as a condoning of them. My purpose is rather to show the remarkable diversity, and sometimes outright contradictions that exist among these various versions of Scripture. Our understanding of the Word of God ultimately depends upon our comprehension of the Lord Himself and His eternal purpose. Where this understanding is not present, we are shut up to scholasticism and conjecture, both of which are of the world, not of God.

# PAUL'S DEFENSE BEFORE AGRIPPA, #2

“ 26:13 At midday, O king, I saw in the way a light from heaven, above the brightness of the sun, shining round about me and them which journeyed with me. 14 And when we were all fallen to the earth, I heard a voice speaking unto me, and saying in the Hebrew tongue, Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me? it is hard for thee to kick against the pricks. 15 And I said, Who art thou, Lord? And he said, I am Jesus whom thou persecutest. 16 But rise, and stand upon thy feet: for I have appeared unto thee for this purpose, to make thee a minister and a witness both of these things which thou hast seen, and of those things in the which I will appear unto thee; 17 Delivering thee from the people, and from the Gentiles, unto whom now I send thee, 18 To open their eyes, and to turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins, and inheritance among them which are sanctified by faith that is in me. 19 Whereupon, O king Agrippa, I was not disobedient unto the heavenly vision: 20 But showed first unto them of Damascus, and at Jerusalem, and throughout all the coasts of Judaea, and then to the Gentiles, that they should repent and turn to God, and do works meet for repentance. 21 For these causes the Jews caught me in the temple, and went about to kill me. 22 Having therefore obtained help of God, I continue unto this day, witnessing both to small and great, saying none other things than those which the prophets and Moses did say should come: 23 That Christ should suffer, and that he should be the first that should rise from the dead, and should show light unto the people, and to the Gentiles.” . . . . . (Acts 26:13-23)

## INTRODUCTION

### A BRIEF SUMMARY OF THE TEXT

In his defense, Paul relates the Lord's appearance to him on the road to Damascus. He spells out the commission that was delivered to him, and boldly declares that he was not disobedient to the heavenly vision. In relating the details of his calling and commission, Paul also affirms that this is what he was found doing when the Jews

“caught” him “in the Temple.” He was not causing dissension, or inciting to riot those who were in the Temple. Instead, he was about serving the Lord. Notwithstanding, he tells Agrippa and those with him that he had obtained help from God, and was witnessing to both small and great, declaring only what the prophets and Moses said would come to pass. This was in stark contrast with the

charges that he was speaking against the Jews and their customs. If they were sincere, they would have paid attention to, and recognized, the truth of what he was saying. Thus, the spotlight has been turned on his accusers.

### THOUGHTS CONCERNING DEFENSE

The idea of giving a defense of

## CONTENTS

- I SAW A LIGHT FROM HEAVEN (26:13)
- I HEARD A VOICE (26:14)
- I SAID "WHO ART THOU, LORD?" (26:15)
- I HAVE APPEARED UNTO THEE FOR THIS PURPOSE (26:16)
- DELIVERING AND SENDING (26:17)
- THE COMMISSION (26:18)
- I WAS NOT DISOBEDIENT (26:19-20)
- FOR THESE CAUSES (26:21)
- HAVING OBTAINED HELP FROM GOD (26:22)
- A SUMMATION OF WHAT MOSES AND THE PROPHETS SAID SHOULD COME (26:23)
- CONCLUSION

oneself is worthy of some consideration. Of old time Tola defended Israel (Judges 10:1). God's people were admonished to "defend the poor" (Psa 82:3). Paul defended himself before the accusing Jews (Acts 22:1). He also said he defended and confirmed the Gospel (Phil 1:7). He even declared that he was "set for," or "appointed for,"<sup>NKJV</sup> "the defense of Gospel" (Phil 1:17).

The word "defense" is translated from the Greek word ἀπολογία (apologeeah) – which is transliterated "apology." The lexical meaning of the word is, "verbal defense, speech in defense,"<sup>THAYER</sup> and "to speak on behalf of oneself or of others against accusations presumed to be false."<sup>LOUW-NIDA</sup> This is the same word employed in First Peter 3:15, where it is translated, "give an answer to every man that asketh a reason for the hope that is in you."

### Other Uses of This Word

In his first epistle to the Corinthians Paul defended himself against those were examining him and questioning his apostleship. As in the First Peter text, here the word "answer" is used to translate the Greek word: "Mine answer to them that do examine me is this" (1 Cor 9:3). In his second letter to Timothy, Paul referred to a time when no man stood with him, and all forsook him: "At my first answer no man stood with me, but all men forsook me: I

pray God that it may not be laid to their charge. Notwithstanding the Lord stood with me, and strengthened me; that by me the preaching might be fully known, and that all the Gentiles might hear: and I was delivered out of the mouth of the lion" (2 Tim 4:16-17). The time during which this occurred is not specified. I assume that it was a trial that took place in Rome. Paul was not actually on trial in any of the cases covered thus far (before the Jews, Felix, and nor Agrippa).

I understand that Peter (1 Pet 3:15) is admonishing all believers to prepare to give an account of their hope before anyone who inquires concerning its reason. It is not common to hear this admonition in our day.

### Involved in Confessing Christ

Giving an answer for the hope that is in you, which is what Paul is doing in this text, is involved in confessing Christ before men. Jesus said, "Whosoever therefore shall confess Me before men, him will I confess also before My Father which is in heaven. But whosoever shall deny Me before men, him will I also deny before My Father which is in heaven" (Mat 10:32-33). The context of these words indicates that Jesus was speaking about the response of His disciples to opposition. "What I tell you in darkness, that speak ye in light: and what ye hear in the ear, that preach ye upon the housetops. And fear not them which kill the body, but are not able to kill the soul: but rather fear him which is able to destroy both soul and body in hell" (Mat 10:27-28).

It is clear that when the followers of Jesus are maligned and opposed because of what they have declared, they are to take care not to mitigate their profession of faith. Their alliance with and allegiance to Christ is not to be hidden. They are not to react in such a manner as to reduce the significance of their embrace of, and commitment to the Lord Jesus Christ.

Therefore, Paul is underscoring his association with

Christ, and his commitment to the preaching of the Gospel. He is further doing so with unquestionable certainty and commitment to Jesus. He is not ashamed of Christ or of the Gospel. He chooses not to minimize the commission that was delivered to him by the Lord's Christ. He does not agree to keep silence, or the refrain from preaching the Gospel.

There are many professing Christians who have ceased to declare the Gospel because it has chaffed against those to whom they made it known. Others have minimized their association with Christ, and sought to paint themselves as a friend to those who do not believe. They have winked the eye at sin, and even blasphemy, imagining that God will strengthen their toned-down witness. **But it is all nothing more than a denial of Christ, and is so regarded in heaven.** It is a less-than-subtle way of saying, "I know not the man."

### SOMETHING TO BE CONSIDERED

To "deny" Christ is not limited to affirming a lack of faith in Him, or the repudiation of His Person and position. There are at least two ways this denial takes place.

⇒ **REFUSING TO SUFFER FOR HIM.** "If we suffer, we shall also reign with him: if we deny him, he also will deny us: If we believe not, yet he abideth faithful: he cannot deny himself" (2 Tim 2:12-13). Here, denial is presented as the opposite of suffering, or bearing opposition and persecution that result from being steadfast in the faith. When a person modifies their speech and conduct to avoid the reaction of the ungodly, Christ has been denied.

⇒ **DENYING THE LORD IN OUR WORKS.** "They profess that they know God; but in works they deny him, being abominable, and disobedient, and unto every good work reprobate" (Titus 1:16). A professing Christian that is lacking in the "good works," which have been ordained for us to walk in them (Eph 2:10), has, in fact, denied the

**Therefore, Paul is underscoring his association with Christ, and his commitment to the preaching of the Gospel. He is further doing so with unquestionable certainty and commitment to Jesus.**

Lord. Those who fail to do what the Lord has required of them are denying him. That is just the way things are.

In our text, we have Paul who has been vigorously opposed for serving the Lord, speaking His Word, and not being ashamed to acknowledge that he lives in the hope of the resurrection of the dead. In order to avoid being dragged from the Temple, and finally incarcerated in prison for two years,

all he had to do was cease expressing his faith. **However, he refused to do so, even though that resulted in an enormous amount of inconvenience and hardship.** It also apparently took him away from his arduous travels and labors. However, he does not balk at any of this, but continues to seize every opportunity to identify himself with Jesus Christ, and declare himself to be faithful to the commission delivered to him.

**In doing this, Paul distances himself from all religious pretension.** He disassociates himself from lukewarmness and spiritual indolence. Both his stance and his words are a stirring rebuke to half-heartedness, casualness, and carnal convenience. In this, he sets a godly example before us – one we should imitate. Our faith will be put to the test, just as surely as Paul’s faith was tested. Be ready for the test! Be ready to stand, and to answer.

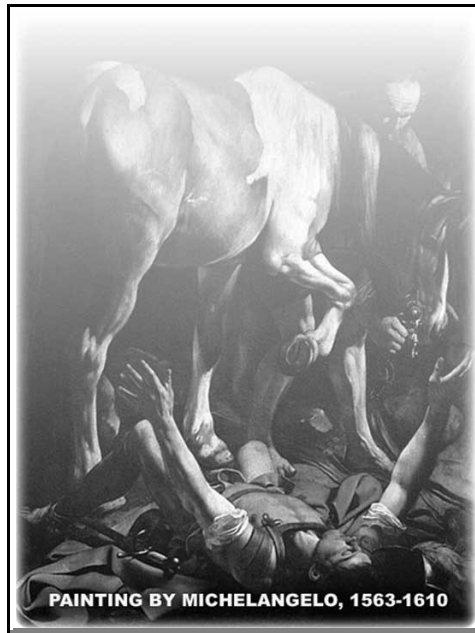
**I SAW A LIGHT FROM HEAVEN**

*“<sup>26:13</sup> At midday, O king, I saw in the way a light from heaven, above the brightness of the sun, shining round about me and them which journeyed with me.”*

Remember, Paul is accounting for the change that has taken place in him – an effective moral and spiritual change. **Nothing prior to Paul’s confrontation of the Christ of God had wrought a spiritual change in Paul.** The Law was not designed to work such a change, but was a system of outward regimentation. The Spirit affirms that the entire service of the Tabernacle *“stood only in meats and drinks, and divers washings, and carnal ordinances, imposed on them until the time of reformation”* (Heb 9:10). **Remember, the Law itself did not allow the people to draw near to God.** The high priest was appointed to represent the people before God, for they could not come into the precincts of the Divine presence themselves (Lev 9:7,15,18; 16:15,24; Num 16:47).

It had been about twenty-one years since the event Paul now describes had taken place. He had traveled extensively, preaching the Gospel in Syria, Crete, Pisidia, Galatia, Phrygia, Macedonia, Greece, and Asia. He had written epistles to believers in Thessalonica, Corinth, Galatia, and Rome. He had been beaten by the Jews five times, beaten three times with rods, stoned once, spent a day and night in the deep, and been in three shipwrecks. This is not to mention perils he had faced in waters, among robbers, among his own countrymen, among the heathen, in the city, in the wilderness, in the sea, and among false brethren. He had also experienced weariness, painfulness, sleeplessness, hunger and thirst, being without food, and being cold and without proper clothing (2 Cor 11:24-27).

**Yet, Paul never forgot that memorable day when he was met by the Lord’s Christ, while he was on a mission to make havoc of the Lord’s church!** You must never forget that conversion is of such a nature that it will always appear greater than the adversities of life. Many a believing soul has been sustained by the holy recollection of when he passed from death to life, and from being condemned to being justified freely.



PAINTING BY MICHELANGELO, 1563-1610

**I SAW A LIGHT FROM HEAVEN**

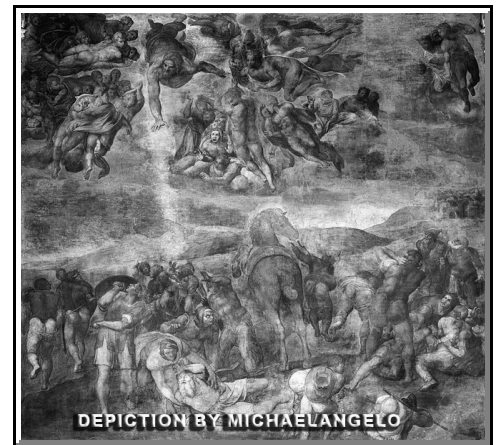
*“At midday, O king, I saw in the way a light from heaven, above the brightness of the sun . . .”* Other versions read, *“brighter than the sun,”* <sup>NASB</sup> *“about noon,”* <sup>NIV</sup> *“shining more brilliantly than the sun,”* <sup>NJB</sup> and *“surpassing the brightness of the sin.”* <sup>WEB</sup>

Luke records the event in the following manner. *“ . . . suddenly there shined round about him a light from heaven”* (Acts 9:3). Before his Jewish accusers Paul said, *“about noon, suddenly there shone from heaven a great light round about me”* (Acts 22:6).

**This light was a revelation of Divine glory – a glory that supercedes the brilliance of any created light.** It was the kind of glory that burst forth from Jesus when He was transfigured, and *“His face did shine as the sun”* (Matt 17:1). When the sun was at its highest and brightest, a light from heaven dwarfed it in sheer magnitude. Something similar appeared at Mount Sinai – *“lightnings,”* or *“lightning flashes”* <sup>NASB</sup> (Ex 19:16; 20:18).

**SHINING ROUND ABOUT ME AND THEM WHICH JOURNEYED WITH ME**

*“ . . . shining round about me and them which journeyed with me.”* Other versions read, *“blazing all around me and my companions,”* <sup>NIV</sup> and *“flashing about me and those who were traveling with me.”* <sup>AMPLIFIED</sup>



DEPICTION BY MICHAELANGELO

What a scene that must have been! Flashes of blinding light all around Saul and

those traveling with him.

Luke's record of the account reads, "And as he journeyed, he came near Damascus: and suddenly there shined round about him a light from heaven" (Acts 9:3). Paul gave this account before the Jews: "And it came to pass, that, as I made my journey, and was come nigh unto Damascus about noon, suddenly there shone from heaven a great light round about me" (Acts 22:6).

The light was focused upon Saul, and yet it affected those who were traveling with him as well. Here was a Divine intrusion that halted what Saul was doing, and struck fear onto the hearts of those who were with him. **Let no one doubt whether or not the glorified Christ can cause evil intentions to immediately abort, and capture the unmitigated attention of those he is apprehending.** This is the event to which Paul referred when he said he had been "apprehended" (Phil 3:12). It was

the time when Christ "took hold of" him.<sup>NIV</sup> Other versions read, "laid hold of by Christ Jesus,"<sup>NASB</sup> and "laid hold of me and made me His own."<sup>AMPLIFIED</sup> Whether or not a person's theology will allow the acknowledgment of this or not, **here is a case where a sinner was forced to confront Jesus, even though he was not seeking Him.**

The Lord captured his attention in a manner than could not be contested, and was not resisted.

## I HEARD A VOICE

"<sup>14</sup> And when we were all fallen to the earth, I heard a voice speaking unto me, and saying in the Hebrew tongue, Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou Me? it is hard for thee to kick against the pricks."

### WE WERE ALL FALLEN TO THE EARTH

"And when we were all fallen to the earth . . ." Other versions read, "when we all had fallen to the ground,"<sup>NASB</sup> and "all gone down on the earth."<sup>BBE</sup>

The entire entourage traveling with Paul, fell down to the earth with him. This was a Divine intrusion they could not ignore, and the flesh crumbled beneath the shear weight of the glory of Jesus. It was only owing to the mercy and purpose of the Lord that they were not all consumed. Saul was being "apprehended," and all who were traveling with him were witnesses.

