



the
book
of **ACTS**

Study Guide Part 1

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Acts
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Chapter 1
Part 1: Acts 1v1-12

Verse 1: *“The first word which I did concerning all, Theophilus, which Yeshua did at the beginning and also taught,”*

The first word: The author is talking about the first book that he wrote - his writing of the Gospel of Luke.

Concerning all: The Gospel of Luke focused upon the work and the personhood of Messiah.

Theophilus: His name means: ‘One who loves G-d’.

Which Yeshua did ... and also taught: What Yeshua **did** and **taught** is emphasised here. Yeshua brought Kingdom experiences (miracles) into this world in order to teach us truth. Truth transforms us.

Verse 2: *“until the day, when He commanded those who He chose to be Apostles through the Holy Spirit, He was taken up.”*

Until the day: ... He was taken up: We find an interruption in the text between ‘until the day’ and ‘He was taken up’. The emphasis is not on the fact that it was the day that Yeshua was leaving, but the emphasis was that on that day, by means of the Holy Spirit, He commanded the Apostles.

Throughout the book of Acts there is a clear emphasis upon the *Holy Spirit*, who is associated with redemption (Isaiah 59v20-21) and with bringing divine order into our lives. Redemption is a purchase, but it can also be understood as a reclaiming.

Who He chose: We, as believers, have also been chosen by G-d and have the Holy Spirit dwelling in us. Being chosen always comes with responsibility, purpose, and a call to service until Yeshua returns again.

Verse 3: *“To them (these apostles) He presented Himself alive, after He suffered, and He did so with convincing proof. For forty days being seen by them and speaking about the things of the Kingdom of G-d.”*

He presented Himself: Literally meaning: ‘He stood before them’.

Alive: This took place after the resurrection; He had conquered death; therefore, He has also conquered sin. Those who believe in Him are supposed to live lives that demonstrate victory over sin.

Convincing proof: There was nothing uncertain about the resurrection. All the evidence left no room for doubt.

Forty days: Forty is seen as a number relating to transition: in this case, a transition from an earthly centred life to a Kingdom centred one. This becomes a reality through the work of the Holy Spirit in our lives.

Speaking about the things of the Kingdom of G-d: He spoke not only about the Kingdom, but He spoke about the **things** of the Kingdom. These things are at the heart of the book of Acts. We do not only expect these things in the future, but they are available to us now.

Verse 4: *“And being gathered with them He commanded them: ‘From Jerusalem you should not depart, but wait for the promise of the Father, which you have heard from me.’”*

Being gathered with them: There is an emphasis upon Yeshua being with the disciples (now called Apostles, because He was sending them forth).

He commanded them: G-d instructs or commands us, and it is only through obedience to His commands that we are going to live a victorious life over sin in this world.

From Jerusalem you should not depart: This was not only Yeshua’s command to the disciples, but was also an act of obedience according to the law of Moses. Yeshua was crucified at Passover and rose on the day after the Sabbath (Luke 23v56, Luke 24v1-3). This particular day (the day after the Sabbath) had been celebrated for generations as the Festival of First fruits – one of the L-rd’s appointed days (Leviticus 23v9-14). 1 Corinthians 15v20 sheds a new light on this festival. It links the resurrection of Yeshua to Him being the first fruit from the dead.

In verse 3 we were told that Yeshua had been seen for 40 days (the 40th day of the counting of the Omer) since His resurrection. In another 10 days (50 days after first fruits in total) another festival needed to be celebrated – It is called Shavuot or Pentecost (Leviticus 23v15-21).

Wait for the promise: This is a principle that should be manifest in our lives. We are waiting for the promises of G-d, His Kingdom (Hebrews 11v39-40).

Verse 5: *“John baptized with water, but you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit, after not many of these days.”*

Baptized: There is a connection between immersion/baptism and a transition/change that happens in a person’s life (or a vessel’s status).

But: This is a word of contrast. John, as great as he was, could only baptise with water. Something much greater than his baptism was coming.

Baptized with the Holy Spirit: Meaning that they were going to have a redemptive experience.

After not many of these days: This is an idiom in Greek meaning ‘within an allotment of time’ or something that should be expected soon.

Verse 6: *“Therefore those (apostles) came before Yeshua and they asked Him saying: ‘L-rd, if at this time you are going to restore the kingdom to Israel?’”*

L-rd: The apostles are recognizing that Yeshua is the L-rd of the Kingdom and that He rules.

Going to restore the kingdom to Israel: The disciples had an expectation that the Kingdom would be restored back to Israel. There is a connection, Biblically, between the Kingdom and Israel.

Verse 7: *"It is not for you to know the times or the seasons which the Father has set under His own authority,"*

It is not for you to know: Yeshua did not disagree that the Kingdom was going to be restored back to Israel. It is going to happen, but there was no need to know when.

The times or the seasons: Yeshua, as well as Paul (1 Thessalonians 5v1) breaks the last days into two distinct allotments of time.

Which the Father has set: The Father sets the time. He is going to give the command for the Son to restore the Kingdom to Israel.

Verse 8: *"but you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit comes upon you, and you shall be witnesses for Me in Jerusalem, and in all of Judea and Samaria, until the end of the Earth."*

Power: This is a destructive power - we get the word 'dynamite' from this word. Before things can be built up they have to first be torn down. The Holy Spirit, although He is a person and the third member of the Trinity, He is also power for the believer.

And you shall be witnesses: We are given power in order to testify - in both our words and deeds.

Verse 9: *"These things He said, and after He said them they were looking, and He was taken up in a cloud from before their eyes."*

He was taken up: The resurrection was G-d's stamp of approval upon the work of Messiah. Likewise, the ascension was G-d's stamp of approval on all that Yeshua had said, His promise of the Holy Spirit, the call that we have, etc. These were all ratified, by G-d, through the ascension.

Verse 10: *"As they were looking into the heavens, as He went, behold two men were standing before them and they had white garments."*

Two men: These two men were angels who had come to give insight concerning the ascension.

White garments: White speaks of purity. It emphasizes where these men had come from, how they lived their lives, and what their job was - to confirm truth.

Verse 11: *"And these were saying: 'Men of Galilee, why do you stand looking into the heavens? For this same Yeshua was taken up from you, into the heavens, and thus He will come in a like manner.'"*

The heavens: Heaven is related to G-d. All that happened had a divine stamp of approval upon it. What those Apostles were called to do, why they were called to do it, and what the outcome of their obedience to that call would be also had this same stamp of approval.

He will come in a like manner: He was taken up by a cloud and He will return in the clouds - in order to do what He has promised, to bring about the fulfilment of His Kingdom.

Verse 12: *“They returned to Jerusalem, from the mountain called ‘The Olives’ which is near Jerusalem, a Sabbath day journey.”*

They returned to Jerusalem: They immediately responded in obedience and positioned themselves for the expectation of the promise of G-d.

From the mountain called ‘The Olives’: The place of Yeshua’s ascension is the same place to which He is going to return (Zechariah 14v4).

A Sabbath journey: According to Jewish law, in regard to the Sabbath, once a person left the boundaries of a city there was a limit as to how far they could go – about two to three kilometres. In Greek, this phrase is literally written: ‘the way of the Sabbath’. Sabbath is a word that reminds us of the Kingdom. They returned back to Jerusalem for the way into the Kingdom, expectant for the Holy Spirit.

Chapter 1

Part 2: Acts 1v13-26

Verse 13: *“When they entered (Jerusalem) they went up into the upper room where they abided. Peter, James, John, Andrew, Philip, Thomas, Bartholomew, Matthew, James of Alphaeus, Simon the Zealot also Judas the brother of James.”*

They abided: They stayed in this place, waiting with expectancy that the Promises of G-d were going to be fulfilled. When we walk in obedience, and respond to the Word of G-d, we can abide/live with expectation, believing and expecting things to happen.

These individuals, who were in the upper room, are in the same location where they had observed the Passover with Yeshua. This ties together what happened at Passover to what was going to happen on Pentecost/Shavuot.

Verse 14: *“All of these were diligently, in one mind at the same time, praying and supplicating with the women, the mother of Yeshua, and with the brothers.”*

In one mind (in agreement): They did not doubt that what Yeshua had promised was going to happen (Those who doubt should not think that they will receive anything from the L-rd – James 1v6).

We need to be people who live with a passionate expectation that the promises of G-d are going to be fulfilled in our lives.

With the brothers: This can also include sisters. In many languages the male plural can refer to individuals of both genders. Yeshua’s brethren or family.

Verse 15: *“In those days, Peter stood up in the midst of the disciples (there was a crowd that numbered at that time 120).”*

In those days: This term possibly speaks about a uniqueness about those days that they were living in. What was rare about those days, compared to most days, was this diligence/unity that they had with each other.

120: 12X10. Ten is the number of completion, that which is in its entirety, wholeness. From a relatively small group of individuals we are going to see the world transformed.

Verse 16: *“He said, ‘Men, brethren, it was necessary that this word be fulfilled which the Holy Spirit spoke beforehand through the mouth of David concerning Judas, who became a guide for those who seized Yeshua.’”*

He said: Peter said.

It was necessary: This means that there was no other way. It was absolutely a must and could not have been anything other than this.

This word be fulfilled: This verse has a prophetic context to it.

The Holy Spirit spoke: One of the major roles of the Holy Spirit is to bring order into this world, into the body of believers, into our lives.

Through the mouth of David: This tells us that it was spoken prophetically through a Psalm (Psalm 41v9).

Judas: Judas Iscariot, the betrayer.

Verse 17: *“He was numbered with us, and he received his portion in this ministry.”*

He was numbered with us: Judas had a *portion of ministry*, serving as an invited and chosen disciple. Nevertheless, he rebelled. One from within betrayed Messiah. All that Judas did was done in fulfillment of Scripture.

Just like Judas was a part of Messiah’s ministry, work, calling and service, Matthew 24v5 warns us that in the last days much of the false teachings are going to be done from within us.

Note: The Scripture foretold/prophesied what Judas was going to do. G-d knew what Judas was going to do, not because He caused it but because He has the ability to look forward in history and He saw it happening. A word of prophecy alerts us to the omniscience of G-d, He is all-knowing.

Verse 18: *“He purchased a field with the wages of this unrighteous act and, having hung himself, he fell down and the middle part of him burst forth and all of his intestines (or bowels) gushed out.”*

He purchased a field: Judas realized what he had done and took the thirty pieces of silver, blood money, that he had received to betray Yeshua, and he cast it back into the Temple Treasury.

This unrighteous act: Judas did that which is unrighteous. G-d, who is Sovereign, and not the cause of unrighteousness, can, nevertheless, turn it into something good.

This does not mean that the one who did that unrighteousness is participating with G-d, or that he should be thought of as doing something good because G-d ended up using it.

Hung himself: He committed suicide.

He fell down and the middle part of him burst forth: All of this shows Judas' shame.

Verse 19: *"It became known to all who dwell in Jerusalem. This field is called by their own dialect: Akeldama: 'The field of blood'."*

Their own dialect: In their language. i.e. Aramaic

Akeldama: This means 'the field of blood'. It is translated for us in the text.

Verse 20: *"For it has been written in the Scripture: 'Let his dwelling place become a desolation, also let no one dwell in it'; and 'Let his charge be given to another.'"*

Let his (Judas') dwelling place become a desolation (barren), also let no one dwell in it: Taken from Psalm 69v25.

And his charge (or his position) let it be given to another: Taken from Psalm 109v8. As a fulfilment of prophecy, Judas' position was going to be given to someone else.

Verse 21: *"Therefore it was necessary those men that had gathered with us from the beginning of all the time from our L-rd Yeshua, coming in and going out."*

Coming in and going out: Although the text is written in Greek this is a Hebrew idiom for leadership. Many times, the kings of Israel are spoken of as 'leading them out and bringing them back in'. It speaks about choosing someone who had a history with Yeshua, who was part of all that went on, and who submitted to His leadership.

Verse 22: *"Beginning from the baptism of John unto the days of Him being taken up from us, let him be a witness of His resurrection, with us one of these."*

Note: Peter is laying a foundation for the requirements of the man who is to take the place of Judas among the apostles. He had to be someone who had been with them, as a witness, from the time of John's baptism until the time of the Ascension.

A witness of His resurrection: This is a primary prerequisite for being a servant or a disciple. Anyone who serves Messiah Yeshua is a witness, testifying, first and foremost, of His resurrection. If we do not believe in a bodily resurrection, or do not understand the implication of His resurrection, then we are not truly saved.

One of these: Meaning that the man who met these criteria would become one of the 12 Apostles.

Verse 23: *"And they stood two; they were Joseph who is called Barsabbas (also called Justus) and Matthias."*

They stood two: Two men were appointed and stood in the midst of them, one of them was to be chosen for this role.

Joseph who is called Barsabbas (also called Justus): The commentaries from the ancient Church Fathers reveal that Joseph was known. The Scripture spoke more about him, meaning that people were more familiar with him. There was an assumption that he would be the one chosen.

Matthias: The only thing told to us about Matthias is his name.

Verse 24: *“They prayed, and they said, ‘You O L-rd are a knower of the heart. Manifest from these two which one of the two you have chosen (elected),’”*

You O L-rd are a knower of the heart: The L-rd knows all things, and He knows the thoughts of individuals. When many individuals want to speak about the Biblical concept of election, they do so by saying that G-d, simply because He could, elected some people and did not elect others. However, when we look at passages that speak about election a word that oftentimes appears there is the word ‘foreknowledge’.

Manifest from these two: G-d is going to choose someone, and the apostles are asking Him to show them which man He has chosen to fill the space that Judas left. The idea of the casting of the lots is for G-d's decisions to be made known, and not mans. Election does not happen in a vacuum. G-d's election of Matthias was based upon the fact that G-d fully and completely knows the hearts of everyone.

Verse 25: *“to receive the portion of this service (ministry) and Apostleship, from which Judas transgressed and went to his own place.”*

transgressed (deviated): This means to step aside (When we step aside from G-d's call, from service to Him, from His truth, we transgress.) Judas was not made to transgress or deviate. He chose to do it.

Went to his own place: Judas went to the place that he belonged to, based upon his choice, his transgression. As a lover of money, he succumbed to temptation and acted in disobedience.

Verse 26: *“And they gave (cast) their lots and it fell upon Matthias, and he was numbered with the eleven Apostles.”*

He was numbered with the eleven Apostles: Matthias joined together with the other eleven, so there were, once again, twelve Apostles.

Apostles: This means to be ‘sent forth’. These 12 were getting ready to be sent out, but before this happened they needed to be filled with the Holy Spirit. Without the anointing, indwelling, or the baptism of the Holy Spirit we cannot go forth.

The Holy Spirit gives us power to submit to truth, power to walk in righteousness and power to be individuals that are equipped/anointed to carry out the services/functions of the Kingdom.

Chapter 2

Part 1: Acts 2v1-21

Verse 1: *“When the day of Pentecost had been fulfilled they were all together in one place.”*

The day of Pentecost: The festivals, appointed times, of the L-rd are very important. Pentecost (called Shavuot in Hebrew) has to do with the number 50. Leviticus 23v15-16 tells us that there were two methods used to count these days: each day (49 days) and each week (7days x 7weeks). The day after these 49 days (i.e. the 50th day) was the day of Pentecost.

The number ‘50’ is also related to liberty or freedom (The Year of Jubilee reveals this to us). At Pentecost, the believers were recipients of the Holy Spirit. In our natural state, stained with sin, we are not free or at liberty to serve or obey G-d. It is only when we are recipients of the Holy Spirit (when we accept, by faith, the gospel message of salvation and forgiveness of sin) that we become truly free and have liberty to serve G-d.

Note: There were 3 major Festivals where the people were expected to pilgrimage to Jerusalem – Pesach (Passover), Shavuot (Weeks or Pentecost) and Sukkot (Tabernacles, tents, or booths). This is a reason why Messiah commanded his disciples to not depart from Jerusalem (Acts 1v4 - Yeshua commanded His disciples to do the same thing that the Torah commanded).

Had been fulfilled: (All 50 days had been counted). This word has nothing to do with the day of Pentecost ‘arriving’ but rather it has to do with it being fulfilled. The Biblical commandment, for this festival, had to do with counting. Counting is so important because it comes with an expectation. When you count you expect that, at the end of the count, something (an event) is going to happen. G-d delights in fulfilling His Word. On Pentecost G-d fulfilled His promise of pouring out His Spirit (Joel 2v29).

They were all together in one place: Speaks of unity. There is a relationship between the moving of the Holy Spirit and unity among G-d's people. They were in the right location, in G-d’s will, and it is only when we are in G-d's will that the Holy Spirit's anointing will be the most powerful.

Verse 2: *“And it came about suddenly, out of the heavens, a voice as the blowing of a violent wind, the whole house was full as they were sitting,”*

Suddenly: Something happened without any indication, other than instruction. Very often there are no visible signs that G-d is about to do something. The only visible signs are our obedience in Him and our trust in the promises received from Him.

The blowing: It is moving quickly; it is a word that has to do with providing something - the Spirit of G-d comes into our lives to provide what we need.

Violent: Powerful, it can accomplish a great deal.

Verse 3: *“and it appeared to them as divided portions of tongues of fire, that sat upon each one of them.”*

Divided portions of tongues of fire: In the same way that we think of G-d providing the Holy Spirit on Pentecost, so to in Judaism G-d provided the commandments at Mt Sinai (with fire and loud sounds - Exodus 20v18).

Tongues of fire: Literally, the Holy Spirit.

Them: They are disciples of Messiah. people who believed in Him and kept His commandments.

Verse 4: *“All of them were filled with the Holy Spirit and **began to speak** in other tongues just as the Spirit gave to them to declare.”*

Began to speak: It was a miracle that they were speaking in other tongues.

Other tongues: This means that they were not speaking their own languages. This was something unique.

To declare: They were called to declare something specifically, they were not just uttering words.

Verse 5: *“And there were in Jerusalem, dwelling there, Jews; men who were G-dly, from every nation under the heavens.”*

Dwelling there, Jews: They were assembled in Jerusalem because of the festival, and in obedience to the command which commanded them to be there.

Men who were G-dly: Pious individuals who were very careful in regard to the things of G-d.

Verse 6: *“It came about that this sound they heard, so they came together, and were bewildered as **they heard**, each one, in his own dialect they were speaking.”*

This sound they heard: The sound drew them to where this was happening.

Bewildered: They were confused because they heard these people speaking in their own languages. They were at a loss to know what was happening and what it meant. Like at Mt Sinai, this was an event that captured the attention of the people.

They heard: The miracle here is that each (foreigner) heard his own language being spoken.

Verse 7: *“All of them were amazed and they marvelled saying to one another: ‘Behold, are not all of these speaking Galileans?’”*

Galileans: Yeshua’s disciples were from Galilee, but another reason for the mention of Galilee is that Galilee has to do with revealing the fulfilment of the promise (Isaiah 9v1-2), the outcome of redemption - the giving of the Holy Spirit.

Verse 8: *“We hear each one speaking in our own dialect in which we were born.”*

Own dialect in which we were born: The believers were speaking in the native tongues of the foreigners.

Verse 9: *“There were people from Parthia, from Medes and from Elam. And those dwelling in Mesopotamia, in Judah, also Cappadocia, Pontus and Asia.”*

Verse 10: *“Phrygia and Pamphylia, Egypt, and parts of Libya near Cyrene, and also the foreigners who dwell in Rome - who were Jews and also proselytes.”*

Verse 11: *“And Cretans and Arabs - each one heard them speaking, in their own language, the great things of G-d.”*

Speaking... the great things of G-d: The purpose of this was for G-d to be magnified and for people to hear the great things of G-d (The ‘great things of G-d’ is G-d moving to establish His Kingdom, which is what was going to happen, with this miracle, through the Holy Spirit).

Verse 12: *“And all were amazed and were also confused. Some were saying: ‘What is the meaning of this?’”*

‘What is the meaning of this?’: The word used here, in Greek, has to do with wishes or desires. These foreigners had an expectation of something good, desirable, something that they wanted, something that would bring about fulfilment to them.

Verse 13: *“But others were mocking, saying that they were full of new wine.”*

But others: These people had a very different perspective from the former ones (2v12). When it comes to the things of G-d there are going to be those who accept and those who reject. There will be those who look for the fulfilment of G-d's promises, and there will be those who scoff and mock at the things of G-d.

Verse 14: *“And Peter, standing with the eleven, lifted up his voice and proclaimed: ‘Men, Jews, and all the ones dwelling in Jerusalem, let this be known to you, put your ear to my word.”*

Proclaimed: Made a declaration.

Put your ear: This means they need to draw close (ultimately for the purpose of intimacy with G-d) in order to listen properly.

Word: This is the word ‘rhema’, a proclamation that fulfils the purposes of G-d.

Verse 15: *“For it is not as you think that these are drunk; for it is only the third hour of the day.”*

The third hour of the day: (9am). The number 3 has to do with revealing something. Peter addresses the crowd at the third hour for the purpose of revelation.

This teaches us a principle; the Holy Spirit enters our lives in order to bring about revelation – not just a source of revelation, but to help us to understand G-d's revelation.

Verse 16: *“But this is what has been said through the Prophet Joel.”*

This is what has been said: (the fulfilment of prophecy) In the past it had relevance, today it also has relevance and in the future it will have relevance.

Through the Prophet Joel: In explaining what was happening, Peter used prophecy (Found in Joel 2v28-32). Peter could not have communicated what G-d was up to, establishing His church, without setting it in the context of prophetic truth. So much of what G-d does, and is still going to do, in our lives and in this world (especially as we draw closer to the end of this age) can only be understood, or perceived, through prophetic truth.

Verse 17: *“And it shall be in the last days that G-d says I will pour out from my Spirit upon all flesh, and shall prophesy your sons and your daughters. Your young men are going to see visions and your old men are going to be given dreams.”*

Last days: (End times): There are two theological understandings (not in conflict with each other) in regard to the end times.

1. There is a long end time period beginning here in Acts and still applicable today. In this period, we are able to make a ‘reservation’ for the Kingdom of G-d. This is the period of time in which we can find salvation.
2. There is a final End Time period of 7 years at the end of this age. This will bring about the establishment of the Kingdom of G-d. The total fulfilment of this prophecy from Joel is going to be in those last seven years, but here we see a foretaste of what will be.

All flesh: What those individuals experienced, uniquely, on Pentecost, is available to all of humanity who have accepted the gospel.

Shall prophesy: More often than not, prophets spoke truth that caused repentance. They spoke words of conviction, words against sinful activity.

Your sons and your daughters: Male and female. This goes back to G-d's original purpose in Genesis. This reference hints to the previous creation and looks forward to a new creation.

Prophecy...visions.... dreams: All of these things (truths) come from G-d and do not originate with us.

Verse 18: *“And also upon my servants (male) and upon my maid servants, and on that day I will pour out from My Spirit and they are going to prophesy.”*

Servants: If this is going to impact our lives, in order to bring about change, we need to ask ourselves if we want to serve G-d. The giving of the Holy Spirit (His anointing) is only for the servants of G-d.

Verse 19: *“I will give wonders in the heavens above and signs upon the earth below. Blood and fire and columns of smoke.”*

Wonders: Supernatural events. These did not take place, 2000 years ago, on the day of Pentecost. This is a future event of which Joel, and now Peter, laid a foundation for.

Blood and fire and columns (or pillars) of smoke: This is reminiscent of Mt. Sinai (Exodus 20v18). At Mt Sinai G-d gave divine revelation to the people – not only the commandments but He also

manifested Himself to them. G-d wanted to give them a new reality whereby they would know the fear of G-d and would become new creations who did not want to sin. The Holy Spirit gives us this potential when we walk in obedience to Him.

Verse 20: *“For the sun is going to turn to darkness and the moon to blood before the coming of the great and awesome day of the L-rd.”*

The moon to blood: This is going to be a sign that announces the coming wrath of G-d (Revelation 6v12-17).

Verse 21: *“And it shall be that all who call upon the name of the L-rd will be saved.”*

All who call...will be saved: The time for salvation began on that day. The announcement was made to call upon the name of the L-rd and, therefore, be saved from the wrath of G-d.

Chapter 2

Part 2: Acts 2v22-36

Verse 22: *“Men of Israel, listen to these words: Yeshua of Nazareth, a man from G-d, was manifested among you with miracles, wonders and with signs, which G-d did through Him in the midst of you, just as you all know.”*

Nazareth: Yeshua was from this location in the Galilee. This is important because it points to the fulfilment of the prophecy found in Isaiah 9v1-7. Nazareth was a very small, insignificant place.

Manifested: Declared or proven. Yeshua demonstrated who He was.

Know: The way this word is written tells us that they knew it in the past, they knew it in the present and they will know it in the future. This is telling us that the ministry of Yeshua is going to continue. The signs, wonders and miracles were not complete and were going to continue - through the Holy Spirit, and through those who are His disciples.

Verse 23: *“Him, being delivered up, by the determinate plan and foreknowledge of G-d, was taken by men who had lawless hands; and they fastened Him to the tree, and He died.”*

The determinate plan: It was marked out, appointed, predetermined. This is also a word that many people translate ‘predestination’.

Foreknowledge of G-d: This predetermined plan does not function in isolation. G-d, who is omniscient, has **foreseen** it and therefore has determined it.

Note: There is a relationship, in the Scripture, between this concept of predestination and the foreknowledge of G-d. Predestination does not mean that G-d has determined some to be in heaven and some to go to hell.

When Scripture speaks of predestination it speaks about something that G-d has seen ahead of time (foreknowledge), and He is able to mark out the plan (like a pattern, see example below) ahead of time, according to what He has seen.

(Example: If we want to make a dress we buy a pattern. Based on the pattern we have an idea about what the dress is going to look like.)

Predestination, according to Paul in Ephesians 1v11, is only relevant for those who are in Messiah, those who have received the gospel. Messiah is the pattern (to use our example above) that we base our lives upon. We are going to be like Him in character (Romans 8v29).

Lawless hands: The hands of people who were against the Torah.

Verse 24: *“Whom the same Yeshua, G-d raised. Having loosened the agony of death because it was not possible that it should seize Him by these things.”*

Yeshua: He is the Son of G-d. He is G-d. Everything about G-d speaks of life and, therefore, the *agony of death* could not hold him/seize Him forever.

Verse 25: *“For David says concerning Him: ‘I saw the L-rd before me through all (time). Because on my right hand is He in order that I should not be moved.’”*

David says: This is a quote from Psalm 16v8.

Through all (time): He was always there.

On my right hand is He: David prophesied that Messiah was going to be at his right hand, meaning that David had His favour, His support.

In order that I should not be moved: It is because we have Messiah that we will not be moved away from the things of G-d (His purposes, Covenant etc)

Verse 26: *“My heart is glad, and my tongue rejoices; my flesh will remain upon this hope,”*

This is a verse quoted from Psalm 16v9.

Remain: It is the same word as ‘to dwell’. The word ‘dwelling’ here relates to a lifestyle.

This hope: David is saying that he is going to dwell/live upon this hope. His life, and all that he does, is going to be based upon the hope that, through Messiah, he will not be moved (by the enemy). Messiah holds us, in order that the enemy does not have victory over us.

Verse 27: *“because He will not leave my soul in hell, nor will He allow the ones who have received grace to see corruption.”*

This is quoted from Psalm 16v10

He will not leave my soul in hell: After Messiah died He was buried and descended into Sheol (Ephesians 4v9-10, 1 Peter 3v18-19). Messiah was not abandoned there. He did not raise Himself from the dead, but G-d the Father raised Him from the dead (Acts 2v32).

Nor will He allow the ones who have received grace to see corruption: Like Messiah was not abandoned to the grave so too will G-d not abandon us in the grave (1 Corinthians 15v20-23). Death is not going to have any effect over us.

Corruption: We are not going to experience the consequence of sin. We are going to experience the consequences of righteousness - His righteousness imputed to us, and His works of righteousness through us.

Verse 28: *“Making known to me the way of life, He has filled me up with gladness with His countenance.”*

Quoted from Psalm 16v11.

With His countenance: His face, His presence – the outcome of which is His blessing.

Verse 29: *“Men, brethren, allow me to speak boldly (frankly, confidently) to you concerning the patriarch David. He is dead and buried and his tomb is with us unto this day.”*

The patriarch David: Jewish tradition speaks of David being alive, that death did not dominate Him. In a much greater way (truth triumphing over tradition) Messiah has risen and, before His ascension, He appeared to people, for 40 days, with convincing proof that He is alive.

Verse 30: *“Therefore, being a prophet and knowing the oath that G-d swore to him that from the fruit of his loins, according to the flesh, He would raise up Messiah and sit Him upon his throne.”*

Being a prophet: David saw (beforehand) this resurrection. If we believe David then we have to believe in a resurrected Messiah. If we believe in a resurrected Messiah we have to first believe in a crucified Messiah.

The oath: G-d had made a covenantal promise to David.

Verse 31: *“And, seen beforehand, he spoke concerning the resurrection of Messiah that He would not leave His soul in hell nor His flesh to see corruption.”*

Seen beforehand: David was a prophet and he saw, ahead of time, what G-d had planned – the death, burial, and resurrection of Messiah.

Verse 32: *“This Yeshua G-d raised up before all of us, we are witnesses.”*

Witnesses: Many of them there would have seen the resurrected Messiah, Yeshua.

Verse 33: *“Therefore, at the right-hand, G-d exalted Him, and the promise of the Holy Spirit have we received from the Father. He poured this One out, now you have seen, and you have heard.”*

Peter, using Psalm 16, Jewish tradition etc. speaks about the proper understanding of what was happening to the believers at that time. The only way to rightly grasp this was to understand the work of Messiah, as it related to the pouring out of the Holy Spirit.

Verse 34: *“For David did not ascend into the heavens, but he said: “The L-rd spoke to my L-rd: ‘Sit at my right hand’””*

David did not ascend into the heavens: David was not the one whom G-d raised from the dead.

Verse 35: *“until I place your enemies as a footstool for your feet.”*

Place your enemies as a footstool: This speaks of victory. Messiah is going to come back to bring victory. He is going to be manifested at the time that His enemies are subdued and put under His feet.

Verse 36: *“Therefore let it be known to all the house of Israel, without any doubt, that also L-rd and also Messiah G-d made him - Yeshua whom you crucified.”*

L-rd: David had already revealed to us that Yeshua (Messiah) is his L-rd. If David calls Messiah his L-rd then even more so should we, all the house of Israel and all the nations of the world also receive Him.

G-d made him: G-d did not create Messiah. This is talking about the fact that G-d has appointed Yeshua to be both L-rd and Messiah.

Chapter 2

Part 3: Acts 2v37-47

Verse 37: *“After they heard their hearts were pierced, and they said to Peter and to the rest of the Apostles: ‘What should we do men and brethren?’”*

They heard (and) their hearts were pierced: They were convicted.

What should we do: They were willing to do whatever Peter told them to do.

For some, this is a problematic question because it is asked in the context of a salvation experience (Peter had been sharing about what they needed to do in order to be brought out of this world and into the congregation of the L-rd).

Salvation is by grace, and not through works. However, salvation through works is not what this question is implying. Instead it speaks about a response. They wanted to know how they should respond to what they had heard, the information that Peter had shared with them.

Verse 38: *“Peter said unto them: ‘Repent and be baptized, each one, in the name of Yeshua the Messiah for the forgiveness of sins, and receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.’”*

Peter said.... ‘repent’...: Peter responds by giving them commandments. We are not saved by the commandments, but they teach us how to respond, they show us the specific response required for our salvation. It is when we follow this plan that we can know, for sure, that we are saved. Nothing is left to the imagination.

Repent: Repentance implies a change in direction – toward G-d. We get to G-d through the work of Messiah – baptism testifies to this work of Messiah.

Be baptized: We are not saved by baptism. Baptism is a testimony of our faith in Messiah’s baptism – not what he did in the Jordan River, but His baptism of death, burial, and resurrection (Romans 6v3-5).

Each one: Salvation is available to all. It is not exclusive (Romans 10v13).

In the name of Yeshua the Messiah: He is our Saviour, and His name also shows us His character. Baptism is about unity. It brings us into a position where we are found to be acceptable and are able to be used by G-d for His purposes.

The forgiveness of sins: Sin has to be dealt with if we want the promise of G-d (His Holy Spirit). This text tells us that there is a willingness by G-d to forgive our sins but there is a very specific way of receiving this forgiveness. If we do not follow this way we are not going to experience forgiveness.

Gift: The Holy Spirit is a gift and cannot be earned (Isaiah 59v20-21 unites the giving of the Holy Spirit with a redemptive experience). The outcome of redemption is manifested in our lives as we depend on the Holy Spirit.

Verse 39: *“For to you is **the** promise and to your children and all those who are far away - whosoever the L-rd our G-d should call.”*

Promise: There is a relationship, Biblically, between the Holy Spirit and promise. The word ‘promise’ goes all the way back to covenant. When we utilize the anointing of the Holy Spirit, in order to serve G-d and do His purposes, we are going to be transformed, and be the recipients of the (Kingdom) blessings of G-d.

To your children: Throughout the Bible there is an emphasis placed on the next generation. The ‘next generation’ should cause us to be Kingdom minded (Deuteronomy 6v6-7).

All those who are far away: Those who are beyond the borders of Israel i.e. The nations. Through redemption, G-d is going to move among nations and bring them into unity with the people of G-d.

Whosoever the L-rd our G-d should call: In its context, **this is a very inclusive statement**, reaching beyond normal borders. This calling comes by means of the gospel message, available for ‘you, your children, and **all** who are far away’.

Verse 40: *“With many other words he testified and exhorted them saying: ‘Be saved from this perverse generation.’”*

Exhorted: Encouraged

Be saved: This is a commandment. However, we cannot save ourselves. We do not have the ability or the capacity to make ourselves acceptable for the Kingdom of G-d. If we were simply at the mercy of being chosen by G-d this would have no relevance whatsoever. Even though we cannot save ourselves we do have the ability to respond, and, in this case, it is a response that says “yes” to the calling of G-d.

Perverse: Crooked, out of order (it does not reflect the order or purpose of G-d).

Note: Only by means of a salvation experience, by faith, can we begin to move in the order of G-d's will. Without a salvation experience we have no hope that we can reflect G-d's order, or purposes, in our lives. Salvation is the starting point of that. Salvation begets change in our lives – we become a new creation through the process of regeneration. We are also sanctified, whereby we begin to reflect the purposes, the holiness, of G-d.

It is wrong to say that G-d, in the absence of any faith on our part, regenerates us or causes us to become new creations, and that only after becoming that new creation do we respond to the gospel.

Verse 41: *“Therefore, they, with gladness, received his word and were baptized, there was added of them that day 3,000 souls.”*

Received his word: They accepted this revelation, of the good news, with joy. There is a receiving of the word before there is any testifying of the effects of that word.

Baptized: Baptism implies a change of status or condition (This all comes through the work of Messiah).

3,000 souls: The number 3 has to do with revealing something. Here we see the revealing of the plan and outcome of salvation

Verse 42: *“These were consistently in the teaching of the Apostles and the fellowship, and they broke bread and they prayed.”*

Consistently: Diligently, frequently.

In the teaching of the Apostles and the fellowship: Part of the sanctification process.

When we are consistently, diligently, and thorough in the Apostles doctrine (Word of G-d) then what is going to be potentially available for us is fellowship – not a group of people who are at odds with each other but a group of people who are connected, united. Truth produces unity.

Broke bread: They spent time with one another and got to know each other.

Prayed: To really feel a burden for someone and to intercede for them requires fellowship. The closer we are to people the more likely we are to intercede for them.

Verse 43: *“It came about on every soul fear. There were many wonders, and also signs, that were done through the Apostles.”*

On every soul: This penetrated to their inner being. It was not superficial.

Fear: A respect or a prioritizing of the things of G-d in their lives.

Wonders: Something miraculous that only G-d could bring about, acts of G-d.

Signs: A sign has to do with revelation. When G-d does a miracle, it is not just to meet needs, but it confirms revelation, confirms His purposes.

Verse 44: *“Many of the ones believed in Him, and they had all things in common.”*

They had all things in common: Faith brought about a congruency among the people. They saw things in the same way. This does not happen naturally (It can also be seen as one of those signs and wonders, it is supernatural). These people became one in every aspect of their existence. Every part of that congregation was a concern to every member of that congregation (Like a body – if there is a toothache the whole body is affected).

Verse 45: *“And their goods and their possessions they sold, and divided them among all, according to as much as there was need.”*

Their possessions they sold: This does not mean that they liquidated everything they had. They sold certain things that they owned (their goods in excess, or things that they could live without) based upon the specific needs within the congregation.

When there were needs, people were making business decisions in order to assist one another. The congregation grew into a (kind of) large family and decisions were not just based upon individual need but on the corporate needs.

Verse 46: *“Every day they continued in oneness in the temple. Breaking bread from house to house, sharing food and rejoicing with sincerity of heart.”*

Oneness: One mindedness, unity is being emphasized.

In the temple: Peter and John were not segregated from the temple. They stayed there by choice, as they wanted to testify that they were believers in the G-d of Israel.

Verse 47: *“They were praising G-d and had favour with all the people. And the L-rd added to the ones being saved, each day, to the church.”*

Had favour with all the people: They had a very unique testimony before others (The Jewish people living in Israel at that time).

The L-rd added to the ones being saved: They did not save themselves, but G-d was adding to them, and was doing so because of the testimony of these early believers.

When we live lives that demonstrate our faith, manifesting sanctification in our lives, it has an impact on others. G-d saving others does not happen in a vacuum. Our testimony makes a difference in who comes to the L-rd.

The church: Ecclesia comes from two Greek words: meaning ‘to call’ and ‘out’. This phrase is tied back to two experiences:

1. Abraham’s call - leaving his land, his family, and his culture to go to an unknown place that G-d would show him. G-d put him on a journey because he acted in faith.
2. The congregation who came out of Egypt – both Jew and Gentile responded to a redemptive experience. We are called to ‘come out’ of our stubbornness, our wrong mindsets, etc and embrace, by faith, the truth of G-d. The truth of G-d changes lives.

Chapter 3

Part 1: Acts 3v1-10

Verse 1: *“Peter and John went up into the temple to pray. It was the hour of prayer, the ninth hour.”*

Into the temple: Peter and John remained in Jerusalem, rather than going back to Galilee, after the outpouring of the Holy Spirit. Their lives were changed. They were a part of those who made prayer a consistent priority in their lives. For this, they did not separate themselves from the Jewish community, but were very present within it.

Hour of prayer: In Judaism, on a typical day, prayers are said three times a day.

The ninth hour: Approximately 3:00 in the afternoon. The Hebrew word for this afternoon prayer means “gift”. This prayer, praising G-d, ‘interrupts’ a person’s day and is seen as a special offering, a gift, to G-d.

The number 9 speaks of an outcome/result – in this case as a result of their prayer.

Verse 2: *“Behold, there was a certain man. He was lame from the womb of his mother. And they set him, each day, at the door of the temple - the one that was called ‘Beautiful’ -to ask alms of those entering the temple.”*

Lame from the womb: This man had not lost his ability to walk. He had never been able to walk. Walking is an important term in Judaism and speaks about a lifestyle. (We find this concept supported in the New Covenant - Colossians 2v6) We can therefore conclude that this man, being lame, did not have a lifestyle that was appropriate/pleasing before G-d.

Note: Miracles are G-d's visual aids. They are, oftentimes, a theological message that give us a greater knowledge of the G-d who has manifested Himself to us. Not necessarily for the purpose of showing the power of G-d to us but to relate more information to us.

This Scripture is communicating to us that although we may not be physically lame we are all spiritually lame. We cannot walk with G-d the way we ought to, and we need the miracle of salvation. One of the signs that point to the ministry of Messiah is that He is going to cause the lame to walk (Isaiah 35v5-6). This was an announcement of the Kingdom of G-d.

Door: It speaks of an entrance, an opening, or a gate.

‘Beautiful’: This word means ‘fitting’, that which is appropriate. This can be seen prophetically. This man was not beautiful, fitting, or appropriate, because men should be able to walk. He was the exact opposite of all that that gate represented.

This can teach us that G-d does not necessarily see how we look/are today, but He sees us in light of His completed workmanship in our lives.

Verse 3: *“Behold, Peter and John were about to enter into the temple, and he asked donations (from them).”*

Verse 4: *“But Peter and John looked very intently at him. Peter spoke and said: ‘Look at us!’.”*

But: This word is a conjunction, and means something that is in conflict or in contrast to something else. This lame man was expecting the normal, the routine...BUT....

Looked: The word used here is not the normal one for just noticing someone but is a more intense word. It speaks about gazing intently on someone, scrutinizing, really paying attention.

Look at us!: To be a recipient of the truth of G-d we need to pay attention.

Verse 5: *“And he paid attention to them, expecting to get something from them.”*

Expecting to get something: This is a unique situation. This man is not used to people speaking to him and asking him to give them something (in this case, attention), but nothing has changed, and he is still expecting that he will receive from them.

Verse 6: *“Peter said: ‘Silver and gold it is not to me, but what I have **this** to you I give. In the name of Yeshua, the Messiah from Nazareth, rise up and walk.”*

Silver and gold: This man was hoping for some type of financial blessing.

***This** to you I give:* Peter and John are going to give him what they possess – the power of reconciling him to G-d. The person who is reconciled with G-d is going to walk with Him, live for Him.

In the name of Yeshua: There is an emphasis on the name Yeshua. It is important that we associate a name with Messiah, Yeshua, meaning salvation or Saviour. It is only through Yeshua that we can have salvation. If we do not know His name then we do not have salvation.

Rise up: This word points to resurrection. Resurrection is synonymous with Kingdom. The intent here is for this man to live a Kingdom life. It is a call to change.

Verse 7: *“And he took him by his right hand and immediately he was strengthened, his feet and his ankles.”*

He was strengthened: His shrivelled, deformed legs were restored supernaturally (by G-d).

Verse 8: *“Jumping, he stood and walked. And he entered with them into the temple, walking and leaping and praising G-d.”*

This miracle parallels our experience spiritually. We were spiritually lame, we could not walk with G-d, so He healed us – giving us strength to serve Him and to do His will.

He stood and walked: This shows a proper outcome. He received healing and was put back into the order that G-d originally intended man to be in.

Praising G-d: Like this man, G-d has healed us and given us the ability to serve Him. What our attitude should characterize is **thanksgiving**, in a most visible way.

This man is a divine example or illustration of what we should be doing - noticeably declaring our praise and thanksgiving for the change that G-d has brought about in our lives.

Verse 9: *“All the people saw him walking and praising G-d.”*

Walking: This text emphasises that he walked. The Scripture is telling us that this man began to live in a proper way, living in light of what G-d had done in his life.

Verse 10: *“And they recognized that this was the one that was asking for alms at the Beautiful gate at the temple. They were filled with wonder and astonishment at what had happened to him.”*

They recognized: Are we living in a way that others can recognise that the name of Yeshua has brought about a change in our lives? (Matthew 3v8)

At the gate: There is a word change here. Now it does not mean door, like we saw in 3v2. This is a word related to intimacy, to purpose.

What had happened: This word is used in key passages in the Old Testament for an undeniable work of G-d, a happening (Ruth 2v3 as one example). A happening, in the Bible, is a miracle that restores things back to the divine purposes of G-d.

Note: What this passage is saying is that the Ministry of Messiah is still with us. He was dead, buried, resurrected, and ascended but His ministry, power and purpose were still available through the ministry of believers. Happenings still happen, and the outcome of these ‘happenings’ should produce a change in how we live and lead us to thanksgiving that G-d remains among us.

Chapter 3

Part 2: Acts 3v11-26

Verse 11: *“He who was healed, the lame one, clung to Peter and John and all the people ran to them at the hall, according to Solomon, and they were amazed (wondering).”*

Clung: The word used here is usually written in regard to clinging to the Word of G-d, holding on to the commandments of G-d.

This man had a desire to walk (live) in the same way that Peter and John did. He wanted a new conduct, a new lifestyle.

Hall: A position that was marked out, associated with *Solomon* (John 10v22). This hall of Solomon was very close to the Holy places. This draws our attention to the fact that the purpose for this healing was to draw people to G-d - not only the one who was healed but all people. When a miracle takes place, it should not just impact the one who received it, but also those who witness it and even those who hear it as a testimony.

Verse 12: *“Peter answered the people: ‘Men, Israelites, why do you wonder about this? Why are you looking at us as though by our own power or godliness that this one who walks was made to walk?’”*

Power or godliness: These two words are united with each other here. This teaches us an important truth, and that is that power (anointing) can bring about the miraculous (accomplish the work of G-d), but there is also power in living G-dly lives. Living righteously and obediently, to the purposes and the plan of G-d, anoints a person with power.

Verse 13: *“The G-d of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, the G-d of our fathers, glorified His servant Yeshua. You delivered and rejected Him before the face of Pilate, who judged this One as One judged to release.”*

The G-d of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob: Whenever the patriarchs are mentioned we should think of two things: faith and promise.

Note: This verse ushers in a change in emphasis. No longer is the miracle done to this man being emphasised, but the emphasis shifts to Israel. The miracle that was done to this man has implications for all of Israel. Israel, if they exercise faith, can become recipients of the promise of G-d.

Rejected: They denied or rejected Him knowing that He was not guilty of what they had accused Him of. They had a portion of knowledge and knew that what they were doing was wrong.
One judged to release: Pilate judged Yeshua and desired to release Him.

Verse 14: *“But you the Holy One and Righteous One rejected, and you requested that a murderous man be granted unto you.”*

Granted: This word has the concept of ‘grace’ attached to it. They acted in a way that a murderous man (Barabbas) became a recipient of grace, and they denied the only True One who could provide grace. They made a very important error in judgement and misappropriated the whole concept of grace.

Verse 15: *“And the Founder of life you killed; whom G-d has raised from the dead; whom we are witnesses.”*

The Founder of life: Life begins with Him.

Verse 16: *“And by the faith of His name (Yeshua) this one (the lame man), whom you have seen and whom you know, His name strengthened. And the faith, which is through Him, has given to him wholeness, before you all.”*

His name (Yeshua) strengthened: Through Yeshua’s name the lame man was strengthened. There is power in His name.

Given to him wholeness: This is an idiom that means that he (the lame man) received perfect or complete restoration, and it all came about through faith in Yeshua's name.

Before you all: They were all witnesses of the healing.

Verse 17: *“And now brethren I know that according to ignorance you performed, just as also your rulers.”*

according to ignorance you performed (acted): Twice earlier (v13 and v14) we were told that they rejected Yeshua – with the implication that they had known what they were doing. However, they had been ignorant of how wrong they were, and what the full implications of their actions entailed.

Verse 18: *“But G-d foretold through the mouths of **all** of His prophets that Messiah suffered to fulfil this.”*

G-d...foretold: This is why it is so important that we have prophetic understanding. If we understand prophecy we can discern Yeshua and understand the implications (to the world and to the individual) of Him being the suffering servant.

Messiah suffered to fulfil this: Yeshua suffered in order to fulfil what all of the prophets had spoken about - a suffering Messiah.

Verse 19: *“Therefore repent, and turn for the blotting out of your sins, so that the times of refreshing shall come from the face of the L-rd.”*

Turn: This means that they need to turn to G-d, to receive the gospel so that *their sins could be blotted out.*

Refreshing: Literally means ‘so that your souls can be brought up’ (into a higher, more appropriate spiritual condition).

From the face of the L-rd: Receive blessings from the L-rd. True blessings, from G-d, enable us to bring about His will in our lives according to His purposes and plans.

Verse 20: *“Also He should send the One appointed to you - Messiah Yeshua.”*

He should send the One: This ties together those times of refreshing with the coming of Messiah at the end of the age. Although miracles can and do occur now they were more plentiful nearly 2,000 years ago, and they are going to become more plentiful again in the last days.

Appointed: Designated

Verse 21: *“Whom it is necessary for the heaven to have received Him up to the time of the restoration of all things. Which G-d has spoken through the mouth of all His Holy prophets from eons.”*

Necessary for the heaven to have received Him: He is there for now.

The restoration of all things: The going back of everything to its proper condition – when Messiah returns He will bring it all back into order during the Millennial Kingdom.

From eons: From ages ago

Verse 22: *“For Moses said to the fathers: ‘A prophet the L-rd, your G-d, shall rise up from your brethren as me. Him you shall hear (obey) according to all which He shall speak to you.’”*

This is a quotation taken from Deuteronomy 18v15.

A prophet... G-d shall rise up from your brethren: Moses prophesied this, and Peter is identifying Yeshua as the One who had been raised up in order to bring about this restoration.

Verse 23: *“It shall come about that every soul who does not hear of that Prophet (Yeshua) is going to be cut off.”*

Cut off: In the Old Testament some would say this person will be cut off from his people, excommunicated. In the New Testament it means that **each** person, who does not listen to this Prophet, will be brought to total destruction or annihilation.