This had often been the reaction of

9:18,25). Job "fell down upon the ground" after hearing of the loss of his possessions and children (Job 1:20). When the wise men from the east saw the infant Messiah, they "fell down and worshiped Him" (Matt 1:20). Unclean spirits "fell down before Him" when they saw Jesus (Mk 3:11). When the woman with an issue of blood was healed by Jesus, she "came and fell down before Him" (Mk 5:33). When the knowledge of the Person of Christ dawned upon Peter, "he fell down at Jesus' knees" (Lk 5:8). When Jairus confronted Jesus, he "fell down at Jesus' feet" (Lk 8:41). A healed leper returned to Jesus and "fell down on his face at His feet" (Lk 17:16). Mary, Lazarus' sister, "fell down" at the feet of Jesus (John 11:32). Paul said that when a stranger or unbeliever entered the assembly of the saints, and the "secrets of his heart" were made known by the insightful words of the members of Christ's body, he would be seen "falling down on his face" and worshiping God (1 Cor 14:25). The twenty-four elders of Revelation "fell down before the Lamb" (Rev 5:8,14). The four

superiority of the glory of God and the words that are sent by Him to men. The more aware men are of the Lord and the things and personalities in heaven, the more they are humbled, and the less power and dominion their flesh has. By the same token, where there is no consciousness of God or of heavenly influences, the fear of the Lord will not be present. **In Christian gatherings, the spirit of casualness and a general lack of interest suggests the absence of the awareness of the Lord Himself.** If it is true that Jesus Himself is in the midst of those who have gathered together in His name, then being unaware of that circumstance is a transgression of the greatest magnitude. During the ministry of Jesus, there were some people who were less cognizant of His person than the demons.

The Lord can strike people down to the ground with His glory. Eventually, "when He shall come in His own glory, and in the Father's, and of the holy angels" (Lk 9:26), there will not be a dissenting voice in the universe. No people will gather against Him them, and there will be no blaspheming of His holy name. **He will force Himself into the affairs of men.** The saints will rejoice, and all of the others will tremble, pleading for something or someone to hide them from the wrath of the Lamb (Rev 6:16-17). Until that time, those with faith are preparing for the day when they will "be like Him," for they will "see Him as He is" (1 John 3:1-3). Now, they bow. Then, every knee shall bow (Rom 14:11; Phil 2:10).

**In Christian gatherings, the spirit of casualness and a general lack of interest suggests the absence of the awareness of the Lord Himself. If it is true that Jesus Himself is in the midst of those who have gathered together in His name, then being unaware of that circumstance is a transgression of the greatest magnitude.**

those on earth to a heavenly presence injecting itself into the domain of men. Even Balaam's donkey "fell down" at the sight of an angel (Num 22:27). Moses twice "fell down" in the presence of the Lord (Deut

living creatures of Revelation "fell down and worshiped God" (Rev 19:4). When John saw an angel, he "fell down" (Rev 22:8).

The idea is that of the

**I HEARD A VOICE SPEAKING TO ME**  
 "... I heard a voice speaking unto me, and saying in the Hebrew tongue . . ." Other versions read, "the Hebrew language,"<sup>NKJV</sup> "the Hebrew dialect,"<sup>NASB</sup> "in Aramaic,"<sup>NIV/NET/NLT/IE/CEV</sup> "in Hebrew,"<sup>CJB</sup> and

*“Hebrews vernacular.”* <sup>INTERLINEAR</sup>

Here again, the varied versions introduce some confusion on the matter, some of the Greek lexicons doing the same thing. Even though the word translated “Hebrew” is clearly stated (Ἑβραϊδὶ διαλέκτῳ – “Hebrew dialect” or language – yet some Greek lexicons add the following: “Hebrew, the Hebrew language; not that however in which the O. T. was written, but the Chaldee (not Syro-Chaldaic, as it is commonly but incorrectly called; cf. A. Th. Hoffmann, Grammat. Syriac., p. 14), which at the time of Jesus and the apostles had long superseded it in Palestine,” <sup>THAYER</sup> “the Hebrew dialect, referring to the particular form of Hebrew (possibly Aramaic) spoken in Palestine,” <sup>FRIBERG</sup> “Hebrew language (i.e. Aramaic),” <sup>UBS</sup> and “Hebrew language, i.e. the Aramaic spoken at that time in Palestine.” <sup>GINGRICH</sup> The Louw-Nida lexicon presents a better view: “(derivative of ~ Ἑβραῖος α Hebrew, 93.105) pertaining to the Hebrews - ‘Hebrew’ (Lk 23.38, apparatus). The addition of γράμμασιν in some manuscripts literally applies to Hebrew letters, though the reference seems to be to the language, probably Aramaic. In Ac 21.40, 22.2, and 26.14 a peculiar form of Ἑβραϊκός ἡ ὄν occurs, namely, Ἑβραῖδι σφηολαῖς ῥοσεωῆρ εχπλαῖν ἰτ ἀς φρομ Ἑβραῖς ἴδος relating it to Ἑβραῖος οὐ (93.105).

This rather tedious explanation has been given for a purpose. **First, there is nothing in Scripture to indicate that the purity of the Hebrew language was not maintained by devout Jews** – particularly since their language had been a point of contention and rebuke during their history (Neh 13:24-26). Second, the Aramaic language is not once mentioned in Scripture. Some are of the opinion that the language of the Chaldees was synonymous with “Aramaic.” Third, the Aramaic language was the language of Syria, and was anything but unique to the Hebrews. <sup>INTERNATIONAL STANDARD BIBLE DICTIONARY</sup>

Fourth, the fact that Jesus spoke to Saul in the Hebrew tongue made His communication unique and not common, which appears to be the reason for the Lord speaking in such a manner. Fifth, special note is made of the Hebrews tongue in the Gospels and the book of the Revelation. In John 5:2 the sheep-market pool was called “Bethesda” in the “Hebrew tongue.” The angel of the bottomless pit in the Revelation was called “Apollyon” in the Greek language, but “Abaddon” on the “Hebrew tongue” (Rev 9:11). Also the gathering of the enemies of the Lord is said to be in a place called “Armageddon” in the “Hebrew tongue” (Rev 16:16).

I therefore conclude that the text means precisely what it says.

### WHY PERSECUTEST THOU ME?

“... Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou Me?...” Other versions read, “Why are you persecuting Me?” <sup>NASB</sup> “Why do you persecute Me?” <sup>NIV</sup> “why are you attacking me so cruelly,” <sup>BBE</sup> “Why do you keep persecuting me?” <sup>CJB</sup> “Why do you continue to persecute me?” <sup>WILLIAMS</sup> and “why do you continue to persecute Me [to harass and trouble and molest Me]?” <sup>AMPLIFIED</sup>

**Here is a perspective of persecution that is hidden from every single person who makes it difficult for the saints of God, or that in any way opposes or afflicts them.** This is the ultimate outcome of unbelief, which puts people into the hands of the devil.

The question that is asked is not one to which the glorified Christ is seeking an answer. It rather shines the light upon the ignorance that then dominated Saul (1 Tim 1:13). The question highlighted what Saul of Tarsus did **not** know, for as soon as he did know who Jesus of Nazareth was, he ceased his campaign against those who believed on Him.

### IT IS HARD FOR THEE TO KICK AGAINST THE PRICKS

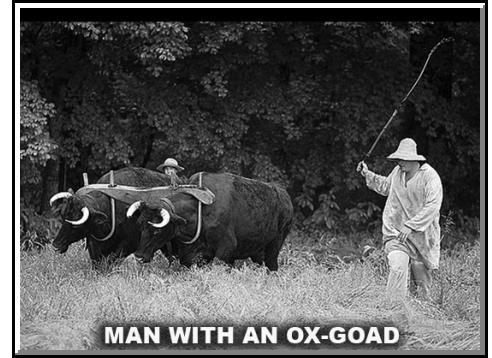
#### THE OX GOAD

“Twas observable that in plowing they used goads of an extraordinary size; upon measuring of several I found them to be about eight feet long, and at the bigger end six inches in circumference. They are armed at the lesser end with a sharp prickle for driving the oxen, and at the other end with a small spade or paddle of iron, strong and massy, to clear thee plough from the clay that encumbers it in working” <sup>McCLINTOCK and</sup>

“... it is hard for thee to kick against the pricks.” Other versions read, “It is hard for you to kick against the goads,” <sup>NKJV</sup> “It hurts you to kick against the goads,” <sup>NRSV</sup> “It is hard for you to go against the impulse which is driving you,” <sup>BBE</sup> “It’s hard on you to be kicking against the ox-goads!” <sup>CJB</sup> “It’s hard for a mortal like you to resist God,” <sup>GWN</sup> and “It is dangerous and turns out badly for you to keep kicking against the goads [to keep offering vain and perilous resistance].” <sup>AMPLIFIED</sup>

3 Now we come to a circumstance that was within. There was a goading that was taking place in Saul of Tarsus – a goading of the conscience that was sharp and difficult to bear. The specific cause of the pricking of conscience is not spelled out. Perhaps it was witnessing the stoning of Stephen and the spiritual composure he

maintained until he breathed his last breath.



MAN WITH AN OX-GOAD

It could have been the call of Stephen to the glorified Christ, “Lord, lay not this sin to their charge” (Acts 7:60).

Perhaps it was some of the experiences that took place when he hauled both men and women out of their homes and synagogues, breathing out threatenings and slaughter against them. What images had been stamped upon his soul as he relentlessly sought to make them blaspheme the name of the Lord, disowning Him in a public manner?

And, who was it that was wielding this tormenting goad? This was doubtless the Holy Spirit, convicting Saul of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment. If so, it was all associated with his opposition to Christ Jesus and those who were believing on Him. **As Jesus opened more fully to Saul, there is a dissoluble unity between Himself and His people.**

The fact that Saul did not deny the existence of the goads tells us something. He knew at this time that whoever he had confronted, it was certainly not an ordinary man. Here was a Person who reached back more than two decades, and with penetrating insight probes the conscience of this Jewish zealot.

Jesus can certainly do such things, and there is no indication that this ability has been relegated to the past. The Lord is still known as “He that searcheth the hearts” (Rom 8:27). The glorified Christ Himself said to the seven churches of Asia, “I am He which searcheth the reins and hearts” (Rev 2:23). Elsewhere it is said of Him, “all things are naked and opened unto the eyes of Him with whom, we have to do” (Heb 4:13). When the disciples were about to choose a replacement for the bishopric vacated by Judas, they addressed the Lord in this manner: “Thou, Lord, which knowest the hearts of all men” (Acts 1:24).

Saul of Tarsus, knowing the Scriptures, knew that the prophets spoke of this Divine attribute. *“But the righteous God trieth the hearts and reigns”* (Psa 7:8). And again, *“He knoweth the secrets of the heart”* (Psa 44:21). Jeremiah said God *“tries the reins and the heart”* (Jer 11:20). God Himself said, *“I the Lord search the heart, I try the reins”* (Jer 17:10). He *“sees the reins and the heart”* (Jer 20:12). Even when Jesus walked among men, *“He knew what was in*

*man”* (John 2:25).

I do not believe enough is made of this in our time – a time when men appear more interested in psychoanalyzing the people, rather than informing them that God knows their thoughts, their motives, and their intentions. Perhaps these things are known theoretically, or even acknowledged in a creedal form. **However, the academic**

**knowledge of the fact of the discerning and probing eye of the Lord has not produced fruit that glorifies God.** It appears to me that a significant number of religious people have **not** been exposed to enough truth concerning God Himself to cause their conscience to be pricked. A concept of God has been produced that does not allow for conviction, which means that it is a false concept.

## I SAID, “WHO ART THOU, LORD?”

“<sup>15</sup> And I said, Who art thou,

Luke’s recounting of this incident

**At the very least, Saul’s use of this word was a recognition of the superiority personality that had confronted him, whether perceived as an angel or the Lord of glory. Saul had immediately recognized that he was vastly inferior to the one who appeared to him. It was obvious He was not one of his peers.**

*Lord? And he said, I am Jesus whom thou persecutest.”*

Saul immediately responded to the voice of the Lord. He did not faint with fear, although fear had unquestionably come upon him. **The glory that threw him to the ground, as it were, did not rob him of sound thought.** Not knowing who he had confronted, he inquired with humility who was speaking to him.

### WHO ART THOU LORD?

*“And I said, Who art thou, Lord? . . .”* Other versions read, *“who are you, sir,”* CJB/GWN/NAB/LIVING/WILLIAMS and *“My Lord, who art thou?”*<sup>MRD</sup> The word translated “Lord” is the customary Greek word for this expression – κύριος. The lexical meaning of the word is, “having power or authority” (from Pindar down), he to whom a person or thing belongs, about which he has the power of deciding; master, lord; used a. universally, of the possessor and disposer of a thing, the owner . . . one who has control of the person,<sup>THAYER</sup> “(strong, authoritative); hence, one having legal power lord, master,<sup>FRIBERG</sup> and “a title for God and for Christ) one who exercises supernatural authority over mankind - Lord, Ruler, One who commands.”<sup>LOUW-NIDA</sup>

represents Saul as saying, “Who art thou, Lord?” (Acts 9:5). When Paul testified to the Jews, he reported the same thing: *“Who art thou, Lord?”*

The term Lord (κύριος) is used 747 times from Matthew through Revelation. Its prevailing use is applied to Deity, and infrequently to holy and glorious angels. It is used 113 times in the book of Acts. In those instances, with only three exceptions, the word always applies to Deity. The three exceptions are as follows.

- ⇒ Cornelius to the angel of the Lord: “What is it **Lord?**” (Acts 10:4).
- ⇒ The “**masters**” who had enslaved the woman with a demon in Macedonia (Acts 16:19).
- ⇒ The jailer to Paul and Silas: “**sirs**, what must I do to be saved” (Acts 16:30).

Even in the exceptions, the persons being addressed were perceived as being in control of the situation, and were seen as greater than the person with whom they were associated. The English word “sir” once meant “a man of rank or position.”<sup>MERRIAM-WEBSTER</sup> Today, however, it is usually used to denote

respect for an individual. It is too weak of a word for this text, as represented in several modern versions (CJB/GWN/NAB/LIVING/WILLIAMS). **At the very least, Saul’s use of this word was a recognition of the superiority personality that had confronted him, whether perceived as an angel or the Lord of glory.** Saul had immediately recognized that he was vastly inferior to the one who appeared to him. It was obvious He was not one of his peers.

### I AM JESUS WHOM THOU PERSECUTEST

*“ . . . And He said, I am Jesus whom thou persecutest.”* Other versions read, *“I am Jesus whom you are persecuting,”*<sup>NKJV</sup> *“I am Jesus, whom you are attacking,”*<sup>BBE</sup> *“I am Yeshua, and you are persecuting me!”*<sup>CJB</sup> and *“I am Jesus, the one you’re persecuting.”*<sup>GWN</sup>

When Paul reported this incident to the Jews, he said, *“And he said unto me, I am Jesus of Nazareth, whom thou persecutest”* (Acts 22:8). Earlier, Paul had told Agrippa that he had thought within himself that he *“ought to do many things contrary to the name of Jesus of Nazareth”* (Acts 26:9). This distinguished Jesus of Nazareth from others who had the same name (Colossians 4:11, surnamed Justus, and Hebrews 4:8, Joshua).