Verse 24: *“And all the prophets from Samuel on, as many as have spoken, have foretold these days.”*

Have foretold these days: We do not have any excuse; it has been clearly told to us.

Verse 25: *“You are sons of the prophets and of the Covenant which G-d appointed to our fathers. Saying to Abraham: ‘To your seed all the nations of the earth shall be blessed’.”*

You are sons (heirs) of the prophets and of the Covenant: Peter is speaking to Jewish people, to Israel.

Verse 26: *“Unto you, first, G-d raised up His Son Yeshua and sent Him to bless you in order that you might turn, each of you, from your evilness.”*

His Son Yeshua: In the natural a son is younger than his father, but this is not the case between the Heavenly Father and His Son. There was never a time that the Father existed and the Son did not. Like an earthly son should, though, Yeshua submits to the authority of His Father and, ultimately, Yeshua will inherit all things from His Father.

Your evilness: G-d sent His Son in order to transform our lives so that we do not have to live in a way which G-d considers evil.

Chapter 4

Part 1: Acts 4v1-18

Verse 1: *“They were speaking to the people, and the priests, the captain of the temple and the Sadducees stood near to them.”*

They: Probably Peter and John

The Sadducees: According to history they had the controlling majority in the Sanhedrin – the governing body, for Israel, from a political and spiritual perspective. The Sadducees denied angels, denied G-d's interaction in His creation (they believed He was creator, but that once things were put in motion He stepped back), they did not believe in an afterlife (or an eternal Kingdom) and they did not believe in resurrection. Anything miraculous they always wanted to discredit.

Verse 2: *“They were bothered on account that they were teaching the people and proclaiming, in Yeshua, the resurrection of the dead.”*

They were bothered: The Sadducees were vexed that the Apostles were teaching in the name of Yeshua (who they had tried to blot out) and that they were teaching about resurrection.

Proclaiming in Yeshua the resurrection of the dead: By His name there is a Kingdom experience, and this miracle confirmed the reality of the power of His name and the coming of His kingdom.

Verse 3: *“They cast upon them their hands and put them in custody until the next day, for it had already become evening.”*

They cast upon them their hands: They seized Peter and John

Evening: This concept of evening is uniquely tied to Redemption. The Israelites were in bondage, so to speak, in Egypt. G-d moved to free them in the night. Peter and John were in prison, being held in custody, and it was night-time so we should expect G-d to move.

Verse 4: *“But many of those who were listening to the Word believed; and it was made the number of men about 5000.”*

But: Shows a contrast, something moving in a different direction.

Believed: Hearing the Word leads to believing, and the lives of those who believe are going to be eternally changed.

5000: 5,000 people now believed because of the teaching of the Word and faith. They did not come to faith on their own but they were made or caused to do so – G-d added them. They believed what they heard, and their faith (given to them by G-d, as they heard the message proclaimed – Romans 10v17) caused them to be added to this number.

5,000 = 50x100. 100 speaks of completion, 50 reminds us of jubilee – freedom, liberty. These people believed and because of that they had complete liberty or freedom from the bondage of this world.

Verse 5: *“But it came about on the next day that the rulers, the elders and the scribes that were based in Jerusalem,”*

Rulers: Those who have political connections.

Elders: The leaders of the people, chosen by the people.

Scribes: Experts in Biblical interpretation.

Verse 6: *“Also Annas, the high priest, Caiaphas, John and Alexander - and as many that were from the lineage (family) of the high priests - were gathered to them.”*

This was an important group that were part of the Sanhedrin.

Verse 7: *“And they stood them (Peter and John) in the midst to interrogate them: ‘By what power and In whose name have you done this?’”*

In the midst: Meaning in the midst of all these important people, possibly in order to intimidate them and cause them to submit.

Verse 8: *“Then Peter, being filled with the Holy Spirit, said to them: ‘Rulers of the people and elders of Israel,”*

Being filled with the Holy Spirit: When someone believes they are filled with the Holy Spirit. The text is implying that Peter received an anointing for this time that he was going to respond, and the Spirit of God entered into him in a unique way.

Rulers of the people and elders of Israel: Peter addressed them respectfully.

Verse 9: *“If you are wanting to make judgment on a good deed: a weak man, by what means that this one, has been saved,”*

A weak man: This is applicable to anybody, and not specifically the lame man that was healed. Weak men and women can find healing.

Saved: This word can be used for physical healings, but it also has salvation overtones. The lame man’s new condition (physical healing) parallels his spiritual healing. The man did not play a role in either his physical or spiritual healing. It happened to him.

Verse 10: *“Let it be known to all of you, and to all the people of Israel, that in the name of Messiah Yeshua of Nazareth, whom you crucified but whom the G-d raised from the dead, this one stands before you whole.”*

Whom the G-d raised from the dead: Even though Peter was in this prestigious group of leaders, who did not believe in the resurrection, he was not intimidated, and he did not change the truth.

Whole: Healed, in accordance with the will of G-d.

Verse 11: *“This One, ‘The Stone which the builders have rejected’, has become the chief Cornerstone’.”*

This One: Speaking about Yeshua

The Stone which the builders have rejected: This is a quote taken from Psalm 118v22

The builders: The leaders, those who were supposed to build the kingdom.

Rejected: This is also a word that means ‘to loathe’.

The chief Cornerstone: Yeshua is the One who is foundational in establishing that Kingdom.

Verse 12: *“And it is in no other Saviour. For no other name under heaven is given to men in which it is absolutely necessary for us to be saved.”*

No other Saviour: There is no other means of salvation, only One way and One name has been given to us. In John 14v6 we are told that it is by means of the Son that we come to the Father. Never do we see that by faith in the Father can we come to the Son.

Verse 13: *“They, perceiving (intently looking at) Peter and the boldness, also John, having understood that the men were uneducated, and were also regular (ordinary) men, they were amazed by them and recognized that they were with Yeshua.”*

Boldness: That boldness came from a confidence of knowing something, and knowing it without any doubt. Peter and John were confident in what they were sharing, and that confidence made an impression on those leaders.

Recognized that they were with Yeshua: It was because of their time with Yeshua that they had confidence in the Word of G-d.

Verse 14: *“Looking upon the man with them standing, the one who had been healed, they did not have anything to say against this.”*

The man with them standing: This man showed his loyalty, his faith, his commitment by staying with Peter and John.

They did not have anything to say against this: There was nothing that they could say against what had happened.

Verse 15: *“But they commanded them outside the Sanhedrin to go, and they took counsel with one another saying:”*

Outside the Sanhedrin: The Sanhedrin was also up on the Temple Mount, in the temple area. They did not want the people, including Peter and John and the man who had been healed, to hear what they were saying.

Verse 16: *“What shall we do to these men? A notable miracle has been done through them, and to all the dwellers in Jerusalem it has been manifested, which we are not able to deny.”*

Verse 17: *“But in order that further it should not spread among the people we must threaten them that they should not speak in this name to any man.”*

It should not spread into the people: They could not deny that a powerful miracle had taken place, but they did not want the result - they were against G-d moving in Kingdom truth, power, and revelation.

Verse 18: *“And they called them, and they commanded them that they should not speak nor teach in the name of Yeshua.”*

They commanded: The majority of the Sanhedrin (it only took 51% for the Sanhedrin decisions to be reported as unanimous) commanded them.

They should not speak nor teach in the name of Yeshua: This is the greatest indicator that there is power in the name of Yeshua.

Chapter 4

Part 2: Acts 4v19-37

Verse 19: *“But Peter and John, answering them, said: ‘If it is righteous before G-d to obey you rather than G-d you judge.’”*

Obey you: These members of the Sanhedrin, and the priesthood, had both political and divinely given authority. Romans 13v1-5 tells us that we need to submit to authority. However, what Peter and John are saying here is that we cannot obey man’s authority if it is at the expense of disobeying G-d. This Scripture speaks of G-d’s supreme authority overall. If a law is passed that is in conflict with the commandments of G-d, then we obey G-d rather than that law.

Verse 20: *“For we are not able, what we see and what we hear, not to speak.”*

Peter and John are rejecting the order (4v18) of the Sanhedrin in order to obey G-d rather than man.

Verse 21: *“After threatening them they released them. There was nothing found on which they could punish them, on account of the people that were all giving glory to G-d because of what had happened.”*

Verse 22: *“For the man more than 40 years he had, this one whom it happened this sign of healing.”*

40 years: The man was more than 40 years old. The number 40 has to do with a transition or a change. Change will only come when an individual realizes that he is ultimately under the authority of G-d and that he must submit to the will of G-d.

sign of healing: It had revelation attached to it.

Verse 23: *“Releasing them they went back to their own, and they proclaimed to them what the high priests and elders had said.”*

They went back to their own: Peter and John went back to their fellow believers.

Verse 24: *“These, having heard this, were in one desire. They lifted up their voice to G-d and they said: ‘Sovereign L-rd, You are God. The One who made the heaven, the earth, the sea and all which is in them.’”*

One desire: These believers heard the law from the Sanhedrin, but they were of one mindset – and that was to agree with Peter and John.

The One who made...all: This text is giving a rationale as to why we should obey the Creator G-d above all. He did not only create the first heaven and earth, but He is also going to create the New Heaven and Earth - in which He will establish His Kingdom.

Verse 25: *“The One through the mouth of David, Your servant, said: ‘In order that the nations should rage and the people plan that which is vain.’”*

Servant: Or son. A young man who is supposed to serve a superior – His father, or one who has authority over him.

In order that the nations should rage and the people (A synonym for ‘nations’, the leaders of the nations) *plan that which is vain:* A quote taken from Psalm 2v1

Verse 26: *“For the kings of the Earth, and the rulers, stand up and are gathered unto him, against the L-rd and against His Messiah.”*

Quoted from Psalm 2v2

Stand up: They stand up in opposition

Are gathered: Something ungodly causes them to be gathered together in unity with an agenda against the plans and purposes of G-d.

Against the L-rd and against His Messiah: Unity between G-d and Yeshua (Supports the trinity)

Verse 27: *“For they were gathered against truth and also against Your Faithful and Holy servant Yeshua, whom You have anointed.”*

Holy: Holy has to do with purpose. Yeshua was the One who carried out the purposes of G-d – offering up His life as a sacrifice.

Verse 28: *“But Herod and Pontius Pilate, with the nations and with the people of Israel, did whatever Your hand and Your counsel saw beforehand to be.”*

Saw beforehand: What G-d saw beforehand He did not necessarily cause. G-d will never cause someone to go against His will.

He does not have to cause someone to disobey Him in order for His will to be fulfilled. G-d's will is best fulfilled through obedience. Disobedience does not cause G-d to be glorified, but punishing disobedience glorifies Him.

G-d saw that Messiah was going to be rejected, but He did not cause the nations and Israel to reject Him. Rejecting Messiah was sinful and brought about G-d's judgement. The rejection of G-d (in Messiah) did not stop G-d from fulfilling His purposes.

Verse 29: *"Now L-rd, look upon their threats and give to Your servants boldness to speak all Your words."*

Boldness to speak all Your words: Boldness to proclaim the gospel message, to reveal what Yeshua has done.

Verse 30: *"In stretching out Your hand for healing, and for signs and wonders to make, according to the name of Your Holy servant Yeshua."*

Stretching out Your hand: They are asking for G-d's power and authority.

Verse 31: *"And they prayed. The place where they had assembled shook and they were filled, all of them, with the Holy Spirit to speak the Word of G-d with boldness."*

G-d answered their prayer.

Verse 32: *"The multitude of believers were one in heart and also in soul. None of them were saying that they possessed to themselves anything of their own, but all things were to them in common."*

All things were to them in common: There was unity even in their resources. They did not sell everything that they owned and give it away – if they had done so they would have found themselves to be in need. They sold the excess that they owned and this they gave away. They did not want to have an abundance of possessions but wanted to bless their fellow believers who had lack.

Verse 33: *"Great power was given to the Apostles for the witness of the resurrection of Messiah, and also great grace was upon all of them."*

Resurrection of Messiah: The Kingdom

Great grace: Grace causes us to deny ourselves and focus on others.

Verse 34: *"None of them possessed any need. For those who were possessors of fields or homes sold what was to them and brought the worth of what they had sold,"*

Verse 35: *"and they set it at the feet of the Apostles. They distributed to each one according to the need he had."*

Verse 36: *“But Joseph, a Levite from Cyprus, the one being called Barnabas by the Apostles - which is translated ‘the son of encouragement’,”*

Note: This verse ushers in a transition. We see a change in authority. This is foreshadowing what is coming – a destruction of the temple and Israel going into exile. The new leadership over the Jewish people was going to consist of the believers – namely the Apostles.

But Joseph: We are talking about a new subject in order to clarify an old subject.

A Levite: The Old Testament law commanded that a tithe needed to be given to the Levites. We now see that a Levite, rather than being the recipient of a tithe, is giving to the Apostles (see 4v37). This shows a new government of G-d being established (An apostolic government).

Encouragement: This is a word related to Messiah. It can also be translated ‘consolation’ or ‘comfort’. As servants of Messiah, believers have been empowered to perform His same ministry – to give encouragement to others, Kingdom comfort.

Verse 37: *“being a possessor of a field sold it and brought the money and set it at the feet of the Apostles.”*

Chapter 5

Part 1: Acts 5v1-11

Verse 1: *“A certain man, Ananias by name, with Sapphira his wife, sold a parcel of land.”*

A parcel of land: The land referred to here, more often than not, is related to a field that is used for grazing livestock – cattle, sheep etc

Verse 2: *“Withholding from the value of the proceeds, and knowing also his wife, he brought a portion and at the feet of the Apostles he set it.”*

Withholding: It would have been acceptable for Ananias to have withheld a portion of the land’s proceeds for himself. Instead what he did was dishonest. He gave the impression that he was setting the full value of what he had sold the land for at the Apostle’s feet, but in reality he had withheld some for himself. Whenever we distort or misrepresent the truth we are not behaving under the anointing of the Holy Spirit, but are behaving like the father of all lies – satan.

Knowing also his wife: Sapphira was aware of what he had done.

At the feet of the Apostles he set it: In a very submissive manner, outwardly, he laid it at the feet of the Apostles. Ananias gave the money to the apostolic ministry. He wanted to further the work of Messiah. However, G-d’s work is not furthered by deceit.

Verse 3: *“And Peter said: ‘Ananias, on account of what did satan fill your heart that you should lie to the Holy Spirit and withhold from the value of the land?’”*

On account of what: Peter wants to know what is going on in Ananias’ thought processes.

Verse 4: *“Was it not, when it remained with you, yours? And when it was sold it was still existed to your authority. Because of what did you set your heart to this thing? You have not **lied to men but to G-d.**”*

Yours: It belonged completely to Ananias.

Still existed to your authority: Ananias could do what he wanted with the land and when he sold it he could still do what he wanted with those proceeds. He was under no obligation to give the proceeds to the Apostles. They were not asking for it, or demanding it. The problem was that he misrepresented what he was doing. He did not act according to truth but lied.

This thing: literally ‘this pragma(tic)’: This Scripture is instructing the believer that we need to set our heart properly. To put it in the right condition.

Lied to ...G-d: In verse 3 we were told Ananias lied to the Holy Spirit and now we are told he lied to G-d. When we put those two statements together we can see the divinity of the Holy Spirit and His part in the trinity.

Note on Trinity: The word ‘trinity’ does not appear in the Bible, but what the doctrine of the trinity teaches is found in many places in the Word of G-d.

The only conclusion we can reach from the above verses is that the Holy Spirit is G-d. We do not have two (or three) gods but we have ONE G-d (Deuteronomy 6v4, Mark 12v29).

The Trinity does not speak about multiple gods; it speaks about G-d the Father, G-d the Son and G-d the Holy Spirit. Three distinct persons but **one** G-d. This may be hard to grasp but anything that we learn about G-d's nature is hard for a human mind to grasp.

Verse 5: *“And Ananias, hearing these words, fell and he expired. And it came about great fear upon all the ones who heard these things.”*

Hearing these words: There was an immediate response.

He expired: This word means ‘to breathe out’. Death, Biblically, is when the spirit of a man, or a woman, exits their body. When the spirit leaves that person physically dies. Physical death is not the same as spiritual death (This is eternal separation from G-d in a place of eternal condemnation and punishment - in the lake that burns forever with fire and brimstone).

Great fear: All those who heard these things gave G-d priority, they had a proper fear of G-d. This is not a fear that causes one to flee. It is a fear that causes one to obey, submit or draw closer to G-d through obedience.

Verse 6: *“The young men standing wrapped him up, carried him out and buried him.”*

Wrapped him up: Wrapping up the body for burial was the tradition of the Jewish community at that time.

Buried him: The emphasis in Judaism is a quick burial. We see this being affirmed here. Ananias was buried even though his wife was not even there. Burying the dead is of the utmost importance and it takes precedence over all things. Only after the burial does the mourning begin.

Verse 7: *“It came about as three hours afterwards his wife came in, not knowing what had happened.”*

Three hours afterwards: 3 hours after Ananias had died. The number 3 is for the purpose of revealing something.

His wife: Biblically the woman is the man's help mate. G-d had graciously equipped her to assist her husband – to assist him in the things of G-d, not in his own desires.

Verse 8: *“And Peter answered her, and he said: ‘Say to me if such-and-such was given for the field.’ And she said: ‘Yes, such-and-such’.”*

Answered her: He is responding to this issue.

Such-and-such: Peter was being specific about the price. Sapphira replied in the affirmative to that specific amount.

Verse 9: *“Peter said to her: ‘Why have you conspired together to test the Spirit of the L-rd? Behold the feet of the ones who buried your husband are at the door and they are going to carry you as well.’”*

The Spirit of the L-rd: This is the third time the Holy Spirit is referred to in this passage.

1. In verse 3 He is called the Holy Spirit.
2. In verse 4 He is mentioned as G-d.
3. Here He is being referred to as the Spirit of the L-rd (possibly ‘L-rd’ is referring to Yeshua Himself – It is only when we recognise the L-rdship of Yeshua in our lives that the Holy Spirit can function powerfully or mightily).

The purpose of these differences is to give us a greater understanding of who The Holy Spirit is. He is working, ministering, and dwelling in the believers. The authority that Peter and the other Apostles have is based upon His anointing and call.

When Yeshua spoke of the Holy Spirit He called Him the ‘Spirit of Truth’ (John 16v13). When we walk in truth the Spirit is going to function mightily in us. The outcome of hindering the Holy Spirit, by behaving deceitfully, does not lead to life but leads to death.

Verse 10: *“She fell immediately at his feet and she expired. And the young ones, entering in, found her dead and they carried and buried her near her husband.”*

At his feet: This place of ‘at their feet’ has been emphasized in this text. Part of the Apostles’ role was to:

1. Minister – receive from others in order to meet the needs of those in need.
2. They had authority. When they were challenged, or lied to, they brought about judgment.

She expired: She died in a similar way to her husband. G-d is a G-d of equality. A man lies and he is punished. A woman lies and she too is punished. The punishment of one is the punishment of the other.

Buried her near her husband: They were partners in deceit and suffered the same consequence.

Verse 11: *“And it came about great fear upon all the congregation. This great fear also was upon all the ones hearing these things.”*

Great fear: See verse 5.

Upon all the congregation: Giving G-d priority, by reverencing or fearing Him, is the description of the ecclesia, the Church of G-d. Walking in this fear, that we have for G-d, is going to cause us not to deceive, distort or lie.

Upon all the ones hearing: Even those who were not part of the congregation could not deny, when they heard these things and saw the burial places, the testimony. It also made an impression upon them.

G-d's truth is mighty to bring about change - in the believers first and, that change, is going to have an impact upon others.

Note: We see the significance of the Apostolic ministry being given. It is manifested first to the body of believers and then to the rest of the people. At the end it is going to be the leaders of G-d that are going to inherit and rule the world. This is a foreshadowing of that.

Chapter 5

Part 2: Acts 5v12-29

Verse 12: *“By the hands of the Apostles were done miraculous signs and wonders among the people, many. And they were all in one accord in Solomon's portico.”*

Miraculous signs and wonders ... many: What is being emphasized is not the number of miracles -although they were numerous - but rather that they were signs. This should have caused reflection among the people, as miracles are G-d's visual aids to revelation (see Note under 3v2). These signs and wonders conveyed Biblical truth. The purpose of them was to enable people to draw closer to G-d in worship.

Solomon's portico: Solomon's Hall was the closest place someone, who was not a Levite or a Priest, could get to the temple. This was a place of worship. It was a place of intimacy, closeness, to G-d.

Note: Worship is not just praising, adoration and the study of G-d's Word. Worship is also service. It is living a sacrificial life full of good deeds - producing the fruit of the Spirit.

Verse 13: *“But no one dared to join them, but the people magnified them.”*

No one dared to join them: Those who did not have this faith, who did not understand the teachings and message of these miracles, did not join in.

Verse 14: *“There was added to the number of those who were believing in the L-rd a multitude of men and also women.”*

Women: We see that women played a highly significant role in the New Testament. The word ‘man’, in the Biblical sense, has to do with this composite between male and female. Although equal, there is a difference between male and female. When they come together, in the way that G-d intended (Genesis 2v22-24), they manifest/reflect a godly character. In the book of Acts as the church is being manifested, developed, we see that there is, once more, an emphasis on male and female. This all goes back to G-d's created purpose.

Verse 15: *“So that in the streets they were bringing the weak and were setting them upon cots (little beds) and also upon mats in order that Peter coming, even the shadow, would overshadow some of them.”*

Verse 16: *“Coming together also the multitude from the regions of the cities. They brought the sick and those that were tormented by unclean spirits so that all were being healed.”*

The regions of the cities: The locations, or neighbourhoods, of the cities around Jerusalem.

The sick and those that were tormented by unclean spirits: Sick both physically and spiritually.

Unclean spirits: Unclean spirits were being defeated. This is the Scripture's way of putting a divine stamp of approval on what the Apostles were teaching and doing. They were having success in spiritual warfare. The Apostolic authority was for defeating the enemy, giving us victory, and bringing about a restoration of the will of G-d.

All were being healed: Without limitations. Every aspect of G-d goes beyond limitations - He is omniscient (knowing all things), omnipresent (located in every location), and omnipotent (all-powerful).

Verse 17: *“But the high priest stood up, and all those who were with him, those being from the sect of the Sadducees and they were made full of envy.”*

The Sadducees: They were the ruling body of the elders of Israel. They did not believe in a supernatural G-d who worked and manifested Himself before the people. The high priest aligned himself with them.

Full of envy: The people were rejoicing and excited. They were coming to, and acknowledging, this Apostolic authority. This ‘old guard’ of leaders were disappointed and envious about this. Therefore, they stood in opposition to this new leadership.

Verse 18: *“They cast their hands upon the Apostles, and they set them in a public jail.”*

They: A small, very influential, portion of the leadership of Israel, in Jerusalem, at that time. It was not the Jewish people as a whole.

Cast their hands upon the Apostles: In opposition to Apostolic authority they exercised their authority.

A public jail: A public place of detention.

Verse 19: *“But the angel of the L-rd, by night, opened the doors of the prison and, leading them out,”*

The angel of the L-rd: When he is manifested in Scripture it is usually within the context of salvation and/or deliverance. God moved against the leadership of the day in support of the Apostolic authority and leadership.

By night: It was through angelic power, at night-time, that the children of Israel came out of Egypt. There is a correlation between Redemption and the night-time.

Verse 20: *“he said: ‘Go and stand and speak in the temple to the people all the words of this life.”*

Go and stand and speak: The government had commanded them not to teach in the name of Yeshua, however the angel commanded them to go and speak of it. G-d always trumps the government’s authority. What G-d says we need to do.

All the words of this life: A life that G-d specifically reveals in His Word.

Verse 21: *“And hearing, they entered into the temple at sunrise and they talked. The high priest entered in, and those that were with him, and they called the Sanhedrin - all the assembly of the sons of Israel - they sent to the prison that they (these apostles) should be brought.”*

At sunrise: They went as early as possible in the morning.

With those that were with him: The Scripture emphasizes that there was always a number of people with the high priest (for the purpose of intimidation).

They called the Sanhedrin: They brought the council into session.

Assembly of the sons of Israel: The elders of Israel.

Verse 22: *“The officers went, but they did not find them in the prison. They returned and proclaimed saying: “*

Verse 23: *“We found the prison having been locked up in all firmness (in all security) and the ones who were keepers of the prison were outside, standing before the doors, but opening inside we found no one.”*

Locked up in all firmness: They used very serious measures to hold these Apostles.

We found no one: There was no natural explanation for this. This is simply another sign, another wonder, for the reader to ponder and to realize that G-d is able to do all things.

Verse 24: *“Upon hearing this word the high priest, the captain of the temple and the chief priests were astonished, and they cast the doubt upon them on what should this happen.”*

Cast the doubt upon them on what should this happen: What should come about because of this.

Verse 25: *“And drew near a certain one and he proclaimed to them saying: ‘Behold the men which you placed in prison are in the temple standing and teaching the people.’”*

Standing and teaching the people: This is in defiance of what the government of Israel ordered the Apostles to do, but it is in obedience to what the angel of the L-rd instructed them to do.

Verse 26: *“The captain (of the temple) went away with the soldiers to bring them, but not with force, for they feared the people in order that they should not be stoned.”*

Captain ... with the soldiers: Their job was to keep order around the temple.

Not with force: Without violence

The people: These were the Jewish people, the inhabitants of Jerusalem. The Apostles were popular and were well-received by the masses of people.

That they should not be stoned: If the Sanhedrin forced the Apostles to stand trial before them they were afraid that the public would stone the members of the Sanhedrin to death.

Verse 27: *“Bringing them they stood them in the Sanhedrin and the high priest asked them saying:”*

Verse 28: *“Was not a commandment commanded unto that you should not teach on behalf of this name? Behold you have filled Jerusalem with your doctrine and now do you intend to bring upon us the blood of this man?”*

On behalf of this name: This name has power. This name is foundational. The leaders understood that it was **this** name that was bringing about a change that they did not want, the will of G-d. This world does not like or want the will of G-d. This name brought about a character change in the lives of the people who received it.

Bring upon us the blood: They did not want to feel guilty about Yeshua’ s death, but they already had, within themselves, a sense of guiltiness.

This man: They did not want to say the name ‘Yeshua’.

Verse 29: *“But Peter and the Apostles answered, and they said: ‘It is absolutely necessary for us to obey G-d rather than men.’”*

G-d had given to Peter Apostolic authority, and had manifested His anointing upon Peter, so that even his shadow brought about healing of both physical and spiritual disorders. We, therefore, need to pay close attention to what Peter said: *It is absolutely necessary for us to obey G-d rather than men.*

Galatians 1:10: If I were still trying to please men I would not be a servant of G-d.

Chapter 5

Part 3: Acts 5v30-42

Verse 30: *“The G-d of our fathers raised Yeshua whom you killed hanging upon the tree.”*

The G-d of our fathers: The patriarchs – Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. They were men of faith and men of the promise. The patriarchs were men who altered their lives and behaved differently. They behaved faithfully because they were pursuing the promises of G-d.

Raised Yeshua: This is an example of a great promise from G-d - **resurrection**. Messiah taught that no one took His life, but He laid it down freely out of obedience to His Heavenly Father. He also said that He had the power to take it up again (John 10v18). However, the Scripture does not emphasize that He took up His life but emphasizes instead that G-d (the Father) raised Him from the dead (1 Corinthians 6v14).

G-d the Father raising G-d the Son testifies of the Father’s acceptance of Messiah's work - His sacrificial, substitutionary death on our behalf - as perfectly sufficient.

Hanging upon the tree: A reference to the crucifixion. In the Torah we find a Biblical truth: ‘Cursed is the one who is hung on the tree’ (Deuteronomy 21v23). This verse references for us that Messiah died because He was accursed. He was not cursed by G-d because of anything that He had done (He is the perfect Son of G-d and was without sin), but the Scripture tells us that He became sin for us (2 Corinthians 5v21). Sin receives the judgement of G-d and leads to death. When Messiah hung on the cross He took the curse, and judgment, so that we could find blessing.

Verse 31: *“This One (Messiah) G-d exalted as Prince and Saviour to His right hand. He gives repentance to Israel and the forgiveness of sins.”*

G-d exalted: Messiah, according to Philippians 2v6-8, emptied Himself and took on the nature of a servant. At the last supper He washed His disciples feet (John 13v4-12) demonstrating His servanthood. He took off His outer garment, a garment of honour, in order to wash their feet - a symbolic reminder of Him removing Himself from His position in the heavens, taking off that role, so to speak. He never ceased being G-d or divine, but He did not function in that role while on earth.

Having served G-d, His Father, perfectly, G-d exalted Him, raised Him up (Philippians 2v9-11).

He gives repentance: Messiah, hanging on the tree, was an invitation that one could receive by faith. When we realise that Messiah is both our Prince and Saviour it brings about repentance. We repent for the purpose of the *forgiveness of our sins*. True Biblical repentance is a desire to turn away from sin.

To Israel: Israel, in this sense, is being used as a Kingdom people.

Verse 32: *“We are His witnesses of these words, and the Holy Spirit, whom He (G-d) has given in order to obey Him.”*

These words: The word used here is *Rhema* (a spoken word). These words have a unique potential and produce literal outcomes. This outcome is connected to the *logos* word - which is G-d's plan. This, therefore, is a spoken revelation in order to bring about a fulfilment of G-d's plan.

The Holy Spirit: He is the One that has the authority to take these Rhema words and make them into a reality.

In order to obey Him: It is when we understand the proclamation of G-d that we are able to submit and, therefore, the fulfilment of His will can be brought about.

Note: The previous verse (5v31) spoke about salvation. In this verse (5v32) we see the outcome of salvation – obedience that brings about the fulfilment of G-d's will.

In this world we have a calling. That calling is to obey the proclamation of G-d in order that, by obedience, these things will be fulfilled. Obedience is where a faithful person demonstrates the love of G-d.

Verse 33: *“Those who heard these things were cut and they desired to kill them.”*

Those who heard: The members of the Sanhedrin, the ruling council of the children of Israel.

Were cut: There was conviction, but not in a G-dly sense.

There are two forms of conviction:

1. Conviction that brings about obedience
2. Conviction that arouses anger in the person when their sinfulness is exposed.
Instead of repenting they lash out, and their true nature/character is manifested.

They desired to kill them: They had just heard of G-d's provision of repentance for Israel, about the fulfilment of G-d's will, about obedience to the purposes of G-d. Should that bring about a desire to kill someone?

Verse 34: *“But a certain one stood up in the Sanhedrin, a Pharisee named Gamliel. He was a teacher of the law, honourable to all the people. He commanded that outside for a little while the apostles would be put.”*

Gamaliel: He was a Pharisee and is well known in Judaism. He had a sensitivity to the things of G-d and gave wise counsel.

He was a teacher of the law: He understood the nature and purposes of the commandments of G-d and had a very different attitude to his peers.

Verse 35: *“And he spoke to them and he said: ‘Men, Israelites, guard yourselves concerning these men that you are ready to strike them.’”*

Them: The members of the Sanhedrin

Guard yourselves: This is a warning. Gamliel probably picked up on some of the Torah truth that Peter was sharing when he said Messiah was hung on a tree.

Verse 36: *“For before these days Theudas stood up claiming to be someone great and a number of men were joined to him, 400. He died and all the ones who were persuaded to him were scattered and this all became nothing.”*

400: This is a global, worldly, number. These men were of the world.

Verse 37: *“And after this, Judas the Galilean rose up in those days of the census. He drew away after him many, but he perished and all those who were convinced of him were scattered.”*

Judas the Galilean: Gamliel is giving examples of individuals who rose up against the leadership of Israel.

He perished...(they) were scattered: Prideful people rise up and the implication is that they are struck down in punishment with nothing coming of their movement/organization.

Verse 38: *“And now I say to you stand-down from these men and leave them. If from men is this thing it will become nothing.”*

Stand-down: Move away from what they were considering doing.

It will become nothing: If it has originated from men it will be condemned to fail.

Verse 39: *“But if from G-d it is you are not able to destroy it, lest also you are found warring with G-d.”*

Gamliel, as part of the Sanhedrin, would have been very aware of Yeshua. He would have understood His trial, as he would have seen and followed these things. Now, hearing an Apostolic presentation of it, in light of understanding Torah law and principles, he is cautioning his peers to not fight against it in the event that it is of G-d.

Verse 40: *“They were persuaded to him and they called the Apostles; they beat them and commanded them not to speak upon the name of Yeshua and they freed them.”*

Were persuaded to him: Gamliel, because of his character and nature, was in a position of honour before the people and they respected him.

Called the Apostles: Individuals sent on assignment by God. The text reveals an anointing and recognition of this call.

They beat them: An act of intimidation.

Upon the name: The name of Yeshua is foundational.

Verse 41: *“Therefore, these went away rejoicing from before the face of the Sanhedrin because, on behalf of His name, they were counted worthy to suffer shame. “*

Rejoicing: Natural joy that comes from obedience. It testifies of people who have overcome the fear of this world and are focussed upon the call of G-d on their lives.

Before the face of the Sanhedrin: The Sanhedrin saw their joy. They did not see that these men were intimidated by the pomp or authority of the Sanhedrin.

On behalf of His name: Name (of Yeshua) is repeated, therefore showing emphasis. Name is synonymous with character. The Apostles were not just speaking the name of Yeshua, but they were demonstrating, before the Sanhedrin, the character of Messiah.

Suffer shame (disgrace): Most people when they are shamed, or disgraced, do not rejoice or see it as a badge of honour. Messiah was rejected and disgraced before the people and these Apostles, knowing that they are behaving like Messiah, rejoiced that they were counted worthy to suffer shame like He did.

Verse 42: *“Every day in the temple, and from house to house, they did not cease to teach and evangelize Yeshua the Messiah.”*

Every day: There was a consistency about their behaviour.

In the temple: They did not hide and do this behind the Sanhedrin's back.

Teach and evangelize: It is very difficult to be an effective evangelist if teaching does not come first. If the Word of G-d is not being taught properly there will not be much anointing for evangelism. All teaching and evangelism was focused on Yeshua, our Messiah.

Chapter 6

Verse 1: *“In those days multiplied the disciples. It came about a grumbling of the Hellenistic Jews against the Hebrews because of the neglecting of the daily ministry for their widows.”*

Multiplied the disciples: More and more people were becoming believers.

The Hellenistic (Greek) Jews against the Hebrews: These were two groups of Jewish people – those (probably in exile) that had come up to live in Israel, and those who had been in Israel for quite some time.

Daily ministry: The daily rations/food. This daily ministry was not something unique to the believing community. It was part of Judaism collectively, and was something that was done in the temple area. It was the leadership of Israel, primarily the priests, who were called to take care of the widows. They were in charge of the tithes and the offerings, that the people brought, and from this money the widows were supported.

Verse 2: *“The Twelve called the multitude of the disciples and they said: ‘It is not appropriate for us to leave the Word of G-d to minister at tables.’”*

The Twelve: The twelve Apostles took leadership in this dispute in order to see it solved.

Appropriate: Pleasing or right

To leave the Word of G-d: The Apostles were committed ministers of the Word of G-d. Without the Word of G-d there would be no church, as the Word is foundational for the church.

They were teaching the Word to the believers, as well as committed to writing it down for us (The New Testament).

Minister: Serve

Verse 3: *“Therefore, brethren, choose men from you, seven men that have a testimony that they be full of the Holy Spirit and wisdom, which we can appoint over this need.”*

Men from you: Meaning from among the believers.

Seven: Seven has to do with purpose.

Full of the Holy Spirit: i.e. Believers. Isaiah 59v20-21 speaks of the giving of the indwelling Holy Spirit as an outcome of faith in the Redeemer Messiah, Yeshua. The Holy Spirit, in a person's life, changes everything.

We can appoint: It was the 12 who would do the appointing.

Verse 4: *“We are going to be steadfastly continuing in prayer and the ministry of the Word.”*

Prayer and ministry of the Word: Those who minister the Word need to be prayerful individuals. Prayer will bring the greatest change to both the understanding and the ability to convey this Word - in the way that G-d intended it to be conveyed.

Verse 5: *“And the word was pleasing before all the multitude and they chose Stephen, a man full of faith and the Holy Spirit. Also, Philip, Prochorus, Nicanor, Timon, Parmenas and Nicolas – a proselyte from Antioch.”*

The word was pleasing: It was received by everyone. The early believers placed high significance upon the sharing of the Word of G-d.

Stephen: This name, in Greek, has to do with a crown. He lived and behaved in a way that he is going to receive that crown.

Full of faith and the Holy Spirit: He believed the truth of G-d. There is a relationship between being full of faith and full of the Holy Spirit (The Spirit of Truth).

Proselyte: Nicolas was not born Jewish but became a believer in the G-d of Israel (Messiah Yeshua).

Verse 6: *“Whom they stood before the Apostles, and they prayed and set their hands upon them.”*

Prayed and set their hands upon them: The Apostles commissioned these 7 men to serve in accordance with the purpose that they were called for. As these men submitted to the purpose that G-d gave them (the responsibility of food distribution), it allowed the Apostles to pray and minister the Word.

Verse 7: *“And the Word of G-d increased and there became a multiplication of the number of the disciples in Jerusalem. Many of the crowd of priests obeyed the faith.”*

The Word of G-d increased: The knowledge of the Word of G-d increased among the believers. The knowledge of the gospel increased among those unbelievers around them. Ministry was effective all around, because of this distribution of power and responsibility.

The crowd of priests obeyed the faith:

1. The priests were the ones who usually carried out this ministry of daily food distribution to the widows and orphans (from within the temple area). The believers in Messiah were increasingly involved in this, and they would have been a testimony in the way that they solved arising issues. This ministry had an impact on the priests, as they saw that the widows and orphans were not being neglected.
2. The primary responsibility of the priests was to teach the Word of G-d. They were now exposed to the whole truth of G-d and this impacted them.
3. They were also responsible for the sacrificial service. They were experts on sacrifice – examining the animals brought to them, in order to deem the sacrifices acceptable (if the animals were blameless) or unacceptable. When presented with Messiah, as the sacrificial Lamb, they received Him as the proper sacrifice for redemption. Acknowledging Him as the Passover Lamb that takes away the sins of the world.

Verse 8: *“Stephen, full of faith and mighty power, doing wonders and great signs among the people.”*

Full of faith: In 6v5 we were told that Stephen was full of the Holy Spirit. Being full of faith and full of the Holy Spirit resulted in a release of the Holy Spirit’s power in his life.

Wonders and great signs: See Note in chapter 3v2

The Apostles are teaching truth, revealing the revelation of G-d. This revelation is being confirmed, by miracles, before the citizens of Jerusalem, the priests, and all living in Israel.

Verse 9: *“Certain ones of the Synagogue of the Freed Ones stood up, and also the Syrians and the Alexandrians and those from Sicily and Asia. These began to argue with Stephen.”*

The Syrians and the Alexandrians and those from Sicily and Asia: These were the ones primarily from outside of Israel but were now living in Israel.

Verse 10: *“They were not able to resist the wisdom and the Spirit by which he was speaking.”*

The wisdom and the Spirit: See 6v3

Note: The book of Acts highlights the Ministry of the Holy Spirit. Without Him leading, guiding, directing, teaching, empowering, illuminating truth to us, etc we would never be able to carry on the Ministry of Messiah.

Verse 11: *“Then stubborn men said: ‘We have heard him speaking blasphemous words against Moses and G-d.’”*

Stubborn men: Rebellious men. Even though truth was presented to them, and was right before their eyes, they chose to deny it.

Speaking blasphemous words: They did not speak truth. They were lying and were distorting the facts. (Doing what is right in G-d's eyes is going to bring about opposition).

Moses: Revered by the Jewish community posthumously.

Verse 12: *“They stirred up the people and the elders and the scribes. They came to Stephen and seized him, and led him into the Sanhedrin.”*

Stirred up the people: For their own purposes, they were sowing deceit and division among the people of G-d – not based upon truth, but based upon a distortion of the facts.

Sanhedrin: The leading governmental body for the Jewish people.

Verse 13: *“They positioned false witnesses, and they said: ‘This man has not stopped from speaking blasphemous words against this holy place and against the law.’”*

False witnesses: Individuals who should not have been allowed to testify among the Sanhedrin.

Verse 14: *“Before, we have heard him speaking that Yeshua from Nazareth will destroy this place and alter the customs which Moses gave to us.”*

They spoke falsehood.

Verse 15: *“Gazing intently at him all the ones who were sitting in the Sanhedrin saw his face as a face of an angel.”*

Ones who were sitting: This implies the Sanhedrin themselves, who had a place within this religious council.

An angel: An angel has to do with one who is sent. It is very similar to an apostle, but it is not one that is sent from. An angel is usually someone on an assignment to do something, or who has a message to speak.

G-d had given Stephen an assignment - to be a testimony, once more, before the Sanhedrin.

Chapter 7

Part 1: Acts 7v1-14

Verse 1: *“The high priest said: ‘If therefore these things have?’”*

If therefore these things have: This is an idiom in the Greek language and could be translated: ‘Are these things thus/true?’

Verse 2: *“He spoke, ‘Men, brethren, and fathers: You have heard the G-d of Glory had appeared to our father Abraham, being in Mesopotamia, before he dwelt in Canaan.’”*

He spoke: Stephen

Men: Addressing the people of Israel in general.

Brethren: Speaking to those believers, within Israel, who are also present.

Fathers: This is a very respectful way of referring to the Sanhedrin, the leadership of Israel.

G-d of Glory: This Glory of G-d is going to be manifested in the Kingdom.

Our father: Stephen points out that he is not establishing a different religion, neither is he speaking against the Torah. Stephen is sharing his confession of faith.

Abraham: The patriarch of the Jewish faith.

Mesopotamia: Abraham was not where G-d wanted him to be, so G-d redirected him.

Canaan: The land of promise, but also the land of submissiveness. It is only when we submit that we are going to have a hope of receiving the promises of G-d.

Verse 3: *“He said to him, ‘Go forth from your land and from your kinsmen (family), and come into the land which to you I will show.’”*

Go forth: G-d told Abraham to move.

Come into the land: G-d wanted to show him the land where he was supposed to dwell.

However, this transformation, this change, that G-d wanted to bring about was conditional on Abraham’s response.

Verse 4: *“Then, coming **out** of the land of the Chaldeans, he dwelt in Canaan. And thus, after his father's death, He emigrated him into this land - into which you now are dwelling.”*

*Coming **out**:* The first thing that G-d wants to do with us, when we become Christians, is to bring us OUT of the situation we find ourselves in – This may be from a location, a mentality, a sinful behaviour etc. He wants to take us into a new, holy, and sanctified reality.

Verse 5: *“And He did not give to him an inheritance in it, not even a place for his foot. It was proclaimed to him that he was going to be given a possession in it, also to his seed after him. At this time there was not to him children.”*

Not even a place for his foot: He did not make any place in it his habitation.

It was proclaimed to him: G-d made promises to Abraham. These were not a reality when he entered Canaan and were only going to be brought about in the future. Abraham faithfully lived with a future expectation of the fulfilment of these promises.

Verse 6: *“And G-d spoke thus that his seed would be a sojourner in a foreign land and that they would be enslaved and mistreated for four hundred years.”*

Mistreated: Treated evilly. When we violate G-d's truth there is going to be punishment, because G-d is true to His laws (both physical and spiritual laws).

We were created with free will and, if we want to be pleasing to G-d, we need to make G-dly decisions. That is why we have His Word and His Holy Spirit - to enable us to do just that.

Four hundred years: Stephen is speaking of 400 years in a general sense. Specifically, or literally, they were in Egypt for 430 years. 400 is also a global number. G-d was going to send His people into exile in order to benefit the world – to show us a picture of G-d's faithfulness. He kept His Word that they would go into exile, but He also showed us how He delivered them out of it.

Verse 7: *“‘The nation that they were enslaved by,’ G-d said, ‘I will judge. After these things they will go forth and will worship Me in this place.’”*

Nation that they were enslaved by: Egypt. G-d did not reward Egypt for their behaviour, but He judged them.

Go forth and will worship Me: Everything that they went through was to bring about a transformation, a change (They came out, were redeemed, and were therefore able to worship).

In this place: Stephen is in Jerusalem and is talking about worshipping in Jerusalem – The city where G-d's name dwells (2 Chronicles 6v6)

In 6v13 Stephen was accused of *“speaking blasphemous words against this holy place.”* He is stating in a very clear way that their slanderous remarks were false.

Verse 8: *“And He gave to him a covenant of circumcision and thus he beget Isaac and he circumcised him on the eighth day. And Isaac (begat) Jacob, and Jacob the twelve patriarchs.”*

Covenant of circumcision: (Genesis 17) ‘Covenant’ speaks of relationship, and it speaks of expectation or promises. Abraham had a relationship with G-d. He had received promises from G-d, and Abraham's reminder of these promises was circumcision. Circumcision is the death of the flesh. The death of the flesh involves not living according to our carnal inclinations, but to live sanctified lives. This means that we live lives that are set apart for the purposes of G-d, by the Word of G-d, through the power of G-d (through the person of the Holy Spirit).

Eighth day: Eight speaks about a new beginning, Kingdom, and redemption. This death of the flesh is preparation for experiencing redemption. When we walk in a redemptive manner we are not living in the flesh, but we are living in the Spirit. When we live in the flesh we live in sin. When we live by the Spirit we live in worship (see 7v7)

Verse 9: *“The patriarchs were envious of Joseph and they sold (him) into Egypt. And G-d was with him.”*

Envious of Joseph: There was a uniqueness about Joseph. He had been born to Jacob in Jacob’s old age (Genesis 37v3). Jacob would not have been working full time (His other sons were managing his affairs) and he would have had an opportunity to lovingly invest himself in the life of Joseph. Part of that investment was to make Joseph a coat of stripes. This might have drawn some contempt from his brothers, but the main issue, that they had with Joseph, was that he had dreams and revelation given to him by G-d that he wanted to share (Genesis 37v19). The brothers rejected that revelation. They were not interested in the things of G-d.

They sold (him): This was a sinful thing for his brothers to do. G-d did not cause the brothers to do this, but G-d used it in order to deepen His relationship with Joseph.

And G-d was with him: What Joseph went through (slander, mistreatment, hard labour, prison) prepared him for what G-d had called him to do.

Verse 10: *“G-d delivered him from all of his tribulation, and gave to him grace and wisdom in the sight of Pharaoh the king of Egypt. He appointed him leader over Egypt and over his whole house.”*

Grace: G-d supplies grace for His will, His covenant promises, to be made a reality.

Wisdom: Discernment in action (Discerned something and followed it up with proper behaviour).

Verse 11: *“And came a famine in all of Egypt and Canaan, and Great Tribulation. The fathers did not find sustenance (food).”*

Famine: A famine shows G-d's displeasure. He was displeased with Egypt because of idolatry. He was displeased with Jacob's family because of a lack of faithfulness, their rebelliousness, and for their desire to reject G-d's revelation (through the dreams that He gave Joseph).

Great Tribulation: **θλίψις** This is the second time that this word is being used. It is a word that is also used in regard to the last days.

Verse 12: *“But Jacob heard being grain in Egypt and he sent forth out our fathers first.”*

Jacob heard: Good things begin to happen in people’s lives when they “hear”.

Sent forth: The same word we get apostle from – sent out ones.

Out: refers to exile

Verse 13: *“And on the second visit, Joseph made himself known to his brothers, and Joseph’s family became known to Pharaoh.”*

This verse offers significant information concerning Yeshua’s ministry, specifically to the descendants of Jacob (i.e. the Jewish people in the last days). It is most significant that when Joseph revealed his identity to his brothers, they did not respond. It was only when Joseph revealed who he was, on the *second visit*, that they received him. This shows that, for the most part, the Jewish people will not receive Messiah Yeshua until His second coming, **when He reveals Himself to them.**

Verse 14: *“Joseph sent to call his father Jacob and all of his relatives, 75 souls that went down.”*

Sent to call: Jacob thought that Joseph was dead. The purpose of him being called to Joseph shows him being called to witness a type of resurrection.

75 souls: Genesis 46v27 tells us that there were 70 people who went to Egypt, so why does it say 75 here?

There are two traditions, or primary textual manuscripts, of the Torah. The Old Testament (as we know it today) is based on the Masoretic text and our New Testament is based on the Septuagint.

1. The Masoretic text was completed in +- 700AD. In the Masoretic text it speaks of 70 souls – 66 + Joseph + Jacob+ Ephraim + Manasseh = 70
2. The Dead Sea Scrolls (written in Hebrew) were written around the time of Messiah’s birth (completed much earlier than the Masoretic text). These are in closer agreement with the Septuagint (LXX), the Greek translation of the Bible, and it is a better manuscript than the Masoretic one. This is the translation that the New Testament writers based their writings and quotes on. In the Dead Sea Scrolls the number of people who went to Egypt agrees with Stephen – 75 in all.
66 souls + Jacob +Joseph +Ephraim+ Manasseh + 5 of Joseph’s grandsons (born in Egypt, as per the LXX) = 75 in total.