Again, the identity of the saints with the Lord Jesus is quite clear. Of old time, it was said of the Israelites, *“He kept him as the apple of His eye”* (Deut 32:10). Again, Zechariah the prophet declared, *“he that toucheth you toucheth the apple of His eye”* (Zech 2:8).

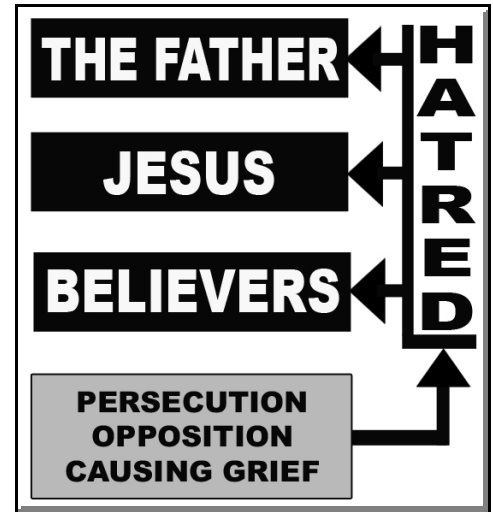
In redemption, however, the relationship of the saved with the Savior is much closer.

- ⇒ **THEY ARE ONE SPIRIT WITH THE LORD.** *“But he that is joined unto the Lord is one spirit”* (1 Cor 6:17).
- ⇒ **THEY ARE OF CHRIST’S FLESH, AND OF HIS BONE.** *“For we are members of his body, of his flesh, and of his bones”* (Eph 5:30).
- ⇒ **THEY HAVE BEEN ADDED TO THE LORD.** *“And believers were the more added to the Lord, multitudes both of men and women”* (Acts 5:14).
- ⇒ **THEY HAVE BEEN BAPTIZED INTO CHRIST.** *“For as many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ”* (Gal 3:27).
- ⇒ **THEY ARE ONE WITH THE FATHER AND THE SON.** *“That they all may be one; as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us: that the world may believe that thou hast sent me”* (John 17:21).

⇒ **THEY ARE THE BODY OF CHRIST.** *“And he is the head of the body, the church: who is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead; that in all things he might have the preeminence”* (Col 1:18). *“Now ye are the body of Christ, and members in particular”* (1 Cor 12:27).

+ This revealed affinity is why Jesus could say, *“I am Jesus whom thou persecutest.”* It is a very real association, and not merely a figurative one. **That is what makes the persecution of believers, and causing them grief, so serious.** It reveals what the offenders really think of the Lord Jesus, and of God the Father. Jesus said, *“Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that receiveth whomsoever I send receiveth Me; and he that receiveth Me receiveth Him that sent Me”* (John 13:20). Again He said, *“He that heareth you heareth Me; and he that despiseth you despiseth Me; and he that despiseth Me despiseth Him that sent Me”* (Luke 10:16). That is how closely we are united with the Lord.

**When the people of God are**



harmed in any way, or maligned, or despised, or hated, it is duly noted in heaven. No such treatment is ignored in the pure and holy precincts of heaven! It is duly noted, and is taken personally by Jesus. It will help you to survive the assaults of the wicked if you will keep this in mind.

**I HAVE APPEARED UNTO THEE FOR THIS PURPOSE**

*“<sup>16</sup> 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.”*

The words Paul now relates must have been especially sweet to him when they were spoken. Upon hearing that this was Jesus who, he was persecuting, there is no note of vengeance in the Lord’s word. It is rather a consoling words that accentuated the marvelous grace of our Lord Jesus Christ.

**RISE AND STAND UPON THY FEET**

*“But rise, and stand upon thy feet . . .”* Other versions read, *“Now get up and stand on your feet,”*<sup>NIV</sup> and *“Stand up!”*<sup>GWN</sup> Thus the words of the Psalmist were fulfilled: *“The Lord . . . raiseth up all those that be bowed down”* (Psa 145:14). A salient statement in the prayer of Hannah was also fulfilled: *“He bringeth low and lifteth up”* (1 Sam 2:7). The word of Hosea was also seen in our Lord’s dealing with Saul: *“He hath smitten and He will bind us up”* (Hos 6:1).

Blessed is the person who realizes that holy alertness always follows being perceptibly humbled!

**I HAVE APPEARED UNTO THEE FOR THIS PURPOSE**

*“ . . . for I have appeared unto thee for this purpose . . .”* Other versions read, *“for this purpose I have appeared to you,”*<sup>NASB</sup> *“to this end have I appeared unto thee,”*<sup>ASV</sup> *“I have appeared to you for a reason,”*<sup>GWN</sup> *“for this very purpose,”*<sup>WEYMOUTH</sup> and *“in order to.”*<sup>MONTGOMERY</sup>

This account is not given in Luke’s record of the appearance of Jesus to Saul of Tarsus (Acts 9:6). Some have conjectured that Paul combined what was said directly by Jesus, and what was said through Ananias. Experience is not an end of itself. I do not receive this explanation. I prefer to take Paul at his word, that this was said to him on the road to Damascus, and that Ananias provided a confirming testimony regarding the reason for Christ’s appearance to Saul.

Valid experience is not an end of itself. Some entertain the notion that experience stands by itself, without regard to

purpose or Divine intent. This is not, however, the manner of the Kingdom. The Lord Himself makes this inclusive statement: *“ye shall know that I have not done without cause all that I have done in it, saith the Lord GOD”* (Ezek 14:23). All of God’s callings are associated with a purpose, or objective.

**TO MAKE THEE A MINISTER AND A WITNESS**

*“ . . . to make thee a minister and a witness . . .”* Other versions read, *“servant and as a witness,”*<sup>NIV</sup> *“to serve and testify,”*<sup>NRSV</sup> *“serve and bear witness,”*<sup>RSV</sup> *“designate you in advance as a servant and witness,”*<sup>NET</sup> *“appoint you as My servant and as witness,”*<sup>NJB</sup> *“appoint thee an officer and a witness,”*<sup>YLT</sup> *“chosen you to be My servant. You will be My witness,”*<sup>IE</sup> and *“to serve as [My] minister, and to bear witness,”*<sup>AMPLIFIED</sup>

The original word translated *“make”* means, *“to choose, to appoint,”*<sup>THAYER</sup> *“to choose, elect,”*<sup>LIDDELL-SCOTT</sup> and *“choose for oneself, select, appoint.”*<sup>GINGRICH</sup> This word is used only twice in the Greek Scriptures (Acts 22:14; 26:15). Both instances refer to the calling of Paul.

The Scriptures record that Ananias also confirmed this testimony to Saul: *“And he said, The God of our fathers hath chosen thee, that thou shouldest know His will, and see that Just One, and shouldest hear the voice of His mouth”* (Acts 22:14).

Right here we are exposed to the Kingdom concept of a *“servant.”* The word means more than a mere slave. As defined by the word of Ananias, it involves being chosen to KNOW Christ’s will. Thus Jesus distinguished His servants from mere slaves who went about doing what they were told, yet without any understanding of the purpose of their master. *“Henceforth I call you not servants; for the servant knoweth not what his lord doeth: but I have called you friends; for all things that I have heard of My Father I have made known unto you. Ye have not chosen Me, but I have chosen you, and ordained you, that ye should go and bring forth fruit, and that your fruit should remain: that whatsoever ye shall ask of the Father in My name, He may give it you”* (John 15:15-16). The word to the eleven apostles is an exact parallel of the word delivered to Saul.

This refers to the sending of

From a human point of view, how likely is it that Saul of Tarsus would be so appointed? There certainly is no indication that any of the believers suspected this would happen. In fact, at the first, Ananias, who was called by Jesus to minister to Saul, found it difficult to see Paul as a *“chosen vessel”* (Acts 9:15).

**The Concept of Serving Christ**

Our day is marked by an astounding ignorance of what it means to *“serve”* Christ. Some perceive this as doing some Christian work that they themselves have birthed. Jesus said of such people, *“If any man serve me, let him follow Me; and where I am, there shall also My servant be: if any man serve Me, him will My Father honor”* (John 12:26).

**A servant of Christ is noted for following Him, and being where Jesus is.** He is carrying out the Savior’s will, being taught by Him, and directed by Him as well.

**THESE THINGS WHICH THOU HAST SEEN**

*“ . . . both of these things which thou hast seen . . . ”* Other versions read, *“of what you have seen of Me,”*<sup>NIV</sup> *“the things in*

what he first saw two times (Acts 22:6-11; 26:13-18).

**THOSE THINGS IN WHICH I WILL APPEAR UNTO THEE**

*“ . . . and of those things in the which I will appear unto thee.”* Other versions read, *“things which I will yet reveal to you,”*<sup>NKJV</sup> *“the things in which I will appear to you,”*<sup>NASB</sup> *“and what I will show you,”*<sup>NIV</sup> *“and of those in which you will see Me,”*<sup>BBE</sup> *“what you will see when I appear to you in the future,”*<sup>CJB</sup> and *“what I will show you.”*<sup>GWN</sup>

The glorified Christ would show Paul more. As a faithful steward, counted to be *“faithful”* (1 Tim 1:12), Paul would declare those coming revelations. In spiritual life, there is a twofold perspective: what you have seen, and what you will see. We have records of him doing precisely this. Here are three rather broad categories.

⇨ **CONCERNING THE LORD’S SUPPER** – 1 Corinthians 11:23-32.

⇨ **CONCERNING THE KNOWLEDGE OF THE MYSTERY OF CHRIST** – Ephesians 3:4-7.

⇨ **CONCERNING THE UNSEARCHABLE RICHES OF CHRIST** – Ephesians 3:7.

I have compiled a partial listing of teachings that are, for the most part, unique to Paul. I list them here in order to emphasize the extensive revelation that was vouchsafed to Paul.

**This includes Paul’s experience on the road to Damascus, what was told him by Jesus, the insight that was received from it, and the commission given to him. In short, he was to testify as to how the Lord Jesus had apprehended him, and the purpose for that apprehension.**

insightful proclaimers as stated in Romans 10:14-15: *“How then shall they call on him in whom they have not believed? and how shall they believe in him of whom they have not heard? and how shall they hear without a preacher? And how shall they preach, except they be sent? as it is written, How beautiful are the feet of them that preach the gospel of peace, and bring glad tidings of good things!”* Such messengers are not sent out by missionary boards and other humanly devised organizations. **In my judgment, the telling difference between those who can effectively communicate the Gospel and those who cannot is traced back to their appointment by the Head of the church.** This is also involved in the placement of the various members of the body where it has pleased God (1 Cor 12:18).

*which You have seen Me,”*<sup>NRSV</sup> *“wherein thou hast seen Me,”*<sup>ASV</sup> *“what you have already seen of Me,”*<sup>CJB</sup> *“a witness of this thy seeing me,”*<sup>MRD</sup> and *“as a witness of this vision in which you have seen me.”*<sup>NJB</sup>

This includes Paul’s experience on the road to Damascus, what was told him by Jesus, the insight that was received from it, and the commission given to him. **In short, he was to testify as to how the Lord Jesus had apprehended him, and the purpose for that apprehension.**

It is a principle woven throughout the Lord’s dealings with men, that what they have been given to see is to be declared. This is in order that He might be properly glorified. In the episode recorded in Acts chapters 22-26, Paul has already testified of

**PAUL’S UNIQUE TEACHING THINGS GIVEN FOR ALL MEN TO HEAR**

1. That the church is the body of Christ (Rom 12:4-5; 1 Cor 12:12-27; Eph 1:23; 2:16; 3:6; 4:4,12-16; 5:23,30; Col 1:16; 2:19; 3:15).
2. Jesus Christ as the Head of the body (Eph 5:23; Col 1:18; 2:19).
3. The merging of Jew and Gentile in Christ (Eph 2:15-16,19).
4. The exposition of justification by faith (Rom 3:20-5:18; Gal 2:16-17; 3:8-24).
5. The distinction between the Old and New Covenants (2 Cor 3:6-14; 7:22; 8:8-13; 10:16-17; Gal 3:15-17; 4:22-28; Heb 9:15-20).
6. The reality of *“the old man”* and *“the new man”* (Rom 6:6; Eph 5:22-24; Col 3:9-10).
7. The inner warfare experienced by those who live by faith (Rom 7:15-25; Gal 5:17).
8. The spiritual logic that declares the coming conversion of the Jews (Romans chapters 9-11).
9. The High Priesthood of Christ (Heb 3:1; 4:14-15;