Chapter 7

Part 2: Acts 7v15-37

Verse 15: *“And Jacob went down to Egypt and there he died, and also our fathers.”*

Our fathers: Referring to the fathers of the 12 tribes of Israel (The sons of Jacob).

Verse 16: *“And they were transferred into Shechem, and they were put in the tomb which Abraham bought with the price of silver (money) from the sons of Hamor at Shechem.”*

They were transferred: μετατέθησαν This word means to set something with something else, alongside, or side by side.

Abraham bought: In Genesis 23, we read that Abraham bought the cave of Machpelah in Hebron from Ephron the Hittite (Machpelah means ‘multiplying’ or ‘doubling’ – The cave of the doubles). Abraham and Sarah, Isaac and Rebekah, and Jacob and Leah are buried in these caves. This verse is not referring to that transaction.

Joseph was buried in Shechem – Joshua 24v32 (and what this verse is alluding to was that the 12 sons of Jacob were also all buried in Shechem)

A piece of land had been purchased from Hamor at Shechem by Jacob (Joshua 24v32). Why then does it say that Abraham purchased it?

Many times, in Judaism, out of respect, people will do something in the name of someone else (in memory of them, like a memorial).

Shechem was the first place that Abraham stopped, after leaving Haran, to offer a sacrifice to the L-rd (Genesis 12v6-7). Jacob (in Genesis 33v18-19) either redeemed this land in Shechem because Abraham had purchased it at an earlier time, or he purchased the land in memory of his father. Either way, Jacob took ownership of land that G-d had promised to Abraham for his descendants (Genesis 12v7)

Verse 17: *“As the time of the fulfilment of the promise came about (drew near), as G-d swore to Abraham, the people grew and multiplied in Egypt.”*

The people: The Jewish people

Grew and multiplied: They did so in a supernatural way.

Verse 18: *“There arose another king who did not know Joseph.”*

Verse 19: *“This one dealt treacherously with our kindred. He did evil to our forefathers at the time that there was the throwing of their children (into the Nile) in order that they would not live.”*

Dealt treacherously: The word used here has ‘wisdom’ in it, but also means to put something down. This king dealt in an intelligently underhanded way, cunningly, deceitfully.

Our kindred: The Jewish race

That they would not live: He wanted to destroy the seed of Abraham, as he saw the anointing of G-d on the people.

Verse 20: *“At this time Moses was born. He was fitting to G-d. He was raised up three months in the house of his father.”*

Fitting (appropriate) to G-d: In Hebrew, the word ‘tov’ is used. This means ‘good’ i.e. He was appropriate for the will of G-d to be manifested through him.

Three months: 3 is for the purpose of revealing something.

Verse 21: *“When he was placed in that river the daughter of Pharaoh lifted him up and raised him as her own son.”*

Lifted him up: This word has a resurrection context to it. Moses should have died but G-d brought him out of death. Like all those other children who were cast into the river and died, Moses too was cast in, but his parents, by faith, placed him in a little basket. The word used here for ‘basket’ is the same word used for the ark that Noah built. Those who went in, by faith, were saved.

Verse 22: *“Moses grew in all wisdom of Egypt and was powerful in word and deed.”*

Grew in all wisdom: Moses had an anointing upon him. Egypt was the foremost place, at this time, for academics, education in the ancient Sciences etc.

Verse 23: *“And when it was multiplied unto him 40 years it went up upon his heart to look upon his brothers, the sons of Israel.”*

Multiplied unto him 40 years: When he was 40 years old. 40 is the number associated with change.

To look upon: This word means to look critically at something, but from a spiritual standpoint. Moses was looking at his people assessing their spiritual condition. It was not right for them to be people in Egypt when they were meant to be heirs in Israel.

Sons: Heirs

Verse 24: *“Seeing a certain one behaving unrighteously (unjustly) he defended and avenged the one who was being oppressed. He slew the Egyptian.”*

Verse 25: *“He reasoned that his brethren would understand that G-d, through his hand, would give to them salvation; but they did not understand.”*

He reasoned: He thought

G-d, through his hand: When Moses looked at his people he thought that they would recognize and understand that G-d, with His hand upon Moses, would save them. But they did not.

Verse 26: *“On the next day he appeared to them who were having contention. He compelled them to peace and said, ‘You know it is not right, men. You are brothers and it is not proper that you act unjustly to one another.’”*

He appeared to them: Moses came upon two Israelites who were fighting with each other. *It is not proper that you act unjustly:* Moses was interested in justice and did not want the people of G-d warring against one another.

Verse 27: *“The one who was acting unjustly to his neighbour pushed Moses and said, ‘Who appointed you ruler and judge over us?’”*

Pushed Moses: Rejected Moses. That push was a very significant act, representing Israel rejecting Moses at this time. This also foreshadows Yeshua’s rejection by the house of Israel.

Verse 28: *“Do you want to kill me in the same place that you killed the Egyptian?”*

Killed the Egyptian: Moses thought he had gotten away with this act (Exodus 2v12), but his secret was out.

Verse 29: *“Moses fled because of this word, and he became a sojourner in the land of Midian. He beget two sons.”*

Sojourner: Foreigner

Verse 30: *“When forty years had been fulfilled the Angel of the L-rd appeared to him in the wilderness of Mount Sinai, in a flame of fire at the bush.”*

When forty years had been fulfilled: Moses was now 80 years old. The number 8 is symbolic of redemption.

Mount Sinai: Also called Mount Horeb.

Verse 31: *“He saw and was amazed at this appearance and he drew near to understand, and it came about the voice of the L-rd unto him.”*

To understand: To look intently at it.

Verse 32: *“‘I am the G-d of your fathers - the G-d of Abraham, the G-d of Isaac, and the G-d of Jacob.’ Moses became trembling and he dared not look.”*

Note: Whenever the Patriarchs are mentioned in Scripture, they are there to remind us of the promises of G-d. These were faithful men, because they were motivated to act in a way to receive the promises of G-d.

God appeared to Moses in order to move in the life of the Hebrews, so that they could once again become recipients of the promise of G-d. However, those promises are dependent upon them being in the land of Israel.

He dared not look: Once Moses found out that this was G-d, he did not want to look upon this sight.

Verse 33: *“But the L-rd said to him, ‘Take off the shoes of your feet, for the place in which you are standing is holy land.’”*

Standing: The way that this word is written (in the perfect) implies that Moses has stood there in the past, is standing there now and will stand there again in the future.

Holy land: Mt Sinai

Verse 34: *“Behold, I have seen the affliction of my people in Egypt and have heard their groanings. I have come down to deliver them. Now come, I will send you to Egypt.”*

My people: G-d is reaffirming the Hebrews as His people, based upon a covenantal promise to the Patriarchs. The sins of Israel put them into exile, where they suffered for their sins, but it did not end that covenantal promise. G-d keeps covenant with the house of Israel.

Verse 35: *“This Moses they rejected saying, ‘Who appointed you ruler and judge?’ This one G-d has sent to be ruler and redeemer, by the hand of the angel that appeared to him at the bush.”*

Judge... redeemer: Judge, oftentimes, is a word that brings to our mind condemnation. Redeemers are those who take us away from condemnation and restore us back to the purpose and will of G-d.

The fact that Moses (a typology of Messiah, see 7v37) is called a redeemer reveals to us that Messiah is going to be the one that brings about the full implication (outcome) of a redemptive experience.

Verse 36: *“This one led them out; doing wonders and signs in the land of Egypt, and at the Red Sea, and in the desert - forty years.”*

Forty years: The purpose of this testimony of wonders and signs, in these three places, was to change them. That they would be transformed from a wilderness experience into the experience of the Promised Land.

Verse 37: *“This Moses spoke to the sons of Israel and said, ‘A prophet among you the L-rd your G-d will raise up out of your brethren, as me. Him you shall hear.’”*

This is a key messianic prophecy found in Deuteronomy 18v15. It shows us that Moses is a paradigm for Messiah. He gave the people a messianic experience, in order to prepare them for that true, and final, messianic experience.

Raise up: Speaking of resurrection. G-d delivered Messiah from death in order to bring about a Kingdom experience.

Out of your brethren: Messiah has to be Jewish.

As me: Messiah will be both Judge and Redeemer (See 7v35).

Him you shall hear: (The people did not listen to Moses). The understanding of this word is that it is a call to hear, in order to obey.

Note: Stephen is testifying, basing his faith, on the foundation of the Torah. In order for us to give testimony of Messiah, and in order for the people to rightly understand Messiah, we first need to understand the Torah. It is not in contradiction to the truth of Messiah. Laid out in the Torah, for us, is the ability to identify, understand, and recognize Messiah. Stephen was laying out, before the Sanhedrin and the people, that the Torah wanted to reveal the prophet who is a redeemer, who comes from the house of Israel and who is the One that the people are called to obey. Stephen and the Apostles were both teaching, and revealing, that this Redeemer Messiah had come – Messiah Yeshua.

Chapter 7

Part 3: Acts 7v38-60

Verse 38: *“This is the one who was with them in the congregation in the wilderness, with the angel who spoke to him at the mountain of Sinai. And our fathers received this living word to give to us.”*

This is the one: Speaking about Moses.

Congregation: The word used here is ‘Church’. It is a word related to testifying or bearing witness. Those who came out of Egypt were supposed to testify of their Redemption. Everyone who came out of Egypt had a Passover experience – they dealt appropriately with the blood of the lamb. Likewise, everyone who comes out of this world, and enters into the Kingdom of G-d are also going to have a Passover experience in the Lamb of G-d.

Verse 39: *“Our fathers did not want to be obedient, but they pushed him away and turned their hearts to Egypt.”*

Did not want to be obedient: The people that were in the wilderness received revelation, but they rejected it and did not want to obey it (To hear and respond). Stephen is revealing that the Sanhedrin has that same character, they are behaving in that same way.

They pushed him away: They rejected Moses.

Verse 40: *“Saying to Aaron, ‘Make for us gods that we might turn before. For this Moses, who has led us out of Egypt, we do not know what has become to him.’”*

Turn before: That they want to follow - and the implication is to follow back to Egypt, a place of idolatry.

What has become to him: This is written in the perfect tense in the Greek meaning this: The people are implying that they did not know previously what happened to him when he went up the mountain, they don't know where he is now, and the implication is that they won't know in the future what's become of him. In other words, they are saying that they do not want anything to do with Moses.

When Moses ascended up into the mountain (in order to bring to the people the commandments, the law) they had been told to wait for him until he returned. They should have been waiting faithfully for him (great theological significance in that). However, they were not interested in where Moses wanted to lead them. When we are not interested in where G-d is leading us, into a Kingdom experience, we are going to go back to our former lifestyles. When we are Kingdom minded we are passionate, and have a strong faith about the future G-d is leading us into.

Verse 41: *“They made the calf in those days, and they offered sacrifices to the idol. They rejoiced in the work of their hands.”*

Offered sacrifices to the idol: Israel fell quickly into idolatry. The people did not want the commandments. When we are not interested in the righteousness of God (revealed to us through the commandments) we will quickly fall away. When we walk in the Spirit we are going to be demonstrating Torah observance – not through the letter but through the Spirit of the law.

Rejoiced in the work of their hands: They found great satisfaction satisfying their flesh through the works of their hands, rather than rejoicing in the work of G-d and what He was doing.

Verse 42: *“G-d turned away and delivered them to the worship of the host of heaven, just as it had been written in the book of the prophets. The house of Israel brought forth these slain beasts and sacrifices to Me for forty years in the desert.”*

Hosts of heaven: A demonic, spiritual realm. The Hebrews had a spiritual experience – but it was an inferior one.

G-d is saying that, even though they did it unto Him, He was not pleased by these offerings.

Verse 43: *“They took up the tabernacle of Moloch and the star of your god Rephan, and the images which you made, to worship them: I will carry you away, beyond Babylon.”*

Moloch: This is a pagan god who the children of Israel sacrificed, burnt, their infants to. When we move away from G-d, embracing what we think is right, we are on a journey to do unthinkable, unspeakable, things that we would never imagine we would do.

To worship them: Everybody worships. The question is: Who? G-d or satan.

Beyond Babylon: G-d changed their location and allowed them to go into exile.

Stephen is giving a hint here to a prophetic reality. G-d sent the children of Israel into exile when they, not understanding the truth Moses, G-d’s appointed leader, taught them, fell into idolatry. Likewise, rejecting Yeshua, as Saviour and Messiah, Stephen was telling the Sanhedrin that they too could expect to go into exile.

Verse 44: *“And the tabernacle of testimony was to our fathers in the wilderness, just as the One speaking to Moses commanded him to build, according to the image which he saw.”*

The tabernacle of testimony: The tabernacle in the wilderness was a pattern for what later became the temple in Jerusalem – both modelled on what Moses had seen up above (in heaven).

The image which he saw: Hebrews 8v5

Verse 45: *“Which also our fathers, that came after, entered in and received with Joshua a possession of the nations, whom G-d cast out from before our fathers until the days of David.”*

Joshua: It is the same name as Yeshua, which means salvation. Joshua, a paradigm for Yeshua, acted in a way to cause those who were following him to take possession of what G-d had promised.

He cast out: G-d cast the nations out.

The days of David: Whenever we talk about David it is also a reference to the son of David or Messiah. David is a Messianic indicator.

Verse 46: *“He (David) found grace before G-d and sought to find the Tabernacle unto the G-d of Jacob.”*

Sought to find the Tabernacle: Jacob (being a patriarch) is associated with promise. This tabernacle, for the *G-d of Jacob*, is a reference to reward – the reward of worship (worshipping G-d in the Land of Israel, in the future paradigm this is worship in the Kingdom of G-d).

Verse 47: *“But Solomon built to Him a house.”*

Verse 48: *“But the Most High does not dwell in a sanctuary made by hands, just as the Prophet says:”*

Verse 49: *“The heaven is my throne, and the land is a footstool for my feet. What is the house that you can build for Me says the L-rd? Or what is the place of My rest?”*

This is a quote taken from the book of Isaiah 66v1.

Rest: Rest is a reference to Kingdom. The first pattern of the Kingdom was Jerusalem, of which there will be a fulfilment in the Millennial Kingdom. However, these are not the final expression of G-d. There is going to be something even greater when G-d enters into His final rest with His people. Rest has nothing to do with being tired. Rest is related to a gift, intimacy, and fellowship.

Verse 50: *“Was it not My hand that made all of these?”*

Quoted from Isaiah 66v2

The one who is going to make the dwelling place for G-d, that is the New Jerusalem, is G-d Himself. Stephan wants to tie Messiah Yeshua to this full Kingdom experience.

Verse 51: *“Stiff-necked, and uncircumcised of heart and ear, you always rebel against the Holy Spirit. As your fathers, also you”*

Stiff-necked: Not humble. Unwillingness to bow and show exaltation (praise, worship) to G-d.
Rebel against the Holy Spirit: Rebel against G-d’s order. There is a constant tendency among humanity to be stiff necked and uncircumcised in heart - meaning we tend not to walk in the Spirit, but tend to walk in the flesh.

Verse 52: *“Which of the prophets did your fathers not persecute? And they killed the ones who were proclaiming previously concerning the coming of the Righteous One. Now you also are traitors and murderers.”*

They killed the ones: Matthew 23v35-37. Jeremiah and so many other prophets were rejected. They spoke primarily about the coming of Messiah.

Traitors and murderers: This is the heritage of those who reject prophecy.

Verse 53: *“You are the ones who received the law, which was given by angels, which you did not keep.”*

Verse 54: *“Hearing these things they were cut to their hearts and they gnashed their teeth at him.”*

Cut to their hearts: They fell under conviction, but not a righteous conviction.

Verse 55: *“And being full of the Holy Spirit, this one (Stephen) looked into the heavens and he saw the glory of G-d, and Yeshua standing at the right hand of G-d.”*

Looked into the heavens: Shows that he had a Kingdom expectation.

Verse 56: *“And said, ‘Behold! I see the heavens opening up and the Son of Man at the right hand, standing, of G-d.”*

Standing: This word interrupts this phrase to show emphasis. This word is also in the perfect tense – Yeshua had stood there previously, He was standing there now, and He will continue to do so in the future. This shows this eternal intimacy between G-d the Father and G-d the Son. It speaks about the divinity of Messiah – always being the Divine Son of G-d.

Verse 57: *“Crying in a loud voice they pressed their ears and they rushed in one accord at him,”*

Pressed their ears: They did not want to hear what Stephen was saying.

Verse 58: *“Casting him outside the city they stoned him. The witnesses laid their garments at the feet of a young one called Saul.”*

Saul: Who later became the Apostle Paul.

Verse 59: *“They stoned Stephen, and he called out and said, ‘L-rd Yeshua, receive my spirit.’”*

Verse 60: *“He placed his knees and cried out with a loud voice, ‘Lord do not charge them with this sin.’ This he said, then he fell asleep.”*

He placed his knees: He bowed down on his knees. This speaks of submission – he is accepting his fate, and it does not change his faith.

Do not charge them with this sin: This is very similar to what we see Messiah saying on the cross (Luke 23v34). Stephen was being utterly rejected by the spiritual leaders of Israel. As they were stoning him he was not thinking about himself, or calling out for his own salvation, but he called upon the name of Yeshua on their behalf. His call for them was one for mercy, grace, and forgiveness

Fell asleep: This is an idiom for dying. It is put in these terms for one main reason - when you fall asleep you expect to wake up. It is speaking about a future hope in the resurrection.

8 Verse 1a: *“But Saul was consenting to his death.*

Consenting: Saul was agreeing with them that what they were doing was the right thing to do. This is foreshadowing that Saul (Paul) needed a radical change.

Chapter 8

Part 1: Acts 8v1-13

Verse 1: *“And it came about in those days a great persecution upon the church. And all were (thoroughly) scattered throughout the regions of Judea and Samaria, everyone except the Apostles.”*

Those days: In the days of Stephen’s death.

Great persecution: Instigated by Saul

Scattered: The believers had all been concentrated in Jerusalem, but now they were all over Israel. The Apostles remained within Jerusalem.

Verse 2: *“G-dly men were carrying Stephen and they made a great lamentation on his behalf.”*

Carrying Stephen: The implication is that they buried him.

Verse 3: *“And Saul was devastating the church. Each house entering into it, and dragging out both men and women to deliver them to prison.”*

In the last days there is going to be a time of a great outpouring of the Holy Spirit again. However, there is also going to come a great time of persecution for believers.

Verse 4: *“Therefore the ones who were scattered went out and were evangelising the Word.”*

Therefore: As an outcome of this time of persecution.

Evangelising: Preaching the good news of redemption.

The Word: This word relates to a blueprint. They were teaching about the plans and purposes of G-d.

Verse 5: *“Philip went down into a city of Samaria and he proclaimed to them the Messiah.”*

Samaria: A place known for idolatry, also linked to the occult and demonic influence.

Proclaimed: To announce with authority and power.

Messiah: Associated with being King. He is going to usher in a new Kingdom and rule.

Verse 6: *“The crowd paid attention to what was being said by Philip. In one accord they were able to hear and see the signs which he was doing.”*

Crowd paid attention: They carefully observed what Philip said for the purpose of understanding, and for the purpose of interacting with/receiving what was said.

In one accord: When the Word of G-d is proclaimed with authority it brings about unity.

Note: In the book of Acts there is a unity between the preaching of the Word of G-d and signs and wonders taking place. The primary purpose of these miracles was to confirm the truth of what was being proclaimed.

Verse 7: *“For many, having unclean spirits, were crying out with a loud voice and they were coming out. Many of those who were paralysed, and lame, were healed.”*

Unclean spirits: The Word of G-d is, first and foremost, against demonic influence. The gospel rids us of unclean spirits as they bring disorder/chaos into our lives.

Paralysed, and lame: People who cannot walk, or who cannot walk properly. (A picture of those who are not living a proper lifestyle – one which is rooted in faith, Colossians 2v6) The purpose of the ministry of the Holy Spirit is to bring about a proper lifestyle, one where we walk in truth.

Verse 8: *“And there came about a great joy in that city.”*

A great joy: What started off as a great persecution G-d turned into a great joy. Sin will not thwart the programme of G-d. G-d does not cause sin, but he can use it to for good.

Verse 9: *“There was a certain man named Simon who previously had practiced sorcery in the city and amazed the people of Samaria. Saying himself that he was someone great.”*

Practiced sorcery: Simon used either the occult, or was an illusionist, in order to give the impression that he was someone great.

Someone great: Simon earned money from this and he liked money, but, even more than money, he liked people thinking he was great.

This is rooted in pride and rebellion toward G-d (Matthew 5v16 – when people see our good works it should cause them to praise G-d and not us. The objective of a servant of G-d is not to make oneself great, but to make G-d great). Insecurity and humility are not the same things. Insecurity is, often, connected to pride.

Verse 10: *“To whom all, from the small unto the great, were paying attention and they were saying about him (Simon), ‘This one is the great power of G-d.’”*

This one is the great power of G-d: Simon had deceived them by saying he was someone great. Simon did this pretending to have the very power of G-d.

Verse 11: *“They were paying attention to him, because for a long time, with his magic, he was amazing them.”*

Amazing them: They could not figure out, and were shocked by, what Simon was able to do. They attributed it to G-d. This is satanic in origin. Satan, created by G-d, did not want to worship G-d, but wanted to exalt himself over G-d. This is very similar to what Simon’s thought process was.

Verse 12: *“When they believed Philip, for he was evangelising concerning the Kingdom of G-d, and the name of Messiah Yeshua, they were baptised; both men and also women.”*

The Kingdom of G-d: When we hear this term, we need to think of ‘change’. This Kingdom is very different from the kingdom of this world. When we receive the gospel, we need to realise that a change is coming in our lives. The preaching of the Kingdom and the name (character) of *Messiah Yeshua* go together.

Baptised: Signifies a desire to serve and a change in status/transformation.

Verse 13: *“Simon, also himself, believed and was baptised. Continuing with Philip, perceiving also the power and the signs that were being done, he was amazed.”*

Continuing with: In a very devoted and committed way.

Chapter 8

Part 2: Acts 8v14-25

Verse 14: *“In Jerusalem, the Apostles heard that Samaria had received the Word of G-d; they sent to them Peter and John.”*

In Jerusalem: There is an emphasis upon Jerusalem, the capital of the kingdom. Just as Jerusalem was an important place for the Old Covenant people so too does it hold an important place for the New Covenant people.

Word of G-d: G-d’s blueprint, revealing His plans and purposes.

Them: Those people in Samaria who received the Word of G-d.

Peter and John: We see in the book of Acts a transfer of authority. In AD70 the temple was destroyed so there was no more authoritative priesthood. We see a new authority, and that authority was upon the apostles.

Verse 15: *“Who, having come down from Jerusalem, prayed on behalf of them so that they would receive the Holy Spirit.”*

There is a relationship between receiving the Word of G-d (the gospel) and receiving the Holy Spirit.

Verse 16: *“For as of yet He had not fallen upon any of them. For only they had been baptized in the name of the L-rd Yeshua.”*

He: Referring to the Holy Spirit.

Baptized in the name of the L-rd Yeshua: Messiah Yeshua was known to them, but they did not have the indwelling of the Holy Spirit.

Verse 17: *“Then they set their hands upon them and they received the Holy Spirit.”*

They: The Apostles

Set (their hands) upon: This verb is written in the Greek imperfect tense. The imperfect tense speaks about an action that began in the past and will continue to have relevance up to a certain time (usually to the present) and then it ends. The Apostles were doing this but were not going to continue to do this. This passage is emphasizing the Apostolic authority of these leaders. They laid their hands upon these individuals because this was the first time the Holy Spirit was given in this geographical area.

Verse 18: *“And Simon, perceiving that through the laying on of hands of the Apostles is given the Holy Spirit, offered them money”*

perceiving (seeing): Looking intently upon it, gazing upon it, recognizing some significance.

Laying on of hands ...is given the Holy Spirit: This was a one-time 'event' that the Holy Spirit was given through the laying on of the Apostle's hands. The Apostles **did not** have to go every time to lay hands on people (up to this present day) in order for them to receive the Holy Spirit.

He offered them money: This was not something that Simon could do through his own power (either his illusions or demonic influence in his life).