- 5:5,10; 6:20; 7:26; 8:1; 9:11; 10:21).
10. The relation of Abraham to those who believe (Rom 4:1-16; Gal 3:6-18).
  11. The significance of Melchizedec (Heb 5:6,10; 6:20; 7:1, 10-21).
  12. The eternal purpose of God (Rom 8:28; Eph 1:11; 3:11; 2 Tim 1:9).
  13. What took place behind the scenes when Jesus died (Col 1:20; 2:14-15; Heb 2:14; 9:26).
  14. The whole armor of God (Rom 13:12; 2 Cor 6:7; Eph 6:10-18).
  15. Spiritual weaponry (2 Cor 10:4-5; Eph 6:17).
  16. Believers battling with principalities and powers (Eph 6:12).
  17. The fruit of the Spirit (Gal 5:22-23; Eph 5:9).
  18. The works of the flesh (Gal 5:19-21).
  19. The office of a Bishop (1 Tim 3:1-7; Tit 1:7-11).
  20. The office of a deacon (1 Tim 3:10-13).
  21. The exposition of spiritual gifts, and how they are administered (Rom 12:3-8; 1 Cor 12:1-31; 14:1-12; Eph 4:11-16).
  22. Why men cannot be justified by works (Rom 3:26; 4:2; Gal 2:16; 3:2-5).
  23. The imputation of righteousness upon the basis of faith (Rom 1:7; 3:22-25; 4:5-25; 10:6-10; Phil 3:9).
  24. Extensive teaching concerning baptism into Christ (Rom 6:1-23; Gal 3:27; Eph 4:5; Col 2:11-15).
  25. The comparison of Adam and Christ (Rom 5:14-21; 1 Cor 15:22,45).
  26. Extensive teaching on the resurrection of the dead (1 Cor 15:15-57).
  27. The ministry of the Holy Spirit (Rom 8:11-14, 26-27; 2 Cor 3:3-18; Gal 4:6, 29; 5:5,16-18,22-24; 6:8; Eph 2:22; Eph 5:9).
  28. The intercession and mediation of Christ Jesus (Heb 7:25; 1 Tim 2:5; Heb 8:6; 9:15; 12:24).
  29. The intercession of the Holy Spirit (Rom 8:26-27).
  30. Predestination and election (Rom 8:29-33; 9:11; 11:5-7,28; Eph 1:5,11; Col 3:12; 1 Thess 1:4; 2 Tim 2:10; Tit 1:1).
  31. The body being for the Lord (Rom 12:1-2; 1 Cor 6:13-20).
  32. God's objective for believers (Rom 8:29-30; Eph 3:15-30; 4:12-16; Col 1:9-11).
  33. The resurrection body (2 Cor 5:1-5).
  34. The accomplishments of the cross (Eph 2:16; Phil 2:8; Col 1:20; 2:14-15).
  35. Extensive teaching concerning the Lord's Table (1 Cor 10:21; 11:23-29).
  36. Types and shadows (Gal 4:24; Col 2:17; Heb 8:5; 9:24; 10:1).
  37. Extensive teaching of the grace of God (Rom 3:24; 4:4,16; 5:2, 15-17, 20-21; 6:14-15; 11:5-6; 12:3-6; 1 Cor 15:10; 2 Cor 8:9; Gal 1:15; Eph 2:5-8; 2 Thess 2:16; 1 Tim 1:14; 2 Tim 1:9; Tit 2:11-12; Tit 3:7; Heb 2:9; 4:16; 12:28).
  38. Heavenly hosts being tutored concerning God's wisdom through the church (Eph 3:10).
  39. Angels being present in the assembly of the saints (1 Cor 11:10; Heb 12:22).
  40. How the church is to respond to immoral people among them (1 Cor 5:1-9).
  41. With the exceptions of six references to the "Gospel" in the book of Acts, and five references in the epistles and Revelation, every mention of that word from in Romans through Revelation (seventy-five) is found in Paul's writings.
  42. The ascension of Jesus and its bearing on the gifts given to the church (Eph 1:20; 4:8-11; 1 Tim 3:16; Heb 1:3; 4:14; 9:14).
  43. The use of the word "heavenly" (1 Cor 15:48,49; Eph 1:3,20; 2:6; 3:10; 2 Tim 4:18; Heb 3:1; 6:4; 8:5).
  44. The degeneracy of the Gentile world without Christ (Rom 1:19-32).
  45. With the exception of two references in First Peter, and one in Third John, the remaining teaching concerning Gentiles is given by Paul (48 references).
  46. The fact that some of the Jewish branches were broken off, and some Gentiles were grafted into the Jewish olive tree (Rom 11:11-24).
  47. The "man of sin" and the "son of perdition" (2 Thess 2:3).
  48. The destruction of the man of sin at the coming of the Lord (2 Thess 2:3-10).
  49. Receiving the love of the truth, and the consequences of not doing so (2 Thess 2:10-12).
  50. What was involved in the condescension of Christ coming into the world (Phil 2:5-8).
  51. What we are "come to" in Christ Jesus (Heb 12:22-24).
  52. +In showing the folly of seeking to be justified by Law, the allegory of Hagar and Sarah in explaining the distinction of the New Covenant (Gal 4:21-31).
  53. The circumcision of Christ and of the heart (Rom 2:29; Col 2:11-12).
  54. Newness of life and newness of spirit (Rom 6:4; 7:6).
  55. The church is the Temple of God (1 Cor 3:16-17).
  56. The church is built together for a habitation of God through the Spirit (Eph 2:22).
  57. A warning to take heed how one builds upon the foundation of Christ (1 Cor 3:10-11).
  58. Products of preaching referred to as wood, hay, stubble, gold, silver, and precious stones – some to be ultimately rejected, some to be received (1 Cor 3:12-16).
  59. Whoever defiles the temple of God with inferior converts will be destroyed (1 Cor 3:17).
  60. Delivering a professing Christian to Satan for the destruction of the flesh (1 Cor 5:5).
  61. The means of supporting the proclaimer of Word as being typified under the Law (1 Cor 9:11-14).
  62. The faithful receiving praise from God (1 Cor 4:5).
  63. The purpose for civil government (Rom 13:1-7).
  64. That the grace of God teaches the saved to reject ungodliness and worldly lusts, and to live soberly, righteously, and godly in this present world (Tit 2:11-12).
  65. That "the flesh," or the "old man" is to be crucified (Rom 6:6; Gal 2:20; 5:24; 6:14).
  66. That we can walk in the Spirit (Gal 5:16,25).
  67. That is we walk in the Spirit, we will not fulfill the lust of the flesh (Gal 5:16,25).
  68. That there is "no condemnation" to them which are in Christ Jesus (Rom 8:1).
  69. That we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ (Rom 5:1).
  70. All of the teaching on reconciliation to God (Rom 5:10; 11:15; 2 Cor 5:18-20; Eph 2:16; Col 1:20-21; Heb 2:17).
  71. With the exception of two brief references by Peter (1 Pet 1:2; 3:15), and one by Jude (Jude 1:1), all of the doctrine concerning sanctification comes from Paul (Rom 15:16; 1 Cor 1:2,30; 6:11; Eph 5:26; 1 Thess 4:3-4; 5:23; 2 Thess 2:13; 2 Tim 2:21; Heb 2:11; 10:10,14,29; 13:12).
  72. A comparison of the glory of the Old Covenant as compared with the glory of the New Covenant (2 Cor 3:7-11).
  73. That those who indulge the flesh will have no part in the inheritance reserved for those in Christ Jesus (1 Cor 6:9-10; Gal 5:19-21; Eph 5:5-7).
  74. On the subject of reprobacy (Rom 1:18; 2 Cor 13:5-6; 2 Tim 3:8; Tit 1:6).

The fact that the vast majority of Christendom is abysmally ignorant of nearly all of these subjects confirms that the ministry of Paul has been largely

**The fact that the vast majority of Christendom is abysmally ignorant of nearly all of these subjects confirms that the ministry of Paul has been largely rejected in our day.**

**rejected in our day.** These revelations were given to him to make them known, particularly to the church. Jesus did what He said He was going to do – show Paul many things. Paul did what he was supposed to do – make them known. Now it is the solemn responsibility of every believer to **not** be ignorant in these areas. To remain in a state of ignorance after such a phenomenal outpouring of Divine wisdom and insight is inexcusable! It is a betrayal of the heart and the low level of understanding.

**DELIVERING AND SENDING**

**“<sup>17</sup> Delivering thee from the people, and from the Gentiles, unto whom now I send thee.”**

The Lord Jesus pledged to protect Paul, so that nothing would ultimately interfere with carrying out the commission that will be delivered to him. This equates to the promise made to the twelve apostles: *“I, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world. Amen”* (Matt 28:20).

**DELIVERING THEE FROM THE PEOPLE**

*“Delivering thee from the people . . .”* Other versions read, *“to deliver you from the Jewish people,”* <sup>NKJV</sup> *“I will rescue you from your own people,”* <sup>NIV</sup> *“keep you safe from the people,”* <sup>BBE</sup> *“taking thee out from among the people,”* <sup>DARBY</sup> *“Delivering thee from this people,”* <sup>GENEVA</sup> *“protect you from . . . your own people,”* <sup>LIVING</sup> *“save you from the Jewish people,”* <sup>IE</sup> and *“continue to rescue you from the Jewish people.”* <sup>WILLIAMS</sup>

How many times the Lord did deliver Paul from the malicious intentions of the Jews! While he did endure five beatings from them (2 Cor 11:24), they could not carry out their determination to kill him. Here are some of those deliverances.

- ⇨ The Jews in Damascus (Acts 9:23-25).
- ⇨ The Jews in Jerusalem (Acts 9:29-30).
- ⇨ The Jews in Antioch of Pisidia (Acts 13:50-51).
- ⇨ The Jews in Iconium (Acts 14:5-6).
- ⇨ When he was stoned by the Jews in Lystra (Acts 14:19-20).
- ⇨ The Jews in Thessalonica (Acts 17:1-10).
- ⇨ The Jews from Thessalonica who sought Paul out in Berea (Acts 17:13-15).
- ⇨ The Jews in Corinth (Acts 18:8-10).
- ⇨ The Jews who charged Paul before Gallio (Acts 18:12-16).
- ⇨ The Jews who sought to kill him when he went into the Temple (Acts 21:18-31).
- ⇨ The Jews who charged him before the Roman captain (Acts 22:21-24; 23:10).
- ⇨ The Jews who sought to have Festus transport him from Caesarea to Jerusalem (Acts 25:3-4).

**DELIVERING THEE FROM THE GENTILES**

*“. . . and from the Gentiles, unto whom now I send thee.”*

There were also deliverances from Gentile idol-worshippers.

- ⇨ The Gentiles in Iconium who were stirred up by the Jews (Acts 14:5-6)
- ⇨ The Gentiles in Philippi (Acts 16:26-39).
- ⇨ The Gentiles in Ephesus (Acts 19:28-41).
- ⇨ The Gentiles soldiers who had determined to kill the prisoners on their boat during a storm (Acts 27:42-43).
- ⇨ From the beasts in Ephesus (1 Cor 15:32).
- ⇨ From three shipwrecks (2 Cor 11:25).
- ⇨ From perils among the heathen (2 Cor 11:28).

This is not to mention the times Paul was delivered from perils in waters, among robbers, in the wilderness, in the sea, and among false brethren (2 Cor 11:26-27).

Behold the faithfulness of the Lord Jesus in the preservation of Paul! **Nothing was able to separate him from the love God, thwart his ministry, or pluck him from the hand of Jesus.** Paul’s faith sustained him as he was being *“kept by the power of God”* (1 Pet 1: 5). He put on the whole armor of God, and thus survived assault after assault. He was delivered, was being delivered, and would be delivered.

**THE COMMISSION**

**“<sup>18</sup> To open their eyes, and to turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins, and inheritance among them which are sanctified by faith that is in me.”**

Here is a commission that is omitted in other accounts of Paul being apprehended by Jesus (Acts 9:6-18; 22:10-18). This does not mean the other accounts are in any way deficient. Further, this was a unique opportunity to bear witness to the things he had been given to see. Before him stands a gathering of dignitaries that are not seeking his life. He will share with them some things he was not able to share with others. There are people whose condition robs them of the right to the *“unsearchable riches of Christ.”*



**TO OPEN THEIR EYES**

*“To open their eyes . . .”* Other versions read, *“to make their eyes open,”* <sup>BBE</sup> *“you will open their eyes,”* <sup>GWN</sup> *“you are to*

*open their eyes,”* <sup>CEV</sup> *“to open the eyes of the outsiders so they can see the difference,”* <sup>MESSAGE</sup> and *“to up-open viewers.”* <sup>INTERLINEAR</sup>

It ought to be apparent that everyone does not have such a commission – but Paul did. He was granted a dispensation of grace that enabled him to cause people to have spiritual comprehension – to see the sense of redemption and take hold of the message of salvation by grace through faith.

Paul did not do this by laying hands upon people and thus enabling them to see the things of God. He did it by preaching and teaching what He had seen and heard. **The truth of the matter is that if people will hear what Paul declares, and receive it as from God, their eyes will be opened.** This is what

took place among the Thessalonians. *“For this cause also thank we God without ceasing, because, when ye received the word of God which ye heard of us, ye received it not as the word of men, but as it is in truth, the word of God, which effectually worketh also in you that believe”* (1 Thess 2:13).

If, however, the teaching of Paul is neglected or rejected, there is no other way to arrive at the truth he was uniquely given to see. He was appointed by Jesus to open the eyes of those willingly and eagerly subjected to his word.

To clarify once again, the opening of men’s eyes has to do with comprehension, discernment, and understanding. It is bringing men to a point where they are *“able to comprehend with all saints what is the breadth, and length, and depth, and height; And to know the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge, that ye might be filled with all the fulness of God”* (Eph 3:18-19). It is a condition where the *“eyes of”* their *“understanding”* are opened (Eph 1:18), and they are *“filled with the knowledge of His will in all wisdom and spiritual understanding”* (Col 1:9).

*glory of the Lord”* (2 Cor 3:18). As stated in Second Corinthians 3:18, this is the means by which we *“are constantly being transfigured into His very own image in ever increasing splendor and from one degree of glory to another; [for this comes] from the Lord [Who is] the Spirit.”*<sup>AMPLIFIED</sup>

This change is facilitated by the opening of the eyes of our understanding, when what God has and is doing through Jesus Christ is seen with holy clarity. **Until this understanding is obtained, no measurable change into the likeness of Christ can occur.**

The lack of this understanding is cause for great concern. To be *“without understanding”* is a mark of the heathen (Rom 1:31), and is a sure mark of being lost (Eph 4:18). The “church world” is quite content for this condition to exist, but heaven is not! An ignorant and untaught church is a contradiction of the salvation of God. To a significant degree, this condition in the Gentile church exists because what was revealed to Paul is not being made known to the people. I do not know how this can this conclusion can be successfully

forms of human discipline? The situation may be glossed by cursory observations. **However, the truth of the matter is that masses of professing Christians have not been turned from the power of Satan under God.** They are enslaved by gross appetites, and are being taken captive by Satan *“at his will”* (2 Tim 2:26).

Why should such a condition continue when Jesus has appointed an effective minister with a message that can turn men from the power of Satan unto God, and from being dominated by Satan to being willingly governed by God? Why is Paul’s teaching being neglected, and sometimes rejected by the very people to whom he has been sent – the Gentiles?

Just as with Corinth and Galatia, *“another gospel”* has been preached – another message (2 Cor 11:4; Gal 1:6-7). However, this corrupt message has no power. It is a *“form of godliness that denies,”* or rejects, *“the power”* (2 Tim 3:5). This is precisely why professing Christians remain enslaved to Satan and sin. **Simply put, Jesus does not work through these watered down worldly-wise messages!** Any message that, when received, does not produce freedom from the guilt and power of sin, and liberty from the dominion of Satan, is a spurious message. Such a word has come from the devil himself, and is calculated to keep men in bondage to him.

Men may banter on and on about which message is true, and which church is valid. But the fruit tells the whole story, and blessed is the person who can see it.

**All of this has particularly to do with discerning what God has and is doing through the Lord Jesus Christ. This is not a kind of novel knowledge, but what is required to sustain the good fight of faith, and finish the race that is set before us.**

All of this has particularly to do with discerning what God has and is doing through the Lord Jesus Christ. This is not a kind of novel knowledge, but what is required to sustain the good fight of faith, and finish the race that is set before us.

**TO TURN THEM FROM DARKNESS TO LIGHT**

*“ . . . and to turn them from darkness to light . . .”* Other versions read, *“so that they may turn from darkness to light,”*<sup>NASB</sup> and *“that they may turn from darkness to light.”*<sup>AMPLIFIED</sup>

This is the reason for opening the eyes of the people – that they may turn from darkness to light. This *“light”* is elsewhere described as *“the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ”* (2 Cor 4:6), and *“beholding as in a glass [mirror] the*

contradicted.

**TO TURN THEM FROM THE POWER OF SATAN UNTO GOD**

*“ . . . and from the power of Satan unto God . . .”* Other versions read, *“from the dominion of Satan to God,”*<sup>NASB</sup> *“from the power of the adversary to God,”*<sup>CJB</sup> *“from Satan’s control to God’s,”*<sup>GWN</sup> *“from the authority of the adversary unto God,”*<sup>YLT</sup> *“live in the light of God instead of in Satan’s darkness,”*<sup>LIVING</sup> *“from the obedience to Satan to God,”*<sup>WEYMOUTH</sup> and *“see the difference between Satan and God.”*<sup>MESSAGE</sup>

Why does sin appear to be flourishing in the church? Why are families falling apart, and people remaining in bondage to all manner of sin? What is the cause of this? Why is there such a seeming need for counselors, recovery programs, and various

**THAT THEY MAY RECEIVE FORGIVENESS OF SINS**

*“ . . . that they may receive forgiveness of sins . . .”* Other versions read, *“receive remission of sins,”*<sup>ASV</sup> *“receive, through faith in me, forgiveness of their sins,”*<sup>NJB</sup> *“receive forgiveness for their sins,”*<sup>LIVING</sup> *“have their sins forgiven,”*<sup>WILLIAMS</sup> and *“receive forgiveness and release from their sins.”*<sup>AMPLIFIED</sup>

**Observe, the forgiveness of sins follows the opening of the eyes, being turned from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God!** This forgiveness cannot be obtained independently of the opening and turning of reference.

What does it mean to receive the forgiveness of sins? Perhaps you have heard the psycho-babel that says, “I know God has

forgiven me, but I have not been able to forgive myself." And what kind of miserable work is that? What inspired man ever uttered or wrote such an absurdity?

The forgiveness of sins involves the conscience of the forgiven one. In fact, in baptism, which is declared to be "for the remission of sins" (Acts 2:38), and the washing away of sins (Acts 22:16), there is an appeal to God for a "good conscience." Peter wrote that "baptism doth also now save us (not the putting away of the filth of the flesh, but the answer of a good conscience toward God,) by the resurrection of Jesus Christ" (1 Pet 3:21). The Amplified Bible reads, "by [providing you with] the answer of a good and clear conscience (inward cleanness and peace) before God." Other versions read, "an appeal to God for a good conscience,"<sup>NASB</sup> "An appeal to God for a clear conscience,"<sup>RSV</sup> "the interrogation of a good conscience toward God,"<sup>ASV</sup> and "a confident demanding which a good conscience maketh to God."<sup>GENEVA</sup>

Peter also points out the difference between a mere ceremonial washing, as under the Law, and the effective cleansing of the conscience: "not the putting away of the filth of the flesh." Several of the versions butcher this text, like unlearned novices hacking away at the sacred text. "The removal of dirt from the flesh,"<sup>NASB</sup> "the removal of dirt from the body,"<sup>NIV</sup> "the removing of outward body filth [bathing],"<sup>AMPLIFIED</sup> and "the removing of outward body filth [bathing]."<sup>BBE</sup>

Peter is saying that baptism bears no similarity to the ceremonial washings that took place under the Law (Heb 9:10). Those only had to do with qualifying a person to walk among the people of God. They had nothing whatsoever to do with the purging, or cleansing, of the conscience. Thus it is written of the highest and most holy day of atonement, "Which was a figure for the time then present, in which were offered both gifts and sacrifices, that could not make him that did the service perfect, as pertaining to the conscience" (Heb 9:9). And again, "For the law having a shadow of good things to come, and not the very image of the things, can never with those sacrifices which they offered year by year continually make the comers thereunto perfect. For then would they not have ceased to be offered? because that the worshippers once purged should have had no more conscience of sins" (Heb 10:1-2). Thus, the ancient sacrifices stirred to the "remembrance of sin" (Heb 10:3).

By way of comparison, the forgiveness of sins has to do with remembering that sins have been forgiven, and that the person has been "justified from all things" (Acts 13:39). This has to do with knowing there "is therefore now no condemnation" (Rom 8:1). The person who labors under the condemning goad of the conscience has not received the forgiveness of reference – even though they may have "obeyed the Gospel" (Rom 10:16). Thus believers are told, "For if the blood of bulls and of goats, and the ashes of an heifer sprinkling the unclean, sanctifieth to the purifying of the flesh: How much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself without spot to God, purge your conscience from dead works to serve the living God?" (Heb 9:14).

In my understanding, everyone that is baptized into Christ begins newness of life with this cleansed conscience. They begin with the "rejoicing of the hope" that is to be kept "firm unto the end" (Heb 3:6). It is quite true that this can be more intuitive than cognitive. However, through the insightful teaching of Paul every believer can obtain a more firm grasp on the truth of forgiveness, and thus begin to "reign in life" (Rom 5:17). Oh, the blessedness of receiving the forgiveness of sins!

#### THAT THEY MAY RECEIVE INHERITANCE

". . . and inheritance . . ." Other versions read, "and a place among those,"<sup>NIV</sup> "and an inheritance,"<sup>ASV</sup> "a heritage,"<sup>BBE</sup> "a

inheritance,"<sup>LEH</sup> "that which is assigned by lot, portion, share, place."<sup>GINGRICH</sup>

The word can also mean the means by which the lot was determined – a pebble, stone, or some other object. But that is not the meaning of the word here. **The point is WHAT is inherited, not the means by which the determination is made.** It is the inheritance itself, not the people with whom it is shared. Those with whom the inheritance is shared are mentioned in the next clause.

Some versions place the emphasis upon the people receiving the inheritance rather than the inheritance itself. This makes the expression a redundancy. It is the business of translators to know the message they are translating.

The inheritance of the people of God is declared in several expressions.

- ⇨ They will "inherit the earth" (Matt 5:5).
- ⇨ "Everlasting life" is an inheritance (Matt 19:28).
- ⇨ "The Kingdom of God" is said to be the inheritance (1 Cor 6:10).
- ⇨ The inheritance is said to be "in the kingdom of Christ and of God" (Eph 5:5).
- ⇨ We are speaking of an "eternal

**There is no advantage whatsoever in an approach to spiritual life that excludes or minimizes the inheritance.**

share among those,"<sup>CSB</sup> "a lot among,"<sup>DOUAY</sup> "a portion with,"<sup>MRD</sup> "a share in the inheritance,"<sup>NJB</sup> "and God's inheritance,"<sup>LIVING</sup> "have a possession among,"<sup>WILLIAMS</sup> "a place and portion among,"<sup>AMPLIFIED</sup> "become a part of,"<sup>CEV</sup> and "inviting them into the company of."<sup>MESSAGE</sup>

As used in this text the word "inheritance" means, "what is obtained by lot, allotted portion,"<sup>THAYER</sup> "as what is assigned or allotted portion, share, possession,"<sup>FRIBERG</sup> "share, part, place," UBS "share, portion Dt 10,9; that which is assigned by lot, office, service Neh 10,35; plot of land 1 Ezz 4,56;

inheritance" (Heb 9:15).

- ⇨ It is also referred to as being "incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for you" (1 Pet 1:4).
- ⇨ Those who overcome are said to "inherit all things" (Rev 21:7).

**There is no advantage whatsoever in an approach to spiritual life that excludes or minimizes the inheritance.** For Paul, a necessary part of

his ministry was preparing people for their inheritance – their “*eternal inheritance.*” This involved acquainting them with the inheritance itself. Of course, to the carnally minded, this makes no sense at all, for they are living for “*this present evil world,*” and that is not the inheritance God has for His children.

**If men do not receive the inheritance, it really makes no difference what they may have done with their lives.** All of their effort has been wasted, and will all go up in flames. Those who know this will take great care in the manner in which they live, and what they choose to occupy their time and capture their attention.

**AMONG THEM WHICH ARE SANCTIFIED**

“ . . . among them which are sanctified by faith that is in Me.” Other versions read, “those who have been sanctified by faith,”<sup>NASB</sup> “those who are made holy by faith in Me,”<sup>BBE</sup> “those who have been separated for holiness by putting their trust in Me,”<sup>CJB</sup> “people who are made holy by believing in Me,”<sup>GWN</sup> “those who have been consecrated by faith in Me,”<sup>NAB</sup> “God’s people, who are set apart by faith in Me,”<sup>NLT</sup> “been sanctified, by faith that is toward Me,”<sup>YLT</sup> “all people everywhere whose sins are

*cleansed away, who are set apart by faith in Me,*”<sup>LIVING</sup> and “those who are consecrated and purified by faith in Me.”<sup>AMPLIFIED</sup>

**In redemption, the people with whom you are identified is a critical matter.** If they are not people whose faith has made them peculiarly God’s, then they are not the people with whom you are to be identified. The people who are promised the inheritance are to be your closest friends and acquaintance – the people of preference. These are the people with whom God is identified. They are His own inheritance (Eph 1:18). They are His “*household*” (Eph 2:19), the “*temple of God*” (1 Cor 3:16-17), “*God’s heritage*” (1 Pet 5:3), and His “*family*” (Eph 3:15). Their faith is what has set them apart from all other people – **not** their creed, **not** the denomination, and **not** their claim.

**Where people do not exhibit faith, there is no proof they are among God’s people.** In such a case, there is no evidence that they have been set apart for Him, that He has received them, or that their names are written in heaven.

The appointed inheritance will be divided to the children of God, with each one receiving his portion. That portion will be in

strict comportment with what they have been given, and how they handled their stewardship.

**THE IMPACT OF PROPER MOTIVATION**

The commission Jesus delivered to Paul became his motivation. He ministered with the intention of opening men’s eyes, turning them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan to God. **His aim was that his hearers would receive the forgiveness of sins here and now, and the inheritance then and there.** He sought to bring people into identity with the ones who have been, and are, sanctified by faith that is in Christ Jesus.

**THIS IS A TIME OF RARE LABORERS**

I will tell you that this kind of motivation is exceedingly rare in this day of apostasy. Scarcely will you be able to find a preacher or teacher who is devoted to such things. When and if you do find such a person, they are invariably at odds with the institution, and are spiritual renegades of sorts. This is because the professing church has been hijacked by charlatans, and is being exploited for the personal advantage of men who are eager for the wrong things, and an institution that serves the wrong purposes. This is a most grievous circumstance, yet is one with which we have to deal!

**I WAS NOT DISOBEDIENT**

“<sup>19</sup> Whereupon, O king Agrippa, I was not disobedient unto the heavenly vision:<sup>20</sup> But showed first unto them of Damascus, and at Jerusalem, and throughout all the coasts of Judaea, and then to the Gentiles, that they should repent and turn to God, and do works meet for repentance.”

Because Paul’s life was like an open book, what he now confesses can be readily substantiated. This it not a vain boast, nor is it an attempt to elevate what king Agrippa

thinks of Paul. **The apostle is rather showing that his life had not only been radically changed, but that he had been, and continued to, live consistently with his calling.** The value of such a testimony cannot be overstated.

**I WAS NOT DISOBEDIENT**

“Whereupon, O king Agrippa, I was not disobedient unto the heavenly vision . . .” Other versions read, “I did not prove disobedient to the heavenly vision,”<sup>NASB</sup> “I was not disobedient to the vision from heaven,”<sup>NIV</sup> “I did not go against the vision

from heaven,”<sup>BBE</sup> “I did not disobey the vision from heaven!”<sup>CJB</sup> “I was not incredulous to the heavenly vision,”<sup>DOUAY</sup> “I did not contumaciously [stubbornly] withstand the heavenly vision,”<sup>M RD</sup> “I could not disobey the heavenly vision,”<sup>NJB</sup> and “I obeyed that vision from heaven.”<sup>NLT</sup>

When the magnitude of the message delivered to Paul is seen, the significance of his obedience to it is greatly appreciated. While such obedience is unusual in the modern church, it ought not to be so.

**I SHOWED FIRST UNTO THEM OF DAMASCUS**

“ . . . But showed first unto them of Damascus . . . ” Other versions read, “declared first to those in Damascus,”<sup>NKJV</sup> “I preached to those in Damascus first,”<sup>CSB</sup> “I spread the message that I first told to the Jewish people in Damascus,”<sup>GWN</sup> “I started preaching, first to the people of Damascus,”

**The apostle is rather showing that his life had not only been radically changed, but that he had been, and continued to, live consistently with his calling. The value of such a testimony cannot be overstated.**

<sup>NJB</sup> and “made known openly first of all to those at Damascus.”<sup>AMPLIFIED</sup>

The account of Paul first preaching in Damascus is recorded in Acts 9:19-22. It followed his confrontation of Jesus on the road to Damascus, the word delivered to him by Ananias, and his baptism into Christ. “And straightway he preached Christ in the synagogues, that **He is the Son of God** . . . But Saul increased the more in strength, and confounded the Jews which dwelt at Damascus, **proving that this is very Christ**” (Acts 9:20,22).

**AND AT JERUSALEM AND THROUGHOUT ALL THE COASTS OF JUDEA**

“ . . . and at Jerusalem, and throughout all the coasts of Judaea . . .”

The account of Paul’s preaching in Jerusalem and all the coasts of Judea is recorded in Acts 9:28-29.

**AND THEN TO THE GENTILES**

“ . . . and then to the Gentiles . . .”

The record of Paul preaching to the Gentiles is recorded in Acts 13:6-7,46-48; 14:18-21; 16:6,9-12; 18:5-8,11,23; 19:21-22; 20:1-3.

**THAT THEY SHOULD REPENT**

“ . . . that they should repent and turn to God . . .” Other versions read, “that they should repent, turn to God . . .”  
NKJV/NASB/NIV/NASBA,AMPLIFIED

This is a kind of summation of what Paul preached, and is not intended to be a detailed account of everything he declared. This is an example of him being obedient to the heavenly vision. It is what is involved in opening men’s eyes in order that they might turn from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God, It also is involved in appropriating the forgiveness of

sins and an inheritance among those who are sanctified by faith.

**Repenting and turning to God is descriptive of a change** – a very real change. Repentance is something that God requires of all men, and He commands them to “repent” (Acts 17:30-31).

The word “repent” is an especially strong word. Lexically is it defined as follows: “to change one’s mind, i. e. to repent (to feel sorry that one has done this or that . . . to change one’s mind for the better, heartily to amend with abhorrence of one’s past . . . conduct worthy of a heart changed and abhorring sin,”<sup>THAYER</sup> “predominately of a religious and ethical change in the way one thinks about acts,”<sup>FRIBERG</sup> “have a change of heart, turn from one’s sins, change one’s ways,”<sup>UBS</sup> and “change one’s way of life as the result of a complete change of thought and attitude with regard to sin and righteousness - ‘to repent, to change one’s way, repentance.’”<sup>LOUW-NIDA</sup>

This is not a mere sorrow for transgressing the word and will of the Lord. It is rather the result of a godly sorrow. As it is written, “For godly sorrow **worketh repentance to salvation not to be repented of: but the sorrow of the world worketh death**” (2 Cor 7:10). **This is the repentance that leads salvation.** It causes the heart of the sinner to break, a condition from which he could never recover if God was not in the matter.

**This is not a goal for Christians, but is a requirement to become a Christian in the first place.** These days, this kind of message is not being heard as it should. It must be affirmed that men are to repent AND turn to God – turn to Him for grace, forgiveness, and direction. Until that is done, salvation cannot be experienced.

**AND DO WORKS MEET FOR REPENTANCE**

“ . . . and do works meet for repentance.” Other versions read, “and do

*works befitting repentance,*”<sup>NKJV</sup> “performing deeds appropriate to repentance,”<sup>NASB</sup> “and prove their repentance by their deeds,”<sup>NIV</sup> “and do deeds consistent with repentance,”<sup>NRSV</sup> and “and do works and live lives consistent with and worthy of their repentance.”<sup>AMPLIFIED</sup>

Here is a matter that is said even less frequently than the requirement to repent. John the Baptist first introduced this requirement. When he was confronted by some who sought to be baptized, he boldly said, “Bring forth therefore fruits meet for repentance,” or “fruit in keeping with repentance”<sup>NIV</sup> (Matt 3:8). This is the same thing Paul preached. What is the meaning of this requirement?

A person’s outward conduct has got to change before salvation can be realized. That change of conduct confirms the person has, in fact, repented. If the individual continues to transgress, allowing lust to express itself in conduct, he has not repented. If, for example, a person is a drunkard, that has to stop before any further benefit from God can be realized.

If it is countered that the person has no power to do such a thing, it must be seen that God will grant the power to those who extend the effort. A lame man will be able to pick up his bed and then commence walking. **There is no legitimate response to God that is not attended with Divine power.**

Even though it is true that God gives repentance, and that Jesus has been exalted to give repentance, it is the commandment to repent that sets the whole work into motion. **When that commandment is taken seriously, and a conscientious effort is expended to obey it, a very real repentance will be realized, and confirmed in deed.** Where this does not occur, a state of lostness exists.

**FOR THESE CAUSES**

**“<sup>21</sup> For these causes the Jews caught me in the temple, and went about to kill me.”**

Paul will now accentuate that his life was lived in view of the commission that had been delivered to him. He was wholly committed to fulfilling this mission.