Simon did the things that he did because of pride and because he wanted to exalt himself. The Scripture is teaching us that we are not to use the Word of G-d, the ministry of the Holy Spirit or the truth of G-d as a means to exalt ourselves.

Verse 19: *"saying, 'Give also to me this power in order that whomever I should lay hands upon should receive the Holy Spirit."*

Power: Simon wants the same authority that he saw the Apostles had. Simon saw that if he had this authority it would give him a better means in order to exalt himself. He wanted this to be uniquely given to him, and he was willing to pay handsomely for it. He did not want to know if this was going to be normative for every believer.

Verse 20: *"Peter spoke to him, 'Your silver with you shall be for destruction, because the gift of G-d you reckoned through money could be obtained."*

Peter: Peter was angry because he understood what Simon was seeking. He wanted to share in the same authorities, so that he could uniquely continue to be exalted in this area. The purpose of the ministry of the Holy Spirit is to exalt G-d. He does not help us to accomplish our goals in order to make us great, but rather that G-d is made great through our lives. Simon did not understand this.

Your silver: When we get what we want by using money as the means to obtain it, it is going to bring about destruction.

Reckoned: Thought, assumed

Verse 21: *"Not is to you a portion nor lot in this Word, for your heart is not upright before G-d."*

This Word: Simon will not share in the ministry of the Word, as he does not have the right thoughts or objectives and does not have a connection with the mindset of G-d.

Verse 22: *"Therefore, repent of this wickedness of yours and pray (beseech) to G-d if therefore He shall forgive you for the intent of your heart."*

This intent of your heart: Simon had a wrong intent in his heart, a wrong purpose.

Verse 23: *"For in the gall of bitterness and bound of unrighteousness, I see this being you."*

Gall of bitterness: Peter is telling Simon that his spiritual condition is rooted in bitterness. Simon does not really like himself (spiritually), and therefore he does not like G-d – who created him. This caused him to think of himself and not of G-d.

Here he was trying to bring about a change so that he would like himself. We need to realize that we are a creation of G-d, and the only way to be faithful and serve G-d appropriately is if we affirm ourselves as His creation. We have value because G-d made us. We should like ourselves because G-d loved us enough that He sent His Son into this world and He died upon a cross for us. There is a purpose for our lives. We need to be thankful to G-d for giving us life and affirm in our lives that we belong to G-d. If we are not happy with ourselves (that we have life) we will not be happy with G-d. When we have bitterness in our lives it is going to put us into bondage.

Bound of unrighteousness: Always pursuing that which is against G-d's will - pursuing what we think will make us happy.

I see this being you: Peter had discernment.

Verse 24: *"Simon answered and said, 'You pray for me to the L-rd so that none should come upon me which you have spoken.'"*

Pray for me: He was convicted by Peter's words and knew inwardly that what Peter had said about him was right. This verse affirms Peter's authority. G-d gives His servants authority, in order that His glory might be seen.

Verse 25: *"Then they returned to Jerusalem, bearing testimony (thoroughly) and speaking out the Word of the L-rd in many other villages of Samaria."*

The Word of the L-rd: Emphasised in this passage.

Other villages of Samaria: As the Apostles were returning to Jerusalem they were evangelizing in many of the Samaritan villages.

Chapter 8

Part 3: Acts 8v26-40

Verse 26: *"The angel of the L-rd spoke to Philip saying, 'Rise up and go according to the south, upon the way that comes down from Jerusalem into Gaza – this is the wilderness.'"*

Angel of the L-rd: Angels minister to us so that we can more effectively serve our L-rd and Saviour.

Down from Jerusalem: In Judaism when one goes to Jerusalem it is spoken of as going up to Jerusalem. When one leaves Jerusalem, it is said that they are going down from Jerusalem. This is true from a position of geography - Jerusalem is up about 3,000 feet/1000m - but it is also true spiritually. When we go up to Jerusalem it is an upward call to worship G-d, and when we go down we are leaving.

Verse 27: *“And he rose up. He went down and behold an Ethiopian man who was a eunuch. He was an important official in the administration of a woman, by the name of Kandace who was the queen of Ethiopia, who was over all of her Treasury. He came from worshipping in Jerusalem.”*

He rose up: He obeyed the commandment of the angel.

Behold: This emphasises that what follows is something we need to pay attention to. Phillip would have never been able to see this on his own. It was because of G-d, speaking to him through the angel, that he beheld this Ethiopian man.

Ethiopian: Jewish families, within the past few years, have come up from Ethiopia and live in the land of Israel. This is prophetic.

Eunuch: A eunuch was someone who went through a procedure that left him unable to have children and he was, usually, unmarried. This freed him up so that they could be single minded and trusted for positions that required great commitment, loyalty, and fidelity.

Queen of Ethiopia: At this time Ethiopia was being ruled by a woman.

Treasury: This man was in charge of the Kingdom’s finances.

Worshipping in Jerusalem: This Ethiopian man was Jewish, and he came up in order to worship.

Verse 28: *“On returning, he was sitting upon his chariot reading aloud from the prophet Isaiah.”*

Verse 29: *“And the Spirit said to Philip, ‘Go and escort (join) this chariot.’”*

Verse 30: *“Running, Philip heard him reading the prophecy of Isaiah. He said to him, ‘Then also you understand what you are reading?’”*

Running: Philip was running to join himself to this chariot.

Prophecy: In the book of Acts there is an emphasis on the working, moving, empowering, equipping, leadership, guidance, and the help of the Holy Spirit. However, there is also an emphasis on prophecy. There is a strong relationship between the Holy Spirit and prophecy. When we are prophetically minded we are going to be encountering the Holy Spirit much more.

Verse 31: *“He said, ‘For how am I able to know (understand) if there is not someone to guide me?’ He invited Philip to come up and sit with him in this chariot.”*

Note: Traditionally, in Judaism, people understand that there is a benefit of reading the Word of G-d, even if they do not comprehend it in their own human intellect. The Word of the L-rd will not return void, but it is desirable if we understand it, that we perceive it.

Verse 32: *“And the portion of Scripture which he was reading from it: ‘As a sheep unto its slaughter is taken, and as a young lamb is before its shearers silent, thus he did not open up his mouth.’”*

The portion of Scripture: This is taken from Isaiah 53v7

Lamb: Speaking about Messiah, who is the Lamb of G-d, who was sacrificed - and in that time of His crucifixion (His sacrifice) He was silent. Yeshua fulfilled this prophecy.

Verse 33: *“In His humility His judgment was lifted up. His generation of whom will declare it, and of his life that was lifted up from the earth?”*

Quoted from Isaiah 53v8

His humility: This has to do with His suffering, being placed upon that tree.

His judgment was lifted up: This can be understood in a few ways: His judgment was removed, or He was removed, or He was lifted up in His judgment.

Whom will declare it: Who is going to state what happened to Him when His life was taken from Him? When He suffered judgment?

Verse 34: *“The eunuch answered and said to Philip, ‘I pray (beseech) you concerning the prophet of who he spoke. Was it concerning himself that he spoke or was it concerning someone else?’”*

Verse 35: *“Philip opened up his mouth and he began from this scripture, evangelizing him Yeshua.”*

Philip is going to be the one to answer this question (8v33) for this eunuch. If we rightly understand this text it is an invitation for us to share the message of the judgment and the shame that Yeshua suffered on our behalf.

Yeshua: Acts 4v12

Verse 36: *“As they went on the way they came to water and the eunuch declared, ‘Behold water! What is prohibiting me to be baptized?’”*

This verse shows us that Philip talked about the death, burial, and resurrection of Yeshua and set it within the context of immersion/baptism.

What is prohibiting me to be baptized: This Ethiopian understood that is not enough just to hear and understand the gospel, but it demands a response.

Verse 37: *“And Philip said, ‘If you believe from the wholeness of the heart it is lawful.’ And he (the Ethiopian) answered and said, ‘I believe the Son of G-d to be Yeshua the Messiah.’”*

Wholeness of the heart: The word ‘heart’ has to do with that part of a person that thinks (Proverbs 23v7). Philip wanted the Ethiopian man to be fully convinced and believe what Philip had shared with him. The focus of the gospel message is Redemption, and redemption is always connected to blood. The shedding of Messiah’s blood is vital in the gospel message. For a Biblical covenant to be ratified (put into effect/made valid) blood was required.

It is lawful: This word emphasizes that there is a strictness, a legality to our faith. It is not legal for just anyone to be immersed, only those who believe (to comprehend and have a desire to respond in obedience) the message of the gospel.

Son of G-d: He believes in the divinity of Yeshua. This also speaks of the faithfulness of Yeshua to His Father.

Verse 38: *“He commanded that the chariot be stopped and the two of them went into the water, Philip and the eunuch. And he baptised him.”*

He (Philip) baptised him: This is unusual and is emphasised and emphatic in the text. When people were coming out to partake of John's baptism he oversaw it, but he did not physically baptize everyone.

Verse 39: *“And when they came out from the water the Spirit of the L-rd snatched Philip away and the eunuch did not see him any longer. He went on his way rejoicing”*

Came out from the water: It is important to be immersed, completely, in the water. Sprinkling, pouring etc is not an acceptable means for baptism.

The Spirit of the L-rd: When we are willing to receive the message from the L-rd we are going to be brought into intimacy and contact with the Ministry of the Holy Spirit.

Snatched: This is the same word used in 1 Thessalonians 4v17 when speaking of the rapture. This would have confirmed to the eunuch that as Philip had been supernaturally taken away so had he been supernaturally brought to him to share the message of salvation with him.

Rejoicing: When we are the recipients of the Ministry of the Holy Spirit it is going to lead us to gladness (worship).

Verse 40: *“But Philip was found in Azotus, and passing through evangelizing all the cities until he came to Caesarea.”*

Azotus: Ashdod – not far from Gaza. It was a city, but was also known as a small region in the coastal plain of Israel.

Evangelizing: When the Holy Spirit works in a person's life his ministry is going to have an evangelistic purpose – sharing the gospel and leading people into worshipping G-d.

Chapter 9

Part 1: Acts 9v1-16

Verse 1: *“Saul was still breathing threats and murder against the disciples of the L-rd. He went before the high priest”*

Disciples: We are called to be committed, faithful and obedient disciples, not just simply called to receive the forgiveness of sins. Disciples pursue the purposes of G-d.

The L-rd: ‘The’ tells us that there is **only one** L-rd. This passage hints, again, at the divinity of Messiah.

Verse 2: *“and asked from him epistles (letters) for Damascus, to the synagogues, so that if were found any of The Way, whether men or women, they were bound, and he would lead them back to Jerusalem for punishment.”*

The synagogues: The early believers were worshipping in the synagogues.

The Way: The disciples of Yeshua were referred to as those who were of “The Way”. A careful reading of Exodus 33v13 reveals to us that Moses was asking for Messiah, who is also called “the Way” (see also John 14v6). It is through receiving “the Way”, Messiah, that we are going to find G-d, He will be made known to us.

Messiah is foundational for knowing G-d, experiencing Him. Not simply knowing that He exists but knowing Him intimately. Having a covenantal relationship with Him.

Verse 3: *“As he went and drew near to Damascus suddenly there shone around him a light from the heaven.”*

Verse 4: *“He fell upon the ground and heard a voice saying to him, ‘Saul, Saul, why Me do you persecute?’”*

Verse 5: *“And he said, ‘Who are you sir? And the L-rd said, ‘I am Yeshua whom you are persecuting. It is difficult for you against the goads to kick.’”*

Who are you sir: Saul has respect for whoever is talking to him, but he does not yet know who it is. He knows that something supernatural is happening and that it is from heaven, but he is not associating it with G-d, and certainly not with Messiah Yeshua.

Yeshua whom you are persecuting: Saul is not persecuting Yeshua in the flesh (He is no longer on this planet and has ascended into the heavens), but Yeshua takes personally when those who believe in Him (His body) are persecuted.

Goads: A rock-like structure that is very sharp and pointed. If someone kicks it they are going to experience a lot of pain. Messiah is telling Saul that if he continues to persecute His disciples it is not going to go well with him.

Verse 6: *“Trembling and amazed he said, ‘L-rd, what me do you want me to do?’ And the Lord (said) to him, ‘Rise up and enter into the city, and it will be said to you what it is necessary for you to do.’”*

Trembling and amazed: He was fearful, but also astonished.

What me do you want me to do: What do you want me to do? Saul made it very personal – this is seen in the way the sentence is grammatically constructed. He is showing, here, a response, submission.

Verse 7: *“The men who were with him on the way stood in shock. They heard the voice, but nothing did they perceive (see).”*

With him on the way: Those who were journeying with him.

Heard the voice, but nothing did they perceive: They heard the sound, but they were not able to understand/discern/perceive what was being said.

Verse 8: *“Saul was raised up from the land and he opened up his eyes, and nothing he saw.”*

Saul was raised up: He was so overwhelmed by this event that he needed help to get up.

Verse 9: *“Being led by the hand they brought him into Damascus, and for three days he did not see, and he did not eat, nor did he drink.”*

Three days: When the number 3 is applied to a human being it is usually related to testing for the purpose of revealing something.

Did not eat, nor did he drink: He did not care about what his body needed. This is a description of fasting. We fast to weaken the body in order that it might make our prayer and spiritual situation stronger so that we can connect with G-d.

Verse 10: *“There was a certain disciple in Damascus named Ananias, and the L-rd said to him in a vision, ‘Ananias!’ And he said, ‘Behold, here am I L-rd.’”*

Ananias: G-d instructed him to reveal truth to Saul in order to bring him into obedience to the will of G-d. It is through discipleship that people will be brought into obedience to G-d's will for their life.

Here am I: He made himself totally available to G-d, for whatever G-d wanted him to do.

Verse 11: *“And the L-rd (said) to him, ‘Rise up and go unto the alley which is called Straight. And seek a house of a man by the name of Yehuda. Ask for a man by the name of Saul of Tarsus for behold he is praying now.’”*

Alley: A small street

Straight: The name of this alley helps us understand the intent of Messiah. His purpose for revealing Himself to Saul was to make his life straight - in agreement with the will of G-d.

Praying: Saul understood the significance of prayer. He knew that he could not understand, discern, or respond to G-d without diligent prayer.

Verse 12: *“And he saw in a vision a man by the name of Ananias that he was entering and that he laid hands upon him in order that he would regain his sight.”*

Regain his sight: The words used here mean to gain sight, but to do so with a new perspective.

Verse 13: *“Ananias answered, ‘L-rd I have heard much concerning this man, how much evil he has done to Your saints in Jerusalem.’”*

Saints: Holy ones - A saint is someone who does the purposes of G-d. A saint has called upon the L-rd and is a disciple.

Verse 14: *“He has received authority here, from the high priests, to bind all of those who have called upon Your Name.”*

Called upon Your Name: One becomes a disciple by calling upon the name of the L-rd. Salvation is not based upon being a good disciple. Salvation is a free gift from G-d, through Yeshua.

Verse 15: *“The L-rd said to him, ‘Go, he is a chosen vessel to Me this one, in order to bear My Name before nations and kings and the children of Israel.’”*

Chosen vessel: G-d has chosen him – it does not matter what his reputation is, what he has done in the past, G-d revealed to Ananias that Saul had been called/chosen as a vessel to bear His Name.

Verse 16: *“For I will show him how much it is necessary for him, on behalf of My Name, to suffer.”*

To suffer: Saul was also called to suffer. Saul's salvation was not dependent upon performing this task well or not. His salvation was dependant on him confessing his sins, acknowledging Messiah in his life, and believing that Messiah was the ransom for his sins.

At that moment he was saved and then, having been saved, he begun to be a disciple. Part of discipleship is bearing the name of Messiah to other individuals and being willing to suffer.

Disciples will meet opposition. True disciples respond to the will of G-d in obedience.

Chapter 9

Part 2: Acts 9v17-31

Verse 17: *“And Ananias went away, and he entered into the house (Yehuda’s house). He laid upon him (Saul) the hands. He said, ‘Brother Saul, the L-rd has sent me, even Yeshua - the one who appeared to you in the way which you were coming- in order that you might regain your sight and be filled with the Holy Spirit.’”*

Regain your sight: Previously Saul had been walking in darkness, he was spiritually blind. He was doing things that were not based upon the illumination of Scriptural truth.

Holy Spirit: The Holy Spirit brings about change in our lives. Receiving the Holy Spirit is a sign of salvation (2 Corinthians 1v22, Ephesians 1v13-14).

Verse 18: *“Immediately fell from his eyes as scales and he regained his sight. And also, he stood up and was baptized.”*

Baptized: Baptism is an action that is a testimony of ones faith to the death, burial, and resurrection of Messiah. Secondly, it shows a desire to obey G-d. We are not saved based upon any performance, but are saved by grace. But once we have been saved we obey G-d because of a change in our heart (our thoughts).

Stood up: When someone rises up, in Scripture, it is obedience to that ‘upward call’. The faith that enables one to ‘rise up’ is something that is pleasing to G-d.

Verse 19: *“He received food and he was strengthened. It came about Saul, with the disciples in Damascus, was there for a few days.”*

He received food: He ended his fast. The Scripture is constructed in a way to give us revelation (teach us things). Only after his baptism did he receive food and find strength. He had been fasting and praying for G-d’s revelation about what he had experienced and once he received the revelation, and therefore received Messiah (a sign of which was baptism), the purpose for the prayer and fasting was fulfilled so he stopped fasting.

Verse 20: *“Immediately he went to the synagogue and proclaimed Messiah, that this one (Yeshua) is the Son of G-d.”*

Messiah: Perhaps everyone in that synagogue believed in the Messiah (Messiah is taught in Judaism), but not by that name, and also not with the revelation that He is the Son of G-d and therefore **divine** (Mark 14v61-62)

Verse 21: *“All of those who heard were astonished and amazed and they said, ‘Is this not the one who was hindering (harassing) in Jerusalem the ones calling upon this name? And here he came in order to bind those and bring them to the high priest.”*

Astonished: They were astonished by the transformation in Saul. There was nothing lukewarm about Saul (Revelation 3v15). When people are passionate about something, even if it is about the wrong thing, they are wholeheartedly committed to obeying those feelings. If G-d changes those feelings those people will be conformed into valuable servants because of their wholeheartedness. This is not usually the case with lukewarm people who show very little passionate commitment to anything.

Here he came: Saul went to Damascus with the purpose of destroying those who believed in Yeshua. These people were confused as now Saul was suddenly preaching about Yeshua.

Saul's entire life, from this moment on, is about bringing people to the truth, bringing them out of idolatry, pagan belief, false tradition within Judaism and bringing them to the true expression of Judaism - which is faith in the Messiah, faith based upon the teachings of the Apostles and the rest of the former covenant, the Old Testament.

Verse 22: *“But Saul, even the more so, received power and he confounded the Judeans that dwelt in Damascus. And he argued that this One (Yeshua) is the Messiah.”*

The Judeans: The Jewish leadership, and not the whole body of Jewish people. They held fast to the traditions of the elders that originated in man's interpretations.

Argued: Successfully disputed.

Verse 23: *“As many days were fulfilled the Judeans took counsel to kill him.”*

Saul correctly taught the Word of G-d and people were receiving it. The teachings of the Judeans, the leaders of the synagogue, could not match the truth and their interpretations were not convincing. As a result, they wanted to kill Saul.

Verse 24: *“Their plot was made known to Saul and they (the Judeans) were watching the gate both day and also night so that they could kill him.”*

watching (guarding) the gate: They wanted to ambush and kill Saul when he left Damascus to go back to Jerusalem (Matthew 24v9).

Verse 25: *“The disciples took him by night, and they let him down through the wall and lowered him in a basket.”*

Verse 26: *“Saul, arriving in Jerusalem, attempted to join with the disciples and all (of the disciples in Jerusalem) were fearful of him, for they did not believe that he was a disciple.”*

They did not believe: They did not think that Saul was sincere because of his reputation that he had been against the believing community. They did not accept Saul's profession of faith.

Verse 27: *“But Barnabas received him (Saul) and he brought (him) to the Apostles. He related to them how he (Saul) saw the L-rd and that he spoke to Him, and how in Damascus he boldly (confidently) proclaimed in the name of Yeshua.”*

Barnabas: His name means “The son of encouragement” and that is what he was – an encourager of others. Barnabas was courageous and got involved in situations where most other people would not.

He spoke to Him: Saul spoke to Yeshua.

Verse 28: *“He was with them, entering in and exiting Jerusalem, proclaiming boldly in the name of the L-rd Yeshua.”*

Was with them: He (Saul) joined himself to the leadership group of the Apostles in Jerusalem.
In the name of the L-rd: It is not enough to know Yeshua is Messiah, but it is also important that we acknowledge him as L-rd.

Verse 29: *“Speaking and also debating with the Greeks; they were attempting, likewise, to put him to death.”*

To put him to death: First the Judeans wanted to put Saul to death and now the Greeks want to do the same thing. The Judeans did not think that they had anything in common with the Greeks. But this text tells us that they were united in their desire to kill Saul. They had the same desire because they too, like the Greeks, were walking in spiritual darkness.

Verse 30: *“The brethren, knowing this plan, brought him down to Caesarea and sent him to Tarsus.”*

When someone is chosen by G-d, for a purpose, the enemy does not like it and he moves in his (satanic) disciples to oppose it. If we are not serving G-d then, by default, we are serving satan.
Sent him to Tarsus: G-d was repositioning Saul.

Verse 31: *“And the congregations throughout all of Judea, Galilee, and Samaria had peace and they were being edified. They went in the fear of the L-rd and the comfort of the Holy Spirit, and increased in numbers.”*

Congregations: Those who are called out of this world, called out of wrong thinking.

Peace: Saul, the most ardent enemy of the church, had come to faith.

Galilee: Galilee is an interruption to the text - we usually read about Judea and Samaria, absent of Galilee. Galilee is a term of revelation and what the text is revealing to us is that in the heartland of Israel (Judah and Samaria) there was revelation.

Edified: Built up or strengthened. Made more powerful.

The fear of the L-rd: When we are spiritually mature we are going to walk in the fear of the L-rd. The fear of the L-rd is demonstrating G-d's priority in our lives. Every aspect of our lives is subjected to Him and He is our chief priority in all things.

Comfort of the Holy Spirit: The word comfort has to do with restoring things back to G-d's purposes so that the outcome of G-d's purposes (His blessings and promises) can be revealed and received.

Increased in numbers: Congregations grow when the people are strengthened, have a fear of the L-rd and receive comfort from the Holy Spirit.

Chapter 9

Part 3: Acts 9v32-43

G-d never changes, but He changes us so that we can walk with Him.

Verse 32: *“It came about that Peter passed through all and he came down to the saints who dwell in Lud.”*

Passed through all: He passed through all the region that he was in, proclaiming truth.

Lud: It was an ancient community close to where Tel Aviv is today.

Verse 33: *“He found there a certain man by the name of Aeneas; from eight years he had been laying upon his bed, as he was paralyzed.”*

There: In Lud

Eight: The number eight speaks about new beginnings and is related to the resurrection. The text hints to us that there is going to be a change in this man. He is going to be given a new beginning.

Paralyzed: He could not move. There was no activity going on in his life. He was not displaying a lifestyle/walk that was pleasing to G-d (Colossians 2v6). Spiritually, we could ask ourselves a question: Is there much activity of the Holy Spirit going on in our lives, or are the things of this world keeping us down? Do we walk in the way of obedience that is pleasing to the L-rd?

Note: John 21v25: Many, many miracles happened, but not all were written down. The miracles that are included in the Scripture are not simply there to tell us about someone in need of assistance. They teach us about some truth that G-d wants to confirm to us through that miracle.

Verse 34: *“Peter said to him, ‘Aeneas, Yeshua the Messiah heals you. Rise up and make for yourself the bed. And immediately he stood up.”*

Rise up: Aeneas was healed, but there were no visible effects of healing until he responded to that word.

Make for yourself the bed: He, himself, needed to put this sick bed into order. It was no longer going to be necessary for him to use it. It was the closing of a chapter in his life. Many people do not want to end chapters in their lives. They do not like where they are, but they are not brave or faithful enough to embark on a new beginning. Therefore, that message of healing, change, and opportunity is there but they are not willing to take hold of it.

Immediately he stood up: He obeyed a command. This is the foundation. Are we wanting to obey G-d? Aeneas received the ability to walk. G-d gave him an opportunity to live and behave in a way that displayed resurrection – new life.

Verse 35: *“All the ones dwelling in Lud and in Sharon saw him and they turned unto the L-rd.”*

Sharon: Sharon is a little bit north of Tel Aviv - along the Mediterranean coast.