**FOR THESE CAUSES**

“For these causes . . .” Other versions read, “for these reasons,”<sup>NKJV</sup> “for this reason,”<sup>NASB</sup> “that is why,”<sup>NIV</sup> “it was because of these things,”<sup>CJB</sup> “on account of these things,”<sup>DARBY</sup> and “for preaching this.”<sup>NLT</sup>

Embedded in Jesus’ words to Paul was the promise that He would deliver Paul from the Jews. That is included in the “causes” to which he refers. **Because of the promise of the glorified Christ, Paul had not feared the Jews, apparently even anticipating their opposition.**

When he was apprehended by the Jews, there is no record of him preaching at the time. Further, Paul is not suggesting that he was arrested for preaching, although efforts to do this frequently arose. He is rather accenting that as he was involved in carrying out the mission of the Lord, he had went to Jerusalem, where he gave an account of what he was preaching and how the Lord had worked through his ministry. His presence in the Temple resulted from counsel that was given him by James and the elders. At that time, he had been misrepresented by the Jews, and therefore took he measures to confirm to the Jews that they had heard false reports of him.

You may recall that when the Jews from Asia stirred up the people, they said, *“Men of Israel, help: This is the man, that teacheth all men every where against the people, and the law, and this place . . .”* (Acts 21:28). In Paul’s teaching

**Thus the conscientiousness of Paul has been established. The basis for that careful and deliberate action has been established as a word from the Lord Jesus Christ. Now the Jews are seen as opposing Jesus, not merely Paul.**

“everywhere,” he was carrying out the work Jesus gave him to do. Were it not for that, the Jews from Asia would have had nothing to say. Thus, Paul precisely represented the case. It was because he was fulfilling the word of Jesus that they came against him.

**THE JEWS CAUGHT ME AND WENT ABOUT TO KILL ME**

“. . . the Jews caught me in the temple, and went about to kill me.” Other versions read, “seized me in the Temple and

tried to kill me,”<sup>NKJV</sup> “some Jews seized me in the Temple and tried to put me to death,”<sup>NASB</sup> and “the Jews seized me in the temple [enclosure] and tried to do away with me.”<sup>AMPLIFIED</sup>

Thus the conscientiousness of Paul has been established. The basis for that careful and deliberate action has been established as a word from the Lord Jesus Christ. Now the Jews are seen as opposing Jesus, not merely Paul.

**HAVING OBTAINED HELP FROM GOD**

**“<sup>22</sup> Having therefore obtained help of God, I continue unto this day, witnessing both to small and great, saying none other things than those which the prophets and Moses did say should come.”**

Not content to let the matter rest there, Paul continues to draw attention to the Lord Jesus who apprehended and commissioned him to open men’s eyes, that they might turn from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan to God; that they might receive forgiveness of sins, and the inheritance that will be given to all who are sanctified by faith.

It will be challenging to see how he states the case. It will be at once apparent that he had not been captured by the traditions of men. **His answer will not blend with any form of sectarianism or heresy.** He will be able to summarize his activity in a God-honoring manner.

**HAVING THEREFORE OBTAINED HELP FROM GOD**

“Having therefore obtained help of God . . .” Other versions read, “I have had God’s help,”<sup>NIV</sup> “I have had help from God,”<sup>NRSV</sup> “and so, by God’s help,”<sup>BBE</sup> “I have obtained help that comes from God,”<sup>CSB</sup> “having therefore met with the help which is from God,”<sup>DARBY</sup> “being aided by the help of

God,”<sup>DOUAY</sup> “God has been helping me,”<sup>GWN</sup> “I have experienced help from God,”<sup>NET</sup> and “I have had the help which comes from God [as my ally].”<sup>AMPLIFIED</sup>

Notice what Paul does NOT say.

- ⇒ He DOES NOT SAY he had been rescued from the Jews’ intentions by captain Lysias.
- ⇒ He DOES NOT say that Gallio refused to hear the charges of the Jews against Paul.
- ⇒ He DOES NOT SAY that he alerted the centurion and Lysias that he was a Roman citizen.
- ⇒ He DOES NOT SAY that his nephew had overheard a plot by the Jews which led to him informing the captain.
- ⇒ He DOES NOT say that Lysias provided four hundred and seventy soldiers to escort him to Caesarea.
- ⇒ He DOES NOT say that Felix told the Jews he would wait for Lysias to come and inform him of the real circumstances.
- ⇒ He DOES NOT say that he told Festus that he appealed to Caesar, and that

Festus honored his request.

- ⇒ He DOES NOT say that when the Jews asked Festus to have Paul tried in Jerusalem, Festus refused to do so, choosing rather to hear the case in Caesarea.

All of the above things really did happen, but none of them were the real causes for Paul’s safety. **It was God who had helped him, moving men to rule in favor of Paul, and refuse to honor the request of the Jews.** Paul traces his safety to its ultimate source, for “safety is of the Lord” (Prov 21:31). Through the prophet Isaiah God promised, “I will help thee” (Isa 41:10,13,14; 44:2). Paul was able to see his circumstances through the lens of God’s promise.

**I CONTINUE TO THIS DAY**

“. . . I continue unto this day, witnessing both to small and great . . .” Other versions read, “to this day I stand,”<sup>NKJV</sup> “testifying both to small and great,”<sup>NASB</sup> and “so I stand here and testify to small and great alike.”<sup>NIV</sup>

Notice the constancy, diligence, and continuance that characterized Paul’s life. This is the common trait of faith, but not of the generation in which we live. It has become exceedingly rare to find a professing

believer that is steadfast in their commitment to the Lord. The so called *Christian life* is often characterized by vacillation, wavering, fluctuation, and variation. People blow hot and cold, go from dependability to a lack thereof, and are quite often unreliable. I could not begin to estimate the number of *ministries* that I have witnessed in their beginning and in their demise. There are people who once appeared strong, who are now noted for their weakness.

There is a religious system in place that makes erratic spiritual behavior appear common and usual. **But this is not the manner of the Kingdom.** It is said of Abraham, *“He staggered not at the promise of God through unbelief; but was strong in faith, giving glory to God”* (Rom 4:20). Believers are exhorted, *“Let us hold fast the profession of our faith without wavering; (for he is faithful that promised)”* (Heb 10:23). And again it is written, *“If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God, that giveth to all men liberally, and upbraideth not; and it shall be given him. But let him ask in faith, nothing wavering. For he that wavereth is like a wave of the sea driven with the wind and tossed”* (James 1:5-6). James traces instability to a double mind: *“A double minded man is unstable in all his ways”* (James 1:8). Peter says such poor souls bare more easily beguiled: *“Having eyes full of adultery, and that cannot cease from sin; beguiling unstable souls . . .”* (2 Pet 2:14). He also affirms that such souls tend to wrest the Scriptures: *“As also in all his epistles, speaking in them of these things; in which are some things hard to be understood, which they that are unlearned and unstable wrest, as they do also the other scriptures, unto their own destruction”* (2 Pet 3:16).

However, this was not the manner of Paul. There is a consistency to his ministry that continued from its beginning to the day he departed from this world. He took advantage of the grace that is available to all who are in Christ Jesus.

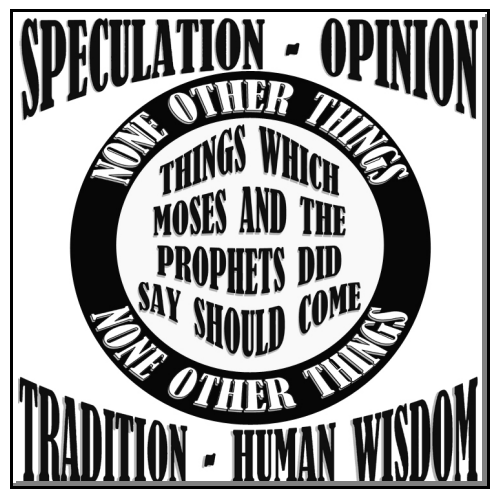
**Small and Great**

This expression can apply to age (young and old), social rank (servants and kings), or spiritual status (babes and mature). While Paul often addressed some traits unique to those categories, **his fundamental message was the same to all.** The Gospel of Christ addresses men at the point where commonality exists. Outside of Christ, it addresses men as sinners, those who are alienated, and who are strangers in

the courts of the Lord. In Christ, they are addressed as members of the household of faith, those who are reconciled to God, who have been washed, sanctified, and justified. **Those who tailor their preaching and teaching for certain fleshly distinctions have no precedent for such an approach in Scripture.** There is not a Gospel for the young, and another for the old; one for servants, and another for kings; one for man and another for woman; one for Jews and another for Gentiles.. **“Small and great” takes in everyone, regardless of fleshly distinctions.** Such a stance does not make for career development, special training, and a unique education. But such things have no validity at all in the Kingdom of God.

**SAYING NONE OTHER THINGS THAN THOSE WHICH THE PROPHETS AND MOSES DID SAY SHOULD COME**

*“ . . . saying none other things than those which the prophets and Moses did say should come.”* other versions read, *“saying no other things,”* <sup>NKJV</sup> *“stating nothing but,”* <sup>NASB</sup> *“I am saying nothing beyond,”* <sup>NIV</sup> *“I tell them only what,”* <sup>GWN</sup> *“Saying nothing different from,”* <sup>NAB</sup> *“saying nothing except,”* <sup>NET</sup> *“I teach nothing except,”* <sup>NLT</sup> *“saying nothing besides,”* <sup>YLT</sup> and *“asserting nothing beyond.”* <sup>AMPLIFIED</sup>



Right here we confront the heart of the message delivered by those commissioned by Jesus. Inspired men confined themselves to what Moses and the Prophets *“did say should come.”* This was in strict keeping with something God had revealed about what He purposed. *“Surely the Lord GOD will do nothing, but he revealeth his secret unto his servants the prophets”* (Amos 3:7). Other versions read, *“Surely the Sovereign LORD does nothing without revealing his plan to*

*his servants the prophets,”* <sup>NIV</sup> and *“Surely the Lord God will do nothing without revealing His secret to His servants the prophets.”* <sup>AMPLIFIED</sup> On the Isle of Patmos, John was told the same thing: *“But in the days of the voice of the seventh angel, when he shall begin to sound, the mystery of God should be finished, as He hath declared to his servants the prophets”* (Rev 10:7). This is, then, a Divine manner.

Later, when Paul was in Rome, he was given his own “hired house” in which he taught those who came to him. Concerning his message it is written, *“And when they had appointed him a day, there came many to him into his lodging; to whom he expounded and testified the kingdom of God, persuading them concerning Jesus, both out of the law of Moses, and out of the prophets, from morning till evening”* (Acts 28:23). When Jesus expounded His own Person to the two on the road to Emmaus, He did so **“beginning at Moses and all the prophets”** (Luke 24:27). When He appeared to His disciples, He said to them, *“These are the words which I spake unto you, while I was yet with you, that all things must be fulfilled, which were written in the law of Moses, and in the prophets, and in the psalms, concerning Me”* (Luke 24:44). When Philip heard Jesus, he found Nathanael and said to him, *“We have found him, of whom Moses in the law, and the prophets, did write . . .”* (John 1:45).

This Jesus is virtually unknown in our time. *“Another Jesus”* (2 Cor 11:4) has been created that reflects the preferences of those who walk after the flesh. In speaking of the Lord Jesus, there are numerous references to the fulfillment of prophecies given by Moses and the Prophets.

- ⇨ He was born of a virgin (Matt 1:22-23; Isa 7:L14).
- ⇨ He was called out of Egypt (Matt 2:15; Hos 11:1).
- ⇨ He was called a Nazarene (Matt 2:23; Isa 53:1-2).
- ⇨ He ministered in Galilee (Matt 4:14-16; Isa 9:1-2).
- ⇨ He carried men’s sicknesses (Matt 8:17; Isa 53:4).
- ⇨ Concerning His reaction to men, not breaking a bruised reed or quenching a smoking flax (Matt 12:16-21; Isa 42:3-4).

- ⇒ Speaking in parables (Matt 13:34-35; Psa 78:2).
- ⇒ His triumphal enter into Jerusalem (Matt 21:4-5; Zech 9:9).
- ⇒ The disciples forsaking Him when He was arrested (Matt 26:58; Zech 13:7).
- ⇒ The casting of lots for His garments when He was crucified (Matt 27:35; Psa 22:18).
- ⇒ The failure of those to whom He spoke to believe Him (John 12:37-41; Isa 53:1).

- ⇒ The people would hearken to Him, and whoever refused to do so would be destroyed from among the people (Gen Deut 18:18-19; Acts 3:22-23).
- ⇒ The people would be gathered to Him (Gen 49:10).
- ⇒ He would come to do God's will (Psa 40:6-10; Heb 10:5-12).
- ⇒ He would ascend into heaven and give gifts to men (Psa 68:18; Eph 4:8-11).
- ⇒ A Stone which the builders rejected (Psa 118:22,26; Acts 4:11; 1 Pet 2:4-8).

- lift up His voice in the streets (Isa 42:1-2; Matt 12:19-20).
- ⇒ Inhibiting influences would be overcome: mountains leveled and valleys raised (Isa 49:11; Lk 3:4-5).
- ⇒ He would make intercession for the people (Isa 53:12; Heb 7:25).
- ⇒ He would be called "*The Lord Our Righteousness*" (Jer 23:6; 1 Cor 1:30; 2 Cor 5:21).
- ⇒ The Kingdom and all dominion would be given to Him (Dan 7:13-14; Matt 28:18; 1 Pet 3:22).
- ⇒ He would make an end of sins, make reconciliation for iniquity, and bring in everlasting righteousness (Dan 9:24; Heb 9:26; Col 1:20; 2 Cor 5:21).
- ⇒ He would be born in Bethlehem (Micah 5:2).

**Paul did not preach a Jesus whom He personally defined. He did not tailor a special Jesus for the society in which he lived. He rather correlated the activities of the Lord Jesus with what Moses and the Prophets foretold of Him. This is how Jesus is to be known.**

- ⇒ Being hated without a cause (John 15:25; Psa 35:19).
- ⇒ The betrayal of Judas (John 17:12; Psa 109:6-19).
- ⇒ Jesus saying "*I thirst*" upon the cross (John 19:28; Psa 22:15; 60:21).

Particular aspects of the accomplishments and ministry of Jesus were detailed by Moses and the prophets. Here are a few of them.

- ⇒ The government would be placed upon His shoulder (Isa 9:6-7; 1 Cor 15:25; Eph 1:20-22).
- ⇒ A root springing out from Jesse (Isa 11:1-16; Rev 5:5; 22:16).
- ⇒ A foundation and a sure foundation (1 Pet 2:6-8).
- ⇒ A tender and good shepherd (Isa 40:11; John 10:11-16; Heb 13:20; 1 Pet 2:25).
- ⇒ When oppressed, He would not cry nor

**Paul did not preach a Jesus whom He personally defined.** He did not tailor a special Jesus for the society in which he lived. He rather correlated the activities of the Lord Jesus with what Moses and the Prophets foretold of Him. This is how Jesus is to be known. As the Servant of God (Isa 42:1), He is primarily carrying out the will of God, not the will of man. **It is a serious error in judgment to present a Jesus that is purported to be the resolution to problems peculiar to our generation.** Though this practice is quite common, it is one in which the power of God is not resident, and the will of God will not be accomplished. Jesus was not sent from God at the behest of humanity.