Saw him: They saw a changed life. They saw the power of G-d transforming him. When we are humble and brave it leads to hearing from G-d and obeying Him. When we hear and obey we have a testimony that others can see, and it will cause them to turn to the L-rd.

Verse 36: *“And in Jaffa there was a certain disciple by the name of Tabitha (when translated – called ‘Dorcas’); she was full of good works and deeds of mercy.”*

Note: This miracle is a Scriptural aid in helping us to understand our call as people who have been healed by G-d. If we have accepted the gospel and asked for forgiveness for our sins (by means of Messiah’s work upon that tree - His death upon that cross, the shedding of His blood) then we have been spiritually healed.

Jaffa: An ancient port city, which is surrounded by Tel Aviv today.

Disciple: This word is in the feminine.

Full of good works: Aeneas was unable to do anything due to being paralyzed. G-d was not working in him. Now we see a woman who is full of good works – helping those in need of physical things.

Deeds of mercy: She had compassion and was willing to act in order to alleviate the suffering of others.

Verse 37: *“And it came about in those days that she became sick and died. They washed her and set her in the upper room.”*

Came about in those days: In that same period of time that Aeneas was healed. These words tie the two events together.

She became sick and died: Sometimes obedience causes us to be physically or spiritually tested.

Washed her and set her in the upper room: This is unusual, because when someone was washed, after dying, they were usually buried fairly quickly and not placed in a room. This is not an act of tradition, but was an act of faith. They believed that G-d was going to move.

Verse 38: *“Lud was near to Jaffa; the disciples heard that Peter was in it (in that city) and they sent two men to him to implore him that without delay to come unto them.”*

Verse 39: *“Peter stood up and went with them. When he arrived, they brought him into the upper room and all the widows stood by him weeping, showing the tunics and the garments which Dorcas was making when she was with them.”*

Was making: This is written in the imperfect tense.

Verse 40: *“Peter cast all of them out outside. He set the knee, he prayed, and he turned to the body and he said, ‘Tabitha, rise up.’ She opened her eyes and she saw Peter, and she sat up,”*

*Cast all of them **out outside**:* The text emphasizes the severity of Peter’s action. He put them out because the weeping of the widows suggests faithlessness. They had also been showing Peter all of her good deeds (garments etc) and Peter does not want the reader to think that it is because of her good deeds that she is going to receive a miracle. Miracles are always an act of G-d's grace/mercy and are not dependant on our good deeds.

Set the knee: He bowed down.

Turned to the body: This shows that she was dead. He did not turn to “her”, because her soul was not there – only her body was present.

She sat up: Experienced resurrection (related to the Kingdom of G-d – in the Kingdom we walk in a full expression of faith. In the Kingdom we do not have to think about lack or shortage).

Sat up: Peter had told her to rise up. She sat up, so she is halfway there.

Verse 41: *“He gave her a hand and he stood her up. He called to the saints, and the widows, and he presented her living.”*

He stood her up: He assisted her. She had enough faith to sit up but then the man of G-d acted to help her to finish obeying the full commandment.

Living: She has life

Verse 42: *“It came about that it was known throughout all the region of Jaffa, and many believed upon the L-rd.”*

Many: Those who witnessed this - testimony is powerful!

Believed upon the L-rd: This belief in Yeshua was foundational to them. It brought about a change in their lives, in their circumstances, and in their community.

Verse 43: *“It came about that many days he (Peter) remained in Jaffa at a certain one who was called Simon the Tanner.”*

Remained in Jaffa: There was a purpose for Peter to remain there.

Simon the Tanner: Simon the Tanner worked with dead animals. He made leather, and that made him ritually unclean. We are going to see a transformation where unclean is going to be made clean. Peter remained there, because the One who is in him is greater than death. He was going to receive a message of life which was tied to that which was commonly thought of as unclean.

Chapter 10

Part 1: Acts 10v1-23

Note: Acts 10 is NOT about kashrut (the dietary laws) or cleansing food to make it acceptable. It is a renewal of Israel's calling. Israel, in their unbelief, did not take the call of G-d seriously. She was created to bless the nations with the truth of G-d, but, unfortunately, most of Israel moved away from that calling. The message that G-d gave initially, exclusively, to the Jewish people is now a message to be taken to all people. As Gentiles receive the gospel they can share equally in this call (joint heirs).

Verse 1: *“A certain man was in Caesarea, Cornelius by name, and he was a centurion. He was from the brigade that was called Italian.”*

Caesarea: It was the capital of the Roman Empire within Israel. It was a Roman city with lots of Gentiles in it, so was considered an unclean city by the sages and within Jewish tradition.

Cornelius... centurion: He was a Roman man, an Italian soldier who was in charge of over at least 100 up to 999 other soldiers.

Brigade that was called Italian: He was from an elite group, and as a centurion he was probably that group's leader.

Verse 2: *“He was pious, also he feared G-d – with all of his house, doing many alms to the people. He was praying to G-d on behalf of all.”*

Pious: He desired to apply G-dly truth to his life.

He feared G-d: He was a Gentile who feared G-d. He believed in the G-d of Israel and took Scripture seriously, but he had not been converted (meaning, he had not gone through a circumcision in order to convert to Judaism)

All of his house: His family also feared G-d.

Alms: These are acts of kindness coming from a character who shows mercy to others.

To the people: This would have been to the Jewish people.

Praying to G-d: He had a very active prayer life. Prayer brings G-dly activity (the ministry of the Holy Spirit) into our lives. It empowers, positions, and equips us so that G-d can move in our lives.

Verse 3: *“And he saw in a clear vision, it was about the ninth hour of the day that the angel of G-d entered in, to him, and spoke to him: ‘Cornelius!’”*

Ninth hour: The number 9 speaks about a deed, an act, an activity. The text gives us a hint that we can anticipate that something is going to happen that is going to be foundational in this passage of Scripture.

Verse 4: *“(Cornelius) Gazing upon him and becoming fearful said, ‘Who are you L-rd?’ He (the angel) said to him, ‘Your prayers and your alms have come up for a memorial before G-d.’”*

L-rd: He understands that he is called to submit.

Your prayers and your alms: Giving of alms impacts our prayers and our prayer life. When we pray, accompanying our prayer with faithfulness, these go up before G-d, into His presence.

Verse 5: *“Now send to Jaffa men; that they summon Simon, the one who is called Peter.”*

Verse 6: *“This one is lodging at Simon the Tanner; whose house is by the sea. This one shall speak to you and (tell you) what you it is necessary to do.”*

Necessary: This is a very significant word and refers to something of absolute necessity - which cannot be altered and changed if the will of G-d is going to be manifested in a situation.

Verse 7: *“The angel that was speaking to Cornelius departed. He called two of his servants and a pious soldier, who was among those who served him steadfastly.”*

Angel...departed: The angel gave one commandment, made it clear what Cornelius was to do and then left it up to Cornelius to respond in obedience.

Verse 8: *“And he clarified to them concerning all these things and sent them to Jaffa.”*

Clarified: Spoke very intently to them. The Greek word used here is ‘exegesis’. It means to clarify in a very accurate, significant, and clear manner the meaning of something.

Verse 9: *“The next day, as they were traveling on the way to the city and drawing near, Peter went up on the roof to pray. It was the sixth hour.”*

Sixth hour: The number six speaks of grace. This text now alludes to the fact that some happening is going to take place that is going to be related to the grace of G-d.

Verse 10: *“And it came about (as he was praying) that he was hungry, and he desired to taste. As they were preparing (food), a trance fell upon him.”*

He was hungry, and he desired to taste: This can also be understood as being hungry for an experience with G-d (spiritually). Peter continued to pray despite his physical hunger. His desire to experience G-d was more powerful than his hunger for food.

Trance: We get the word ‘ecstasy’ from the Greek word used here. It speaks about a joyful experience that affects the innermost being, the essence, of a person.

Verse 11: *“He perceived the heaven being opened and coming down unto him a certain vessel, as a great garment bound by four corners, and it came down onto the ground.”*

Great: It can be referring to great in size, but also great in significance.

A garment being held by four corners: A tallit – the prayer shawl, a four cornered garment. The purpose of this garment was to help the people to remember the commandments of G-d (Numbers 15v37-41).

Verse 12: *“In which were all types of four-legged animals of the earth, beasts, creeping (crawling) things and also the birds of heaven.”*

In which: In this garment.

Note: The text does not tell us if these were clean or unclean animals. There are four-legged animals (beasts, creeping things, and birds) that are kosher (clean), and there are four-legged animals (beasts, creeping things, and birds) that are not. Knowing whether these animals are clean or unclean is not important for understanding this passage. There is a far greater purpose that G-d is using this illustration to point to.

Verse 13: *“And it came about a voice to him (to Peter). It said, ‘Rise up, Peter. Sacrifice and eat.”*

Rise: A call to service.

Sacrifice: This word is being used in this context for a ritualistic slaughter. The intent is to kill the animal - but in a ritually acceptable way. Sacrifices could only be performed by certain people (priests from the line of Aaron) who were ordained to slaughter the animals and offer the sacrifices. The problem was that Simon Peter was not from that priestly family so was not permitted to do that. If Peter performed the slaughter the clean animals would automatically become unclean because Peter was not ordained to perform this task. However, G-d is using this illustration to ordain/commission Peter to go to the Gentiles.

Verse 14: *“But Peter said, ‘Never L-rd! Nothing has entered into my mouth that is common or unclean.”*

Common: This refers to an animal that is, by nature, not kosher. Forbidden e.g. A pig.

Unclean: An unclean animal is one, that for a variety of reasons, is kosher but is unacceptable to be offered up to G-d (a broken leg, an infection etc). It was still permissible to eat, but Peter - because of its condition- rejected it for food.

Verse 15: *“And a voice again, a second time to him, said, ‘What G-d has cleansed you do not call unclean.”*

What G-d has cleansed you do not call unclean: G-d is correcting a wrong understanding that Peter has. If G-d has cleansed something it is no longer unclean.

Note: The intent of this passage is not about whether or not we can eat pork. This passage has far greater significance than this.

1. The first problem was this: there was something that **was unclean, but it was not common**. It would have been acceptable, but because of some wrong it was rendered unclean.
2. The second problem was that although G-d had cleansed it Peter still thought of it as unclean.

What is this that was unclean but not common? The answer is found within the context. Cornelius, a Gentile man.

One of the rulings of Judaism, an oral law and not a law found in the law of Moses, was that a Jewish man was forbidden to go into the house of a Gentile. These oral laws are traditions of man and were often put together and mixed in with the laws of Moses. They were/are adhered to as if they were/are Biblical laws.

Messiah was doing two things here:

1. Reaffirming His call to Israel – to be a blessing to the nations (Gentiles) – Genesis 12v3
2. Telling Peter to not believe the lie that Gentiles were unclean, and that he could not have fellowship with them. Israel’s purpose was not to be separated from the Gentiles, but to minister to them and take truth to them - so that they too could be full members in the family of G-d.

Verse 16: *“And this came about a third time, and again this vessel was taken up into the heaven.”*

Third time: The number 3 is for the purpose of revelation. What is G-d wanting to reveal? That we can eat anything we want? No! Not freedom from food consumption, but freedom from sin. This message is for ALL people – in an equal manner. It was for the Jew first, but is now also for the Gentile. Through this vision, G-d was commissioning Peter, not to kill animals in order to eat them but, to take the gospel to the nations. Peter was unqualified to slaughter animals for sacrifice, and did not feel called or qualified to take the gospel to the Gentiles. Through this vision G-d called Peter, ordained Peter, and qualified him for the task.

Verse 17: *“And as in himself he (Peter) was confused on what this vision was. As he was pondering these things behold the men that were sent from Cornelius were inquiring of Simon's house. And they stood at the gate”*

Simon's house: Simon the Tanner

Verse 18: *“They were calling and asking if Simon, the one who is called Peter, was lodging there.”*

Verse 19: *“Peter was thinking concerning this vision and the Spirit said to him, ‘Behold, three men are seeking you.’”*

Three men: 3 again, for the purpose of revelation coming to Peter. This passage is NOT about food, but it is about the appropriateness of the gospel for all people - Jew and Gentile alike. G-d wants all people to become one people - His people. Through the forgiveness of sins, by the grace of G-d, through the gospel message that speaks of the all-sufficient, perfect work of redemption - Messiah Yeshua

Verse 20: *“But stand up, go down, and go with them and do not contend with them – because I have sent them.”*

Do not contend: Do not argue with them.

Verse 21: *“Peter went down to the men that were sent by Cornelius to him. He said, ‘Behold I am whom you are seeking. For what reason is it on account of which that you have come?’”*

For what reason: Peter knows that he must go with them and he knows that G-d is at work here. But he does not understand yet the reason why they were there. (The reason was to take the message of the gospel to the Gentiles. This was revolutionary at that time.)

Verse 22: *“They said, ‘Cornelius, a centurion, a righteous man and fearing G-d of all the world - of the nations of the Jews he has a testimony by them. He received a divine proclamation, by a holy angel, to send for you to come into his house, that he should hear the words from you.’”*

Righteous man and fearing G-d: When we fear G-d we will live righteously.

Hear the words from you: In his trance, G-d had told Peter to rise up to do something. G-d commissioned Peter to be a servant (like those priests who served to ritually slaughter animals to sacrifice them to God), but Peter’s commission was to go to the Gentiles whom Judaism had said were unclean.

Verse 23: *“Therefore entering with them he brought them in for to lodge. On the next day Peter went out with them, and certain ones of the brothers of Jaffa.”*

He brought them in for to lodge: Peter gave these three men a place to stay for the night.

Certain ones of the brothers: Some believers, who lived in Jaffa, also went with him to Caesarea. They heard this testimony and wanted to participate in the things of G-d.

Chapter 10

Part 2: Acts 10v24-48

Verse 24: *“On the next day he entered into Caesarea. Cornelius was expecting him and had called together his family members, his relatives, and the friends who were close to him.”*

Called together: If we hear good news we want to naturally share it.

Verse 25: *“It came about when Peter entered, Cornelius stood up and falling upon the feet (of Peter) he worshipped.”*

Stood up: Shows respect

Verse 26: *“Peter raised him up saying, ‘Stand up! I also am a man.’”*

Verse 27: *“And talking with him he entered and found, having gathered there, many.”*

Talking: The word used for ‘talking’ implies that Peter was instructing/teaching Cornelius – like a homily.

Verse 28: *“And he said to them, ‘You understand how unlawful it is for a man of the Judeans to come before a stranger. And to me G-d has shown not to call a man common or unclean.’”*

Unlawful: Peter is not talking about this from a Torah standpoint. It is not unlawful according to the Torah, but was unlawful according to the traditions of the sages – the oral law.

Come before a stranger: To keep company with Gentiles/someone who is not a fellow Jew.

And to me: Peter is referring to the vision that G-d gave him.

G-d has shown to call no man common or unclean: The vision was not given in regard to all of those four-legged creatures etc. The vision had nothing to do with food, but had everything to do with people and taking the gospel to the nations/Gentiles. Peter had to step out of rabbinical Judaism and their oral tradition concerning Gentiles.

Verse 29: *“Therefore also, without objection, I came when summoned. Therefore, I inquire for what reason that you have sent for me?”*

Without objection: Peter departed from Jaffa because he understood the message told to us in verse 28. G-d was not changing the law. Messiah said not one jot, not one tittle, is going to go away from the law until there is a new heaven and a new earth. What G-d was disagreeing with was the Rabbinical/traditional/the oral law (these laws that were a creation of man) that He did not have anything to do with.

Inquire: Peter understands the message G-d gave to him, but he is unsure why Cornelius sent for him.

Verse 30: *“Cornelius said, ‘Four days ago, at this hour, I was fasting and at the ninth hour I was praying in my house. And behold a man standing before me in shining clothing.’”*

A man: An angel – the word for ‘man’ in Hebrew is sometimes used in relation to an angel.

Verse 31: *“And he said, ‘Cornelius, your prayer has been heard and also your alms have come up as a memorial before G-d.’”*

Verse 32: *“Therefore send to Jaffa to the one called Simon, who is also named Peter. This one is lodging in a house of Simon the Tanner by the sea. Therefore, this one, having come, will speak to you.”*

Verse 33: *“Immediately, therefore, I sent for you and you also have done well by coming. Therefore, now all of us are before G-d to hear the message the L-rd has given you.”*

All of us are before G-d: They are waiting for what G-d wants to tell them so that they can obey.

Verse 34: *“Peter opened up his mouth and he said, ‘Truth I have received: G-d is not a respecter of people.’”*

Not a respecter of people: G-d does not show favouritism or partiality.

Verse 35: *“But in every nation the ones who fear Him and who do righteousness are received to Him.”*

The ones who fear Him:, G-d is looking for people in every nation that fear Him, give Him priority.

Do righteousness: Peter is not talking here about works of righteousness. Righteousness is connected to the will of G-d and to the Kingdom of G-d. When people have a priority for G-d, and want to participate in the will of G-d and being part of the Kingdom of G-d, G-d is going to move. He is looking for such people.

Note: We are not saved by fearing G-d and doing righteous deeds. But we are saved by receiving the forgiveness of sin through His name (see 10v43). We are only saved by calling on His name.

Verse 36: *“And therefore this Word was sent to the sons of Israel, proclaiming the good news of peace that through Yeshua, the Messiah, this One is the L-rd of all.”*

The good news: G-d gave Israel the gospel message –a message of reconciliation or peace.

Peace: Peace has to do with reconciliation and with the purposes of G-d.

L-rd of all: Yeshua is not simply the Jewish Messiah alone. He is the Messiah who entered this world as a Jew, but He is the L-rd of all.

Note: Jonah was also in Jaffa when G-d commanded him to take the message to the Ninevites/Gentiles. Jonah did not want to go. Peter was also commissioned from this same city, but, unlike Jonah, Peter went willingly to the Gentiles he was called to.

Verse 37: *“For you know that happened the word throughout all of Judea. It began from Galilee, and after the baptism of the one, called John. Who proclaimed”*

The word: The message of Messiah went through all the area of Judea.

Verse 38: *“Yeshua from Nazareth as the One who G-d anointed with the Holy Spirit and power, who passed through doing good (works) and healing all the ones who are afflicted by the devil. For G-d was with Him.”*

Holy Spirit: Whenever the Holy Spirit is mentioned in the Bible we need to always see Him in the context of redemption (Isaiah 59v20-21). There is always a connection between redemption and the work of the Holy Spirit.

The ones who are afflicted: Peter puts this statement in the present tense because Messiah is still doing this. The same anointing that was upon Yeshua is available to us by means of the Holy Spirit. Likewise, we can have victory over unclean spirits and set free those who are afflicted.

G-d was with Him: G-d's work of redemption was through him.

Verse 39: *“We are witnesses of these things which he did in the land of Judea and in Jerusalem. Whom they killed and whom they hung upon the tree.”*

Whom they killed: Messiah was rejected, and His work was not received by Israel.

Verse 40: *“This One G-d raised on the third day and gave Him to be manifest”*

This One G-d raised: G-d the Father raised Yeshua from the dead. In no way does this lessen the power and the divinity of Yeshua, but it emphasizes His submissiveness, trust, and absolute confidence in His Heavenly Father.

Verse 41: *“Not to all the people but rather to the witnesses that G-d had hand-picked beforehand - of us who ate and drank with Him after He rose from the dead.”*

Not to all the people: The manifestation of the resurrection of Messiah was not given to all the people but was given to witnesses.

Hand-picked beforehand: There was a calling/selection by G-d of the witnesses who were going to take this message. They had been witnesses of His resurrection, as they ate and drank with Him (Had fellowship with Him) after his death and resurrection. They were the ones who could attest to the resurrection better than anyone else.

Verse 42: *“He commanded us to proclaim to the people and to testify that this is the One pre-destined to judge the living and the dead.”*

Pre-destined: G-d saw beforehand – based upon a pattern. G-d had a pattern. He had a description, and Messiah met that description perfectly. G-d ordained Yeshua because He was the One who met the criteria for being the Redeemer - being the One who would be anointed by G-d to judge the living and the dead.

Judge the living and the dead: We cannot go very far in either the Old Testament or in the New Testament without judgment coming into play. All matters of judgment have been given over to Yeshua. He meets the qualifications for being the Anointed One, the King. Kings rule. As King, Yeshua judges.

Verse 43: *“To this (One) all the prophets testified concerning how one can receive the forgiveness of sins through His name, to everyone that believes in Him.”*

All the prophets testified: To understand Messiah (who He is, what He did and what He is going to do) we need to read and understand Biblical prophecy.

One can receive the forgiveness of sins through His name: We have to call upon Him in faith. That is where we find forgiveness of sins (Not by doing righteous works or living in the fear of the L-rd). It begins by believing that there is a G-d and by us wanting to serve Him and do His will. When this is our desire, G-d gets the message of the gospel to us so that we can call upon the name of Yeshua and be saved.

Verse 44: *“While Peter was still speaking these words, the Holy Spirit fell upon all the ones hearing the word.”*

All the ones: Gentiles

Note: No one laid hands upon them. The moment that they believed, received the gospel, the Holy Spirit fell upon them.

Verse 45: *“And they were astonished, the ones of the circumcision who believed who had come with Peter, that also upon the Gentiles the gift of the Holy Spirit was poured out.”*

The ones of the circumcision: The Jewish believers who were those that came from Jaffa with Peter.

The Holy Spirit was poured out: This word for ‘poured out’ is in the perfect passive. This means that the pouring out of the Holy Spirit happened in the past, it happened in the present (in that room in Caesarea), and it is going to continue happening into the future. This is an act of G-d done to us, and cannot be brought about by ourselves.

Verse 46: *“For they heard them speaking in tongues and glorifying G-d. Then Peter answered,”*

They heard them speaking in tongues: This happened when they came to faith. It was neither a secondary act and nor was it accompanied by the laying on of hands. When a person believes he receives the Holy Spirit, and one of his first acts of obedience is to testify through baptism.

Verse 47: *“Can anyone forbid water that these should not be baptized? These are the ones who received the Holy Spirit, just as us.”*

Note: The gift of the Holy Spirit was poured out upon these Gentiles in the same way that it was poured out upon the Jewish believers. The way of salvation for a Jewish person is the same as the way of salvation for a Gentile. Jews do not receive the Holy Spirit in a different way to non-Jews. G-d does not show partiality, and His Word is the same for all.

Verse 48: *“He commanded them to be baptized in the name of the L-rd. Then they asked him to remain a few days.”*

Asked him to remain: They did not want him to depart immediately. They wanted to hear more. They wanted to be discipled. This is what a true believer desires - to know the Word of G-d in order that they can walk with G-d, serve G-d, and bring honour to His Name.

Chapter 11

Part 1: Acts 11v1-18

Verse 1: *“The Apostles and the Brethren, the ones being down in Judea, heard that also the Gentiles had received the Word of G-d.”*

Being down in Judea: In Hebraic terminology going to Jerusalem is referred to as ‘up to Jerusalem’. Those leaving Jerusalem, or those in Jerusalem who speak of another location, refer to the other places as ‘going down’.

Verse 2: *“When Peter went up into Jerusalem he contended with them, those of the circumcision.”*

Contended with them: Peter spoke against the view held by the Judaizers (see comment below)
Those of the circumcision: The Judaizers. They held to a doctrine that the gospel was only for Jewish people. They also believed that a man had to be converted, become a Jew by being circumcised, before Yeshua’s message and work could have a saving effect in his life. They believed that if a man were not a Jew outwardly then he could not be saved inwardly.

Verse 3: *“They were saying, ‘There was a man who entered in and ate with those of the uncircumcised.’”*

They: Those of the circumcision group

He entered in and ate with Gentiles: There is a difference between Biblical law and rabbinical law (the traditions of the elders).

Nothing in the Word of G-d prohibits a Jewish person from going into a Gentile home and eating together. In the rabbinical law it was seen as forbidden, a violation. The rabbi’s believed that their law agreed with the law of Moses. However, it did not. Yeshua himself did not agree with their laws (Matthew 15v1-9).

The oral tradition (Mishnah and Gemara) does not assist us in following the law of Moses, but the Holy Spirit and Word of G-d will.

The circumcision group was saying that it was wrong for Peter to have done what he did.

Verse 4: *“Peter began to set them in order saying,”*

Verse 5: *“I was in the city of Jaffa praying, and I saw in a trance a vision of a certain vessel coming down as a large garment having four corners. It was being let down by these four corners from heaven, and it came unto me.”*

Garment having four corners: See comment in chapter 10v11

Verse 6: *“At which I looked very intently to discern; and saw four legged creatures of the earth, even the beasts and also creepy things and also the birds of the heaven.”*

Looked very intently to discern: These two words, put together, inform us that Peter saw great significance in this vision and paid great attention to it.