## A SUMMATION OF WHAT MOSES AND THE PROPHETS SAID SHOULD COME

***"<sup>23</sup> That Christ should suffer, and that he should be the first that should rise from the dead, and should show light unto the people, and to the Gentiles."***

Here is a marvelous and appropriate summation of what Moses and the prophets foretold of the Christ. This is also a summing up of what Paul preached.

**THAT CHRIST SHOULD SUFFER**  
*"That Christ should suffer . . ."*

Other versions read, "*would suffer,*" <sup>NKJV</sup> "*was to suffer,*" <sup>NASB</sup> "*must suffer,*" <sup>NRSV</sup> "*would go through pain,*" <sup>BBE</sup> "*would die,*" <sup>CJB</sup> "*is to suffer,*" <sup>YLT</sup> "*was to be a suffering Christ.*" <sup>IE</sup>

Precisely how is prophecy to be viewed? Is it a mere look into the future, then foretelling what is seen. Or, is prophecy the declaration of what God has determined to do? If the former is a proper definition, then there is a theoretic risk that it may not be fulfilled. Not only is vacillating humanity

involved, the crafty devil is also involved, together with principalities, powers, the rulers of darkness, and spiritual wickedness in high places. **Without some kind of Divine control, I do not know how a person can substantiate the sureness of prophecy.**

If, however, the latter is a proper definition – namely that prophecy is a declaration of what the Lord is going to do – the prophecies of a suffering Christ were a declaration of the will of God. That this is

true is substantiated by a number of declarations.

- ⇒ **AS IT WAS DETERMINED.** *“And truly the Son of man goeth, as it was determined: but woe unto that man by whom he is betrayed!”* (Luke 22:22).
- ⇒ **MUST BE ACCOMPLISHED.** *“For I say unto you, that this that is written **must yet be accomplished** in me, And he was reckoned among the transgressors: for the things concerning me have an end”* (Luke 22:37).
- ⇒ **MUST BE FULFILLED.** *“And he said unto them, These are the words which I spake unto you, while I was yet with you, that all things **must be fulfilled**, which were written in the law of Moses, and in the prophets, and in the psalms, concerning Me. Then opened He their understanding, that they might understand the scriptures, And said unto them, Thus it is written, and thus it behoved Christ to suffer, and to rise from the dead the third day”* (Luke 24:44-46).
- ⇒ **COMMANDED TO LAY DOWN HIS LIFE.** *“Therefore doth My Father love Me, because I lay down My life, that I might take it again. No man taketh it from me, but I lay it down of Myself. I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again. **This commandment have I received of My Father**”* (John 10:17-18).
- ⇒ **DELIVERED BY THE DETERMINATE COUNSEL AND FOREKNOWLEDGE OF GOD.** *“Him, being delivered by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God, ye have taken, and by wicked hands have crucified and slain”* (Acts 2:23).
- ⇒ **CHRIST SHOULD SUFFER.** *“But those things, which God before had showed by the mouth of all his prophets, that Christ should suffer, **He hath so fulfilled**”* (Acts 3:18).
- ⇒ **GOD’S COUNSEL DETERMINED BEFORE TO BE DONE.** *“For of a truth against Thy Holy Child Jesus, whom Thou hast anointed, both Herod, and Pontius Pilate, with the Gentiles, and the people of Israel, were gathered together, for to do **whatsoever Thy hand and Thy counsel determined before to be done**”* (Acts 4:28).
- ⇒ **MUST NEEDS HAVE SUFFERED.** *“Opening*

*and alleging, that Christ **must needs have suffered**, and risen again from the dead; and that this Jesus, whom I preach unto you, is Christ”* (Acts 17:3).

- ⇒ **FOR THE SUFFERING OF DEATH.** *“But we see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels **for the suffering of death**, crowned with glory and honor; that He by the grace of God should taste death for every man”* (Heb 2:9).
- ⇒ **CAME TO DO GOD’S WILL.** *“Then said I, Lo, I come (in the volume of the book it is written of Me,) to do Thy will, O God. Above when He said, Sacrifice and offering and burnt offerings and offering for sin Thou wouldest not, neither hadst pleasure therein; which are offered by the law; Then said He, Lo, **I come to do Thy will, O God. He taketh away the first, that He may establish the second. By the which will we are sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all**”* (Heb 10:7-10).
- ⇒ **TESTIFIED BEFOREHAND.** *“Searching what, or what manner of time the Spirit of Christ which was in them did signify, when it **testified beforehand** the sufferings of Christ, and the glory that should follow”* (1 Pet 1:11).
- ⇒ **FOREORDAINED BEFORE THE FOUNDATION OF THE WORLD.** *“Who verily was **foreordained before the foundation of the world**, but was manifest in these last times for you”* (1 Pet 1:20).
- ⇒ **+SLAIN FROM THE FOUNDATION OF THE**

Divine determination is comprehended. If such a thing is true, why did Jesus and His messengers say so much about the matter? Certainly it was not because it was really of no consequence.

**There is a frothy view of the sufferings and death of Jesus that presents Him more as a martyr than a Savior.** His profound love for mankind is seen as the compelling factor in Christ’s submission to suffering and death. Jesus, however, presented it as a matter of obeying the commandment of the Father, and doing the will of God.

It is wrong to view the sufferings and death of the Lord Jesus as something men did, only to have God convert it all to something good. Were it not for the will of God in the matter, no man could have been able to beat Jesus, spit in His face, or crucify Him. He said, *“No man taketh is [His life] from Me”* (John 10:18).

Therefore Paul preached that *“Christ **should** suffer.”* Moses and the prophets declared it before hand, not simply as a matter that would happen, but as something God had determined. All of this was done in order to satisfy the justice of God, which cannot continue to *“wink”* at sin. Sin had to be judged in order for God to be righteous in justifying sinners (Rom 3:26).

It is a terrible display of gross ignorance that this revealed perspective is heard so little in our time. **As long as that circumstance continues, men will keep on developing erroneous concepts of God, of Christ, and the great salvation that is**

**Some might imagine that it makes no difference whether or not the matter of Divine determination is comprehended. If such a thing is true, why did Jesus and His messengers say so much about the matter? Certainly it was not because it was really of no consequence.**

**WORLD.** *“And all that dwell upon the earth shall worship him, whose names are not written in the book of life of **the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world**”* (Rev 13:8).

**Does This Make Any Difference**

Some might imagine that it makes no difference whether or not the matter of

offered to men through Jesus Christ. I do not believe it is possible to fully state the magnitude of the distortion of the Gospel.

**THAT CHRIST SHOULD BE THE FIRST TO RISE FROM THE DEAD**

*“... and that he should be the first that should rise from the dead ...”* Other versions read, *“the first to rise from the*

dead,"<sup>NIV</sup> "the first to come back from the dead,"<sup>BBE</sup> "become the first fruits of the resurrection from the dead."<sup>MRD</sup>

The resurrection of Christ is a key point in apostolic doctrine (Acts 2:24,31-32; 3:15; 4:10,33; 5:30-31; 10:40-41; 13:30-34; 17:3,31; Rom 1:4; 4:24,25; 5:10; 6:4-5,9-11; 10:9; ; 1 Cor 6:14; 15:3-8,12-23;; 2 Cor 4:10-11,14; 5:15; Gal 1:1; Eph 1:20; 3:10; 3:10; 2:21; 1 Thess 1:10; 4:14; 2 Tim 2:8; Heb 13:20; 1 Pet 1:3,21; 3:18,21; Rev 1:5,18).

The resurrected Christ is the One with whom we now have to do.

- ⇒ It is His resurrected "life" that saves us (Rom 5:10).
- ⇒ It is the "power of His resurrection" that is to be experienced now (Phil 3:10).
- ⇒ The power that is "toward us" is the very power that raised Jesus from the dead (Eph 1:19-20).
- ⇒ He is the "firstborn from the dead that in all things He might have the preeminence" (Col 1:18).
- ⇒ In being raised from the dead, Jesus

the nature of the times in which we live. The Christ that is being preached is too often not the One concerning which Moses and the Prophets testified.

**THAT CHRIST SHOULD SHOW LIGHT UNTO THE PEOPLE**

"... and should show light unto the people. . . ." Other versions read, "proclaim light to the Jewish people,"<sup>NKJV</sup> "proclaim light to His own people,"<sup>NIV</sup> "give light to the people,"<sup>BBE</sup> "should announce light . . . to the people,"<sup>DARBY</sup> "spread light to Jewish . . . people,"<sup>GWN</sup> "announce God's light to Jew,"<sup>NLT</sup> "bring light to Jews,"<sup>LIVING</sup> "proclaim a message of light . . . to the Jewish people,"<sup>IE</sup> "announce the light of salvation to the Jews,"<sup>GNB</sup> and "He would be the first rays of God's daylight shining on people far and near."<sup>MESSAGE</sup>

When Jesus began His ministry in Judea, it is written, "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" (Matt 4:16). This, Matthew records, fulfilled the prophecy of Isaiah (Isa 9:1-2). Zechariah, father of John the Baptist said of Jesus' coming into the world, "Through the tender mercy of our God; whereby the dayspring from on high hath visited us, To give light to them that sit in

Jews, have not been written off as some allege. God still has a covenant with them. As it is written, "And so all Israel shall be saved: as it is written, There shall come out of Sion the Deliverer, and shall turn away ungodliness from Jacob: for this is my covenant unto them, when I shall take away their sins" (Rom 11:26-27). Incidentally, the term "Jacob" is nowhere applied to the body of Christ as a whole – and neither is "Israel." Both of those terms are derived from Jacob, grandson to Abraham. I do not believe the church is ever associated directly with Jacob. Those who believe on Christ are referred to as "the children of Abraham" (Gal 3:7). However, they are never called the children of "Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob," or "the children of Isaac," or "the children of Jacob." Also, those who teach that a special gospel will be preached to the Jews that is distinct from the one preached to the Gentiles, have attempted to impose their theology upon the Scriptures. However, they are not able to do it. The light Jesus dispensed is the same for both the Jews and the Gentiles, as this text unquestionably affirms.

- ⇒ **RISEN CHRIST SENT TO BLESS ISRAEL FIRST.** "Unto you first God, having raised up His Son Jesus, sent him to bless you, in turning away every one of you from his iniquities" (Acts 3:26).

- ⇒ **IT WAS NECESSARY TO FIRST DECLARE THE GOSPEL TO THE JEWS.** "Then Paul and Barnabas waxed bold, and said, It was necessary that the word of God should first have been spoken to you: but seeing ye put it from you, and judge yourselves unworthy of everlasting life, lo, we turn to the Gentiles" (Acts 13:46).

**THAT CHRIST SHOULD SHOW LIGHT UNTO THE GENTILES**

"... and should show light . . . to the Gentiles." Other versions read, "and to the nations,"<sup>DARBY</sup> "and non-Jewish people,"<sup>GWN</sup> "and Gentiles alike,"<sup>NLT</sup> "and to the heathen,"<sup>WILLIAMS</sup> and "godless."<sup>MESSAGE</sup>

Both Moses and the Prophets spoke of the Gentiles being blessed by God. Moses alluded to this circumstance, but the Prophets wrote of it in detail.

- ⇒ **GOD WOULD PROVOKE THE JEWS.** Through Moses, God spoke of provoking the Jews to jealousy by giving attention to those who were not a people. "They have moved me to jealousy with that which is not God; they have provoked me to anger with their vanities: and I will

**The fact that so little is being said these days concerning the resurrection of Jesus Christ defines the nature of the times in which we live. The Christ that is being preached is too often not the One concerning which Moses and the Prophets testified.**

"delivered us from the wrath to come" (1 Thess 1:10).

- ⇒ God has begotten us to a living hope "by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead" (1 Pet 1:3).
- ⇒ Jesus was raised from the dead "that your faith and hope might be in God" (1 Pet 1:21).
- ⇒ Baptism "saves us . . . by the resurrection of Jesus Christ" (1 Pet 3:21).

**The fact that so little is being said these days concerning the resurrection of Jesus Christ defines**

darkness and in the shadow of death, to guide our feet into the way of peace" (Luke 1:78-79). When aged Simeon saw the infant Christ he referred to Him as "the glory of Thy people Israel" (Lk 2:32).

That marvelous light was but an introduction to the light that was shed forth after Jesus was raised from the dead and returned to heaven. Now the light of the Gospel is preached "to the Jew first" (Rom 1:16). And why so? Because "salvation is of the Jews" (John 4:22). They were prepared for it, being tutored by the Prophets concerning the coming Savior, and the nature of His exalted ministry.

This necessarily infers that the

move them to jealousy with those which are not a people; I will provoke them to anger with a foolish nation" (Deu 32:21). Paul cited this prophecy when speaking of the preaching of the Gospel. "But I say, Did not Israel know? First Moses saith, I will provoke you to jealousy by them that are no people, and by a foolish nation I will anger you" (Rom 10:19).

⇒ **THE HEATHEN PROMISED TO THE MESSIAH.** "Ask of Me, and I shall give Thee the heathen for Thine inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for Thy possession" (Psa 2:8).

⇒ **ALL THE ENDS OF THE EARTH.** "All the ends of the world shall remember and turn unto the LORD: and all the kindreds of the nations shall worship before Thee" (Psa 22:27).

⇒ **THE GENTILES WOULD SEEK.** "And in that day there shall be a root of Jesse, which shall stand for an ensign of the people; to it shall the Gentiles seek: and his rest shall be glorious" (Isa 11:10).

⇒ **GIVEN FOR A COVENANT TO THE GENTILES.** "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" (Isa 42:6).

⇒ **A LIGHT TO THE GENTILES.** "And he said, It is a light thing that thou shouldst be my servant to raise up the tribes of Jacob, and to restore the preserved of Israel: I will also give thee for a light to the Gentiles, that thou mayest be my salvation unto the end of the earth" (Isa 49:6).

⇒ **GOD'S HAND LIFTED UP TO THE GENTILES.** "Thus saith the Lord GOD, Behold, I will lift up Mine hand to the Gentiles, and set up My standard to the people: and they shall bring thy sons in their arms, and thy daughters shall be carried upon their shoulders" (Isa 49:22).

⇒ **ISRAEL TOO SMALL TO BE THE ONLY ONES.** "Indeed He says, 'It is too small a thing that You should be My Servant To raise up the tribes of Jacob, And to restore the preserved ones of Israel; I will also give You as a light to the Gentiles, That You should be My salvation to the ends of the earth'" (Isa 49:6).

The risen Christ is the Administrator of a Kingdom of light. Ignorance has no place where Jesus is ministering. Now there is:

⇒ **ILLUMINATION** (Heb 10:32).

⇒ **ENLIGHTENMENT** (Eph 1:18; Heb 6:4).

⇒ **COMPREHENSION** (Eph 3:18).

⇒ **DISCERNMENT** (1 Cor 2:14; 1 Cor 11:29; 12:10; Heb 5:14).

⇒ **UNDERSTANDING** (Matt 13:23; Acts 8:30; Rom 15:21; 1 Cor 12:3; 14:15,19,20; Eph 1:18; 3:4; 5:17; Col 1:9; 2:22; Tim 2:7; Heb 11:3; 1 John 5:20).