Creatures: See comment in chapter 10v12

Verse 7: *“I heard the voice saying to me, ‘Rise up Peter! Slaughter and eat.’”*

Rise up: This is a call to service, to get up and do something for G-d.

Slaughter: See comment in chapter 10v13.

Verse 8: *“And I said, ‘Never (absolutely not) L-rd! Nothing common or unclean has ever entered into my mouth.’”*

Common or unclean: See comment in chapter 10v14

Peter was given a task to take the gospel to the Gentiles. He did that, and now we see him in Jerusalem explaining why he went into the home of a Gentile and ate with them.

The issue that this text is speaking into is whether Gentiles should be seen as common and unclean.

Verse 9: *“But the voice answered me a second time from the heavens, ‘What G-d has cleansed you not common.”*

G-d has cleansed: This word ‘cleanse’ means to be put into a fit order. This cleansing is significant. It is removing any obstacle (perceived or unperceived, legitimate, or illegitimate) from the issue of kashrut (the dietary laws). As an example, let us look at cleansing in Judaism today: Someone inspects an animal and they pronounce it unclean (it would never be slaughtered for sacrifice). If an authority comes and looks at the same animal but decides that it is clean, despite the previous judgement of it, they say, “I cleanse it.”

The authority does not tell the individual, who initially pronounced it unclean, that he is wrong or that his view was incorrect. This would be putting the other individual down. Instead, when the authorities say “I cleanse it” - whether there was a problem (perceived, unperceived, legitimate, or illegitimate) or not- it becomes acceptable.

G-d is the authority who can legitimately say “I cleanse it”, and it becomes clean, no matter what had been wrong with it previously.

Note: This Scripture is dealing with G-d cleansing the Gentiles and does not deal with the issue of food laws.

Verse 10: *“And this came about three times and all of it was taken up into the heavens.”*

Three times: See comment in chapter 10v16.

Verse 11: *“And behold! Immediately three men stood at the house in which I was. They were sent from Caesarea to me.”*

Behold: The word *behold* alerts us to pay attention, because what follows this word is foundational in arriving at the right understanding of the text.

Three men: Ties it back to the previous event.

Verse 12: *“The Spirit said to me to go with them, and do not contend with them. And they went with me, these six men, and we entered into the house of a man.”*

Contend: This is the same word translated ‘contend’ in 11v2.

Six men: Six is the number related to grace. Peter and these men took a message of grace to the Gentiles in Caesarea.

A man: Cornelius

Verse 13: *“He (Cornelius) proclaimed also to us how he saw the angel in his house being stood, and he (the angel) said to him, ‘Send to Jaffa for a man, Simon, the one who is called Peter.’”*

Being stood: It is written in the passive – meaning that the angel did not do this on his own. He was sent there by G-d.

Verse 14: *“Who will speak words to you (meaning to Cornelius) in order which you will be saved and all your household.”*

Words: The word used here is ‘rhema’.

Note: There are two Greek words for this concept of word: logos and rhema.

Logos refers to a pattern, a blueprint, that relates to the will of G-d. It represents what is logical to G-d – His purpose, plan and will.

Rhema is the word that is spoken/proclaimed and produces the fulfilment of that blueprint. It is a word of power and of transformation.

You will be saved: It was a message of salvation.

Verse 15: *“In the beginning I (Peter) was speaking and the Holy Spirit fell upon them just as also He fell upon us in the beginning.”*

The Holy Spirit fell: The sign of their faith was that the Holy Spirit fell upon them.

In the beginning: At Pentecost/Shavuot.

Verse 16: *“And I remembered the word of the L-rd was which said John (The Baptist) baptized with water but you will baptize in the Holy Spirit.”*

Baptize in the Holy Spirit: These Gentiles received the baptism of the Holy Spirit. In chapter 8v17, when the Holy Spirit was given in Samaria, the text showed us the authority of the Apostles who came and laid hands on the people who then received the Holy Spirit. This is now different. Peter was still speaking the gospel when the Holy Spirit was poured out.

Verse 17: *“Therefore, if the equal gift G-d gave to them as to us when they believed upon the L-rd Yeshua the Messiah, who am I to forbid G-d?”*

Equal: G-d did not make a distinction between the Holy Spirit that the Jewish people received and the Holy Spirit that the Gentiles received. They both received the same Holy Spirit.

When they believed: The indwelling and the baptism of the Holy Spirit came about because they believed in the L-rd Yeshua, the Messiah.

Verse 18: *“Hearing these things they were silenced, and they glorified G-d saying, ‘Then also to the Gentiles G-d has given the gift of the repentance unto life.’”*

G-d has given the gift of the repentance unto life: G-d invites us to repent, but does not force us to.

Unto life: And that life must include the Holy Spirit. He is the one that guides us, directs us, instructs us, reproves us, convicts us, empowers us, and equips us so that we might be a servant of G-d.

Chapter 11

Part 2: Acts 11v19-30

Verse 19: *“Therefore the ones who had scattered, from the tribulation that arose upon Stephen, came unto Phoenicia, Cyprus, and to Antioch, but they did not speak the word except only to Jewish individuals.”*

Tribulation: This is the same word that speaks of the last days tribulation. This is a very general word and can apply to persecution from the enemy (satanic in origin) but it can also apply to the discipline of G-d, or even the consuming wrath of G-d.

Arose upon Stephen: Persecution that started after his death

Did not speak the word: They were not sharing the Gospel message or teaching Scriptural truth as they should.

Only to Jewish individuals: The believers were of the opinion that this gospel message was only for the Jewish people, and not for the Gentiles. G-d reveals, through the book of Acts, that this is a wrong view. The gospel is a necessity for **all** of humanity.

Verse 20: *“There were some from the men of Cyprus and Cyrene who had entered into Antioch. They were speaking to the Greeks, evangelizing the good news of the L-rd Yeshua.”*

Greeks: These Greeks were Jewish Greeks (Hellenistic Jews) as we were just told that the believers were not speaking the word to the Gentiles.

Verse 21: *“And the hand of the L-rd was upon them and a great number believed and turned unto the L-rd.”*

Hand of the L-rd was upon them: G-d's anointing/authority was upon them.

Unto the L-rd: They submitted to the authority of Yeshua.

Verse 22: *“The word was heard into the ear of the church in Jerusalem concerning them, and they sent Barnabas to pass through and to come unto even Antioch.”*

The church in Jerusalem: Some people had remained in Jerusalem despite persecution.

Verse 23: *“When he arrived he saw the grace of G-d and he was rejoicing, and he encouraged all in the purpose of the heart, clinging to the L-rd.”*

In the purpose of the heart: Remaining faithful and bold in their commitment to the will of G-d.

Clinging to the L-rd: An expression that goes back to clinging to the commandments of G-d. (Deuteronomy 13v4, Joshua 23v6-8). If we hold fast to the L-rd we are going to be doing His will.

Verse 24: *“He was a good man, full of the Holy Spirit and faith, and there was added a large crowd to the L-rd.”*

A good man: An individual who is committed to the will of G-d.

Full of the Holy Spirit: If we expect the ministry of the Holy Spirit to be working in our lives we need to be doing the will of G-d.

Faith: A person who has faith is going to be committed to the will of G-d and there will be a manifestation of the Holy Spirit in their lives.

Added a large crowd: When someone is submissive to the will of G-d and manifesting the ministry of the Holy Spirit in their life other people are going to be saved.

Verse 25: *“Barnabas went out into Tarsus seeking Saul.”*

Verse 26: *“After finding him he brought him into Antioch. It came about for a full cycle that they assembled in the congregation and they taught this large crowd. It was first in Antioch that the believers were called Christians.”*

Brought him into Antioch: Barnabas realized that G-d was working in Antioch and he went to find Saul to help him with the ministry there.

Full (whole) cycle: A whole year. There is a Torah cycle and a holiday cycle that repeats each year in Judaism. It is through the cycle of the Torah reading and the holidays that the more excellent way of the L-rd can be taught.

Christians (Messianic): This word is tied to Yeshua. What is important here is that people were looking at these individuals and understood they had a connection to Yeshua the Messiah the Christ.

Verse 27: *“And in those days the prophets came down from Jerusalem into Antioch.”*

Verse 28: *“One from them named Agabus stood up and he gave a sign through the Spirit that there was going to be a great famine that was about to be upon all of the earth. (This came about upon Caesar Claudius).”*

He gave a sign: Probably something miraculous as he did it *through the Spirit*. Signs can also be doing something prophetically (physically) as an illustration of something to come (e.g. Jeremiah wearing a belt as a picture of what was to come - Jeremiah 13v1-11)

Great famine: Difficult times were coming.

Came about upon Caesar Claudius: It happened during the administration of the Caesar by the name of Claudius.

Note: What Agabus prophesied came true. Are we people who respond in light of prophetic truth? These believers had matured and were willing to leave their traditions and receive new revelation (the foundation of that new revelation was obviously based in the Scriptures). Prophecy oftentimes speaks about future and we need to respond for the future right now. The reason that Agabus revealed this was because the people needed to respond and prepare for this famine.

Verse 29: *“Of the disciples, according to how he prospered, each one did what they determined and gave to their Jewish brethren dwelling in Judea.”*

According to how he prospered: (Written in the singular, but applied to the many) The disciples decided that they were going to look at their financial situations and, depending on their profit, they were going to send money to those who were left in Judea.

When G-d revealed to them that there was going to be a famine their thoughts, attention and their actions were for the Jews in Judea, the Jewish people in Israel.

Determined: The same word is often translated as ‘predestined’. The word means to see beforehand – they saw how they prospered, and, based upon knowing the facts of that, they decided what they were going to give from the profit.

Verse 30: *“Which also they did, sending it to the elders through the hand of Barnabas and Saul.”*

Note: Believers in Messiah should have a powerful testimony of supporting and blessing the Jewish people.

Chapter 12

Verse 1: *“In that season King Herod cast the hands to do evil on certain ones from the congregation.”*

To do evil: Persecution against believers. Evil is not G-d’s will, but He can use it. Evil does not thwart the purposes of G-d.

Verse 2: *“And he killed Jacob, the brother of John, with a sword.”*

Jacob: James

Verse 3: *“Seeing that it was pleasing to the Judeans he continued to do more by apprehending Peter. The days were of unleavened bread.”*

Judeans: This term does not mean the Jewish people in general. Rather, it is a term that speaks about those who primarily lived in Judea and followed the traditions of the elders – the oral tradition, rather than the law of Moses.

Days were of unleavened bread: It was around this period of time, very close to the days of unleavened bread. Unleavened bread speaks about purity - a removal of that which is unclean. What makes believers unclean is our lack of belief.

Verse 4: *“He arrested him and set him in prison, and delivered a four-soldier battalion, intending after the Passover to bring him to the people.”*

Four-soldier battalion: Probably four different shifts, with four soldiers at a time guarding on each shift.

After the Passover: On Passover there would be an opportunity for the people to request one of the prisoners to be set free. Herod did not want Peter to be set free. Passover is the festival of redemption – being set free from bondage.

Bring him to the people: For judgement.

Verse 5: *“Therefore Peter was kept in the prison, and prayer was happening by the congregation, up to G-d, on behalf of him.”*

Verse 6: *“When Herod was about to bring him (Peter) before (the people), it was that very night, Peter was sleeping between two soldiers- having been bound with two chains, there was also a guard that was before the door, keeping the prison.”*

That very night: It was either the day after or the evening of Passover.

Peter was sleeping: At Peace, even though it was the night before his trial.

Two: This number is emphasised. Two speaks frequently, in the Scripture, to two different opinions. What we see here is that Herod had one opinion, but G-d had a different one.

A guard: High security

Verse 7: *“Behold! An angel of the L-rd stood and light shone in the cell. And he (the angel) struck the side of Peter and woke him up saying, ‘Rise up in haste!’ And his chains fell off from his hands.”*

Struck: Normally when this word is used for striking someone it is a blow to death. This word is used here to show us how soundly Peter was sleeping.

Verse 8: *“The angel said to him, ‘Gird your clothes and put on your sandals.’ And Peter did thus. And he said to him, ‘Put on your garment and follow me.’”*

Gird: A word that implies getting ready for service.

Verse 9: *“He went out and followed him. He did not know that this happening was real; he was thinking that it was a vision that he was seeing.”*

Verse 10: *“Going through the first guard and then the second they came unto the gate, the iron gate, the one that led into the city, which opened up for them automatically. And going out they went to the first street and immediately the angel departed from him.”*

The angel departed: The angel got him out of the prison and into the street and then he left Peter.

Verse 11: *“And Peter, coming to himself, said, ‘Now I know truly that the Lord has sent forth His angel and saved me from the hand of Herod, and all the expectations of the people of the Judeans.’”*

Now I know: This is an experiential word – not knowing by knowledge, but knowing by experience.

Expectations: Related to desire. There were those in Judea that desired Peter to be put to death.

Verse 12: *“Understanding this, he came unto the house of Miriam the mother of John, who was called Mark, which there were many that had assembled and were praying.”*

Miriam: Mary

Many that had assembled and were praying: The implication is that more and more people were coming and were praying. Prayer was being offered up around the clock, in a very powerful way.

Verse 13: *“Peter was knocking on the door of the gate and a young woman came forth having heard, and her name was Rhoda, and she went out unto the gate.”*

Knocking on the door: They had locked themselves up inside and Peter could not get in.

Having heard: A word that means to obey, or to do something based upon what has been heard.

Rhoda: Probably a servant girl.

She went out: She responded to the knocking.

Verse 14: *‘She recognized the voice of Peter and from joy she did not open the gate; but she ran inside and proclaimed, ‘Peter is standing at the gate!’”*

Peter is standing at the gate: This was a fulfilment of prayer. We have been told, twice, that there was fervent prayer going up around the clock. People were assembling to pray on behalf of Peter, that G-d would save him. Peter experienced miraculous deliverance.

Verse 15: *“But they said to her, ‘You are insane.’ But because she kept insisting thusly that it was, therefore, on account, they said, ‘It is his angel.’”*

You are insane: Even though the church was praying fervently, continuously, for Peter’s deliverance they did not really believe -down deep within their souls – that G-d was going to answer their prayers. Too often we pray but do not have that **sure expectation** (faith) that G-d will answer.

That it was: Meaning that Peter was actually there.

Verse 16: *“Peter continued knocking on the door, and after they opened it they saw him, and they were astonished.”*

Peter continued knocking: It was harder for Peter to get into the worship service than it was for him to get out of prison. G-d can bring people out of bondage, and He does - all the time, but do we respond to what G-d is doing? Are we willing to accept these people as sent by G-d?
They were astonished: When G-d responded to their expectations they were astonished. That is not the proper response. Our response should be one of thanksgiving. We should expect, with confidence, that G-d responds to those things that we pray for.

Verse 17: *“Giving to them a sign with his hand to be quiet he proclaimed to them how the L-rd brought him out from the prison. He said, ‘Proclaim to James and the brothers these things.’ And he went out and came to another place.”*

James: This James was Yeshua’ s brother.

Verse 18: *“And it came about in those days not a small disturbance arose in regard to the soldiers on account of what had happened to Peter.”*

Verse 19: *“For Herod was seeking him and he was not found, therefore he examined the guards and commanded them to be put to death. He (King Herod) went down from Judea and entered into Caesarea.”*

The guards: A soldier obeys what he is told to do, but if he is told to do something that is against G-d's will or commandments he should not obey.

Caesarea: The capital city of the Roman Empire in Israel.

Verse 20: *“There was a great conflict between him (King Herod) and Tyre and Sidon. They were brought to one accord. Having secured the support of a man by the name of Blastus, who was placed as the chambermaid, they were seeking peace. On account that their region was nourished by the kings.”*

Tyre and Sidon: Two Lebanese cities.

Brought to one accord: There was an agreement among them.

Blastus: The implication was that he was favourable towards the people of Tyre and Sidon.

Chambermaid: The person who guarded the king's bed chambers.

Their region was nourished: They got their food from Israel.

Verse 21: *“And on a designated day Herod, clothed in royal garments, sat upon the throne and he was going to give a public speech to them.”*

On a designated day: G-d sent an angel on His appointed day (Passover). Now Herod has made for himself an appointed or designated festival and G-d, not pleased with what Herod was doing on this day, is again going to send an angel, but for a very different purpose.

Verse 22: *“And the people cried out, ‘(This is) The voice of G-d and not of man.’”*

The people cried out: They gave Herod great praise, but it was from the pit of hell. They were praising Herod as if he was a god.

Verse 23: *“Immediately the angel of the L-rd struck him because he did not give thanks and glory to G-d. And it came about that the worms ate him up and he expired.”*

Struck him: Same word as the one used in 12v7. In Peter’s life this strike brought about freedom, and an opportunity to serve G-d. In Herod’s life it brought about death (*he expired*).

Verse 24: *“And the word of the L-rd was strong and also multiplied.”*

Was strong: Became great. The Word of G-d became strong within the people. More and more people accepted that word in a powerful way.

Verse 25: *“Barnabas and Saul returned from Jerusalem having fulfilled their ministry, taking with them John, the one who is called Mark.”*

Barnabas: Barnabas’ name is mentioned first. He has a leadership position at this time.
Fulfilled their ministry: Earlier, Barnabas went to get Saul to help him to strengthen the early believers and many of the Gentile believers who were outside of Israel. This purpose has now been fulfilled with the believers having been strengthened and multiplying in, around and outside of Jerusalem.

Chapter 13

Part 1: Acts 13v1-12

Verse 1: *“There were certain ones in Antioch being in the congregation, prophets and teachers. Barnabas, Simeon (the one who is called Niger), Lucius (from Cyrene), Manaen (who was raised up with Herod, who was the Tetrarch) and Saul.”*

Congregation: The word used for congregation (ecclesia) has to do with those people who have received a calling to ‘come out’ of this world in their conduct, way of thinking etc.

Prophets: Those who receive G-d’s revelation and speak it out. A true prophecy is always based on the Word of G-d, agreeing with Scripture.

Teachers: Those who took G-d’s revelation from the prophets and taught it, giving a human application to it.

The Tetrarch: A ruler (governor) over a quarter of a region.

Verse 2: *“They were worshiping the L-rd and fasting and the Holy Spirit said, ‘Set apart to me Barnabas and Saul for all the work which I am calling them.’”*

Fasting: In the early congregation fasting was a great part of their worship experience. They fasted in order to be ready to worship G-d.

Set apart: To make a distinction.

Verse 3: *“They fasted and prayed, and they set hands upon them and released them.”*

Note: These two men were very integral in this congregation. They were released from this congregation, based upon the Holy Spirit's instruction, that they might do the work that the Holy Spirit had called them to do.

Verse 4: *“Therefore they were sent forth by the Holy Spirit and they went down to Seleucia and they sailed on to Cyprus.”*

Verse 5: *“Coming into Salamis they proclaimed the Word of the L-rd in the synagogues of the Jews. And they had John as a helper.”*

Salamis: This is still a city in Cyprus today.

Proclaimed the Word of the L-rd: The Word of the L-rd going forth is foundational. Barnabas and Saul had heard the Word of G-d - prophetic revelation was also taught to them in a way that they could understand it, apply it, and therefore share it with others.

Synagogues: This is not a Hebrew word, it is Greek, and it means ‘A gathering place’. Like a community centre. Barnabas and Saul went specifically, with intent, to these gathering places in Jewish communities - in order to share to the Jewish people first (Romans 1v16).

Verse 6: *“Passing through the island unto Paphos they found a certain Jewish magician, a false prophet, and his name was Bar-Jesus,”*

Magician: This word is uniquely tied to idolatry. Idolatry is not always the worship of other gods. Other gods just camouflage the real purpose – and that is to exalt oneself.

A false prophet: What this man was doing was steeped in falsehood, lies. A false prophet stands in opposition to the Word of G-d.

Bar-Jesus: Literally means ‘Son of Salvation’.

Verse 7: *“Who was with an individual who was a proconsul, Sergius Paulus, an intelligent man. He called to Barnabas and Saul, seeking to hear the Word of G-d.”*

Proconsul: A proconsul is an advisor to Caesar. He is usually appointed by the Roman Senate as a high official.

Intelligent: Wise

He called to Barnabas and Saul: When Barnabas and Saul came upon the scene, teaching the Word of G-d he walked away from falsehood. He saw something better -he could discern a most excellent way.

Verse 8: *“Elymas the magician (for thus is the translation of his name) stood against them. He was seeking to turn this proconsul from the faith.”*

Elymas THE magician: This was probably not his given name, but it was the name that he gave himself in an attempt to exalt himself above others who practiced that same deceit.

Verse 9: *“Then Saul, also (known as) Paul, being full of the Holy Spirit, looked intently at him and said,”*

Full of the Holy Spirit: The Holy Spirit brings order into a situation.

Looked intently: It is a word of discernment. The *Holy Spirit* caused Saul to look intently at Elymas. The Spirit gave him discernment about who this man really was, what he was really doing and who he truly belonged to.

Verse 10: *“O, you who are full of all deceit and all slothfulness (can also be translated ‘wickedness’), a son of the devil, an enemy of all righteousness, who wants to cease them from turning from the right way of the L-rd.”*

Note: Through the revelation of the Holy Spirit a man or woman of G-d needs to speak firmly, clearly, and succinctly into any problems.

Full of all deceit: Even a little bit of falsehood corrupts.

Slothfulness: He might be using religion as he is too lazy to work.

Wickedness: Slothfulness leads to wickedness. If we want to live righteously we will be diligent and hard workers.

Devil: The word *devil* comes from the concept of being diabolical. This is where someone is very wise in the practice of deceit. He is ingenious in deceiving individuals - making it sound right, good, and proper when it is really evil and ungodly.

The right way of the L-rd: Elymas wants to take the true way and distort it.

Verse 11: *“Now behold the hand of the L-rd is upon you. You shall be blind and not see the sun for a period of time. Immediately it fell upon him gloom and darkness. He went around seeking to be led by the hand.”*

The hand of the L-rd is upon you: G-d's authority is over you. The hand of G-d can have the power of blessing or of cursing.

Shall be blind and not see: Saul was not just talking about a spiritual blindness, but also about a physical blindness. When we are disobeying G-d there are physical consequences. As believers we undergo discipline (Galatians 3v13). Unbelievers live under a curse.

Not see the sun: Completely blind.

Gloom: This word parallels what we see in Egypt (Exodus 10v22-23). This was a punishment and brings upon a person a great fear. Those who reject the message of salvation will be thrown into utter darkness (Matthew 25v30).

Verse 12: *“The proconsul, seeing this happening, believed. He was astonished with the teaching of the L-rd.”*

Note: Judgment is so important. It is a manifestation of G-d's power. When G-d's power is manifested so is His glory. G-d's judgment will also bring about worship.

Was astonished: He was amazed at the power of G-d. The proconsul had been spending time with the magician and had seen all his tricks, illusions, and falsehood. Faith comes by hearing, so when he heard the Word of G-d he was interested in truth as he was seeking G-d.

He was astonished with the teaching of the L-rd: Here we see a coming together between the Word of G-d and the miracle of G-d. He was amazed by the miracle, but he was just as amazed at the Word. Sergius Paulus was able to discern the power of G-d from the false power of the false magician because earlier on he had heard the Word of G-d.

Miracles are G-d's visual aids to confirm the truth of G-d found in the teaching of G-d.

Because people heard the Word of G-d they had a new perspective (they saw things differently), they had the ability to exercise discernment, and be able to identify that which is of the L-rd. They then needed to respond to it, submit to it and be obedient to G-d.

Chapter 13

Part 2: Acts 13v13-31

Verse 13: *“The ones around Paul sailed from Paphos and they came into Perga of Pamphylia. John departed from them and returned to Jerusalem.”*

Ones around Paul: Paul is there as well, but the emphasis is on those who are travelling with him.

Perga of Pamphylia: In Asia Minor.

Verse 14: *“But Paul and Barnabas travelled inland to Antioch of Pisidia. On the Sabbath they went to the synagogue for the services.”*

Verse 15: *“After the reading of the Law and the Prophets the leaders of the synagogue said to them, ‘Men and brethren, if there is a word in you, a word of comfort (or exhortation), for the people – speak on.”*

Them: To Paul and those who were with him.

A word in you: An encouraging word or a word of comfort that G-d has given to them to speak.

This is not a word to make the people feel good about themselves, but is a word to exhort them to the truth