⇒ **KNOWLEDGE** (Acts 2:14,36; 4:10; 13:38; Rom 3:19; 5:3; 6:3,6,9,16; 7:18; 8:22,28; 9:23; 13:11; 15:14; 1 Cor 2:12; 1 Cor 6:2-3,9; 8:1; 14:34; 15:58; 2 Cor 4:6; 5:1; 8:9; Gal 2:16; 3:7; 4:9; Eph 1:9,17,18;

3:3-5,19; 4:13; 5:5; 6:8-9,19; Phil 1:9; 3:8,10; Col 1:9-10,27; 3:10,24; 4:6; 1 Thess 1:4; 4:4; 1 Tim 1:8-9; 3:15; 4:3; Heb 10:30,34; James 4:4; 5:20; 1 Pet 1:18; 5:9; 2 Pet 1:2,3,5,20,20; 3:3,17,18; 1 John 2:3-5,13,14,18,20,21,29; 3:2,5,14,15,19,24; 4:2,6,7,13,16; 5:2,13,15,18-20; 2 John 1:1).

⇒ **SEEING** (Rom 3:30; 2 Cor 3:12; 4:1; Col 3:9; 2 Thess 1:6; Heb 4:6,14; 6:6; 7:25; 12:1; 1 Pet 1:22; 3:11,14,17).

**An unilluminated people who profess to be Christian are a living contradiction.** Among professed believers, a continued state of ignorance contradicts the very nature of salvation. To continue walking in darkness when the greatest light is shining betrays a hard heart and a rebellious spirit. **Although this condition is common among the churches of our day. It is not at all common in heaven.** In Christ Jesus, and because of justification and reconciliation, God has placed the truth within the reach of every humble and contrite spirit. **The way has been cleared to the Divine classroom, and the heavenly Teacher stands ready to teach whoever will come to Him.** Jesus explained the failure of men to take advantage of this light. "And this is the condemnation, that light is come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil. For every one that doeth evil hateth the light, neither cometh to the light, lest his deeds should be reproved. But he that doeth truth cometh to the light, that his deeds may be made manifest, that they are wrought in God" (John 3:19-21).

That is the real situation, contrary claims notwithstanding.

## CONCLUSION

The wisdom and thoroughness with which Paul gave his defense is most arresting. Paul introduced his defense by saying, "I shall answer for myself this day before thee touching all the things whereof I am accused of the Jews" (Acts 26:2). Yet, in all of his defense, he spends no extensive time either mentioning or directly contradicting the charges brought against him. **Instead, he introduces a body of evidence that contradicts what was said of him.** In so doing he is providing a

context in which the charges will be seen as incredulous and absurd. Ponder the remarkable scope of Paul's defense.

1. His manner of life was known publically since he was young (26:4).
2. His manner of life was known to all of the Jews, who knew him from the beginning (26:5a).
3. He lived as a Pharisee, the strictest sect of the Jewish religion (26:5b).
4. He is being judged for the hope of the

promise that was made to the Jewish fathers: Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob (26:6).

5. All faithful Jews – the twelve tribes – lived with this hope. It was not a strange thing among them (26:7a).
6. It was this hope that caused the Jews to make their accusation against Paul – a hope that was being lived out with consistency and zeal (26:7b).
7. He asks Agrippa and those with him why they would think it incredible that

- |  |   |  |
|--|---|--|
| <p>God would raise the dead (26:8).</p> <p>8. In his prior life, he was convinced he ought to do many things contrary to the name of Jesus (26:9).</p> <p>9. He lived consistent with this thought shutting many saints in prison (26:10a).</p> <p>10. He did not go about this opposition in a disorderly way, or in any kind of opposition to Jewish authorities. He rather obtained authority from the chief priests to do so (26:10b).</p> <p>11. When these saints were put to death for their allegiance to Christ, Paul gave his voice against them (26:10c).</p> <p>12. Pursuing his conviction, he punished believers in the synagogues, pressuring them blaspheme (26:11a).</p> <p>13. He even launched an initiative against the believers in cities outside of his own country (26:11b).</p> <p>14. Jesus Himself accosted Paul as he went to Damascus with authority and commission from the chief priests (26:12).</p> <p>15. At midday, when the sun was at its highest, a light from heaven, brighter than the sun, focused on him, also shining around those who were with him (26:13).</p> <p>16. Both Paul and those with him were struck to the ground by something and someone that was superior to them (26:14a).</p> <p>17. He heard a voice speaking to him in the Hebrew tongue asking why he was persecuting the Speaker (26:14b).</p> <p>18. With penetrating insight, the voice said it was difficulty for him to kick against the goads of his conscience (26:14c).</p> <p>19. He asked who was speaking to him (26:15a).</p> <p>20. The voice replied that He was Jesus whom he was persecuting (26:15b).</p> <p>21. Jesus told him to get up on his feet (26:16a).</p> <p>22. Jesus told him why He had appeared to him (26:16b).</p> | <p>23. Jesus had appeared to him to make him a minister and a witness of what he had seen (26:16c).</p> <p>24. Jesus was also making him a minister and a witness to the things he would show him in the future (26:16d).</p> <p>25. Jesus told him He would deliver him from the Jews (26:17a).</p> <p>26. Jesus told him he would deliver him from the Gentiles, to whom, He would now send him (26:17b).</p> <p>27. Jesus appointed him to open men's eyes (26:18a).</p> <p>28. Jesus appointed him to turn men from darkness to light (16:18b).</p> <p>29. Jesus appointed him to turn men from the power of Satan unto God (26:18c).</p> <p>30. Jesus appointed him to turn men so they could receive forgiveness of sins (26:18d).</p> <p>31. Jesus appointed him to turn men so they could receive an inheritance among those who are sanctified by faith (26:18e).</p> <p>32. He was not disobedient to the heavenly vision (26:19).</p> <p>33. First he showed these things to the Jews in Damascus (26:20a).</p> <p>34. Then he showed them at Jerusalem (26:20b).</p> <p>35. Then he showed them throughout the coasts of Judea (26:20c).</p> <p>36. They he showed them to the Gentiles (26:20d).</p> <p>37. He declared that they should repent and turn to God (26:20e).</p> <p>38. He declared that they should do works appropriate for repentance (26:20f).</p> <p>39. It is for these causes, while he was engaged in fulfilling the mandate of Jesus, that the Jews caught him in the Temple and sought to kill him (26:21).</p> <p>40. He had obtained help from God (26:22a).</p> <p>41. Until that very day he had continued witnessing to both small and great</p> | <p>(26:22b).</p> <p>42. He said nothing except what the Prophets and Moses said should come (26:22c).</p> <p>43. He declared that Christ had to suffer (26:23a).</p> <p>44. He declared that Christ had to be the first to rise from the dead (26:23b).</p> <p>45. He declared that Christ had to show light to the Jews (26:23c).</p> <p>46. He declared that Christ had to show light to the Gentiles (26:23d).</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Of these forty-six points, note the following.</p> <p>⇨ Four refer to his strict Jewish upbringing.</p> <p>⇨ Three refer to the "hope" in the promises of God.</p> <p>⇨ Two refer to the resurrection of the dead.</p> <p>⇨ One refers to his persuasion that he should oppose Jesus.</p> <p>⇨ Six refer to his zealous initiative against believers in Christ.</p> <p>⇨ Eighteen refer to Jesus apprehending and commissioning him.</p> <p>⇨ One refers to the difficulty he had kicking against a goading conscience.</p> <p>⇨ Twenty-one directly refer to Jesus Christ.</p> <p>⇨ Seven refer to his faithfulness in carrying out the commission of Jesus.</p> <p>⇨ One refers to the Jews apprehending him while he was carrying out Jesus' commission.</p> <p>⇨ Two refer to the fact that God helped him.</p> <p>⇨ One refers to the totality of the people to whom he witnessed.</p> <p>⇨ Five refer to the summation of what the Prophets and Moses said about Jesus.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">That is an example of being ready to give an answer for the hope that is within!</p> |
|--|---|--|

**Our next Hungry Saints Meeting will be held on Friday, 8/13/10. We will continue our current series of lessons on the book of Acts. The one hundredth and first lesson will cover verses 24 through 32 of the twenty-sixth chapter: "RESPONSES BY FESTUS AND AGRIPPA." After hearing Paul's stirring testimony of his calling and commission by Jesus, both Festus and Agrippa react. Our meeting will begin at 7:00 P.M. You are invited to bring your family and friends for fellowship around the Word of God. Refreshments are served afterward, with a time of extended fellowship for everyone.**

*The Blakely Family: Given, June, Benjamin, and Eva*

*406 South Sergeant Street, Joplin, MO 64801*

Telephone: (417) 782-3063, Email: Given (GivenB@aol.com) June: (JuneE01@aol.com)

ADAH's Webpage: <http://wotruth.com/adah.htm> -- EVA's Webpage: <http://wotruth.com/Eva.htm> Benjamin  
(Bensvison@aol.com), Eva (Evablakely@aol.com)

Adah Hutchcraft ([adahhutchcraft@hotmail.com](mailto:adahhutchcraft@hotmail.com)), Jason Hutchcraft ([hutchcraftj@hotmail.com](mailto:hutchcraftj@hotmail.com))

---

## **THE WORD OF TRUTH FELLOWSHIP**

**WORD OF TRUTH FELLOWSHIP Website: <http://wotruth.com/wotf/wotindex.htm>**

**A place where believers can meet, fellowship, be edified, and express themselves.**

**Additional Website for Word of Truth Fellowship: <http://www.forministry.com/USMOINDPTWOTFW>**

---

**WORD OF TRUTH Website: <http://wotruth.com>**

### **BROTHER BLAKEY'S ON-LINE COMMENTARIES**

**COMMENTARY on Nehemiah: <http://wotruth.com/nehindex.htm>**

**COMMENTARY on Daniel: <http://wotruth.com/Daniel.htm>**

**COMMENTARY on Hosea: <http://wotruth.com/hoseaindex.htm>**

**COMMENTARY on Romans: <http://wotruth.com/Romans.htm>**

**COMMENTARY on Second Corinthians: <http://wotruth.com/2Corinthians.htm>**

**COMMENTARY on Philippians: <http://wotruth.com/philippiansindex.htm>**

**COMMENTARY on Colossians: <http://wotruth.com/Colossians.htm>**

**COMMENTARY on First Thessalonians: <http://wotruth.com/1sthessindex.htm>**

**COMMENTARY on Second Thessalonians: <http://wotruth.com/2ndthessindex.htm>**

**COMMENTARY on Hebrews: <http://wotruth.com/hebindex.htm>**

**COMMENTARY on First Peter: <http://wotruth.com/1stpetindex.htm>**

**COMMENTARY on First John: <http://wotruth.com/1stjohnindex.htm>**

**COMMENTARY on Revelation: <http://wotruth.com/revelationindex.htm>**

**COMMENTARY on Mark: <http://wotruth.com/Mark.htm>**

**COMMENTARY on Titus: <http://wotruth.com/Titus.htm>**

**COMMENTARY on Acts: <http://wotruth.com/Acts.htm>**

**COMMENTARY on Malachi: <http://wotruth.com/Malachi.htm>**

**COMMENTARY on Galatians: <http://wotruth.com/Galatiansindex-new.htm>**

---

## PARTICIPATING BROTHERS AND SISTERS

### A DESCRIPTION OF THE VARIOUS MINISTRIES DURING OUR GATHERINGS

"Openings and Introductions" = 7-10 minute exposition of truth to promote spiritual focus; "Lead Singing" – AM Songs selected by Leader, PM Songs Lead in favorites by the brethren; "Calling" = 7-10 minute exposition of truth designed to provoke disciplined thought; "Sermon" = 45 minute exposition of the things of God as revealed in Scripture; "Exhortation" = 5-8 minute challenge to act upon the truth we have heard; "Table Meditation" = 8-12 minute exposition of matters relating to Christ's role in salvation; "Lead Scripture shower" = Leading of the quoting/reading of Scripture without comment; "Lead prayer session" = Presentation of three matters for prayer that are taken from the Word of God; "Lead Intercessory Prayer" = A time of focused prayers for personal needs; "Closing Scripture/Benediction" – Closing of the AM Gathering

## SPEAKING/LEADING/MINISTERING IN THE ASSEMBLY

The Word of Truth Fellowship, Joplin, MO  
DURING JULY, 2010

1. *Blakely, Given O.* (PM Sermon, PM Table Meditation, PM Sermon).
2. *Blakely, Jonathan* (PM Introduction, PM Introduction).
3. *Blakely, June* (Lead PM Prayer Session, Lead PM Singing).
4. *Blakely, Mattie* (Lead PM Singing).
5. *Blakely, Michael* (PM Sermon).
6. *Blakely, Michele* (Play Piano, Lead Scripture Shower).
7. *Burlingame, Brett* (PM Intercessory Prayer).
8. *Cobb, Matthew* (AM Table Meditation).
9. *Cobb, Nicole* (Lead AM Singing).
10. *Cobb, Robert* (AM Table Meditation, AM Opening Word, Teach AM Class, PM Exhortation, PM Exhortation, PM Sermon).
11. *Dill, Sarah* (Closing Scripture/Benediction)
12. *Hutchcraft, Aaron* (AM Opening Word, Teach AM Class, AM Exhortation, AM Sermon, PM Table Meditation, PM Exhortation).
13. *Hutchcraft, Barbara* (AM Calling, Lead Scripture Shower, Lead AM Singing, Lead PM Singing, PM Introduction).
14. *Hutchcraft, Gene* (Lead PM Intercessory Prayer, AM Sermon. AM Table Meditation, PM Table Meditation, PM Exhortation).
15. *Hutchcraft, Judah* (Closing Scripture/Benediction, Read AM

- Sermon Text, Read PM Sermon Text. Introduction to PM Sermon).
16. *Miller, Levi* (Lead AM Singing).
17. *Murphy, Mariah* (Special Piano Numbers for PM Message, Read PM Sermon Text, Read PM Sermon Text).
18. *Parker, Melissa* (AM Opening Word, AM Calling).
19. *Parker, Tony* (AM Sermon, AM Table Meditation).
20. *Sims, Annie* (Closing Scripture/Benediction, Lead Scripture Shower, Read PM Sermon Text).
21. *Sims, Baylie* (Read AM Sermon Text).
22. *Sims Girls-Annie, Hannah, Rachel* ()).
23. *Sims, Ricky* (Teach AM Class, AM Exhortation. AM Exhortation, PM Introduction, PM Table Meditation).
24. *Sims, Tasha* (Leads AM Singing, AM Calling, Lead Scripture Shower, Lead PM Singing).
25. *Williams, Jeremy* (AM Exhortation. AM Sermon, Am Opening Word).
26. *Williams, Logan* (Play AM/PM Lord's Table Interlude, Read AM Sermon Text, Benediction/Closing Prayer ).
27. *Williams, Sydney* (Read AM Sermon Text).
28. *Preparing Lord's Supper* (Various sisters).

### THE BODY OF CHRIST

It is a fact: "But now hath God set the members every one of them in the body, as it hath pleased Him" (1 Cor 12:18). He did not set them in the home, but "in the body." He did not place them in society, but "in the body." They are functioning members of the body who fill necessary functions – edifying roles in the solemn assembly (1 Cor 12:19-27). The functioning value and ministry of "the body" is realized when it is "together," not when the people are separated. The ministry of each member is determined by their faith – "a measure of faith" that has been given to them in order to the "profit" of the entire body (Rom 12:6-8; 1 Cor 12:7). This is how the Lord has put together "the church, which is His body" (Eph 1:22-23). We make no apologies for the ministry of the entire body – publicly, in the assembly, and in order to the edification of the saints. This is all done in an orderly manner, with due thoughtfulness and regard for those who are in Christ Jesus, and who, in faithfulness to God who gave these various abilities. Our assemblies are designed to allow for the various expressions and insightful responses of all who are of honest and good heart, have faith, and are in, and living for, the Lord Jesus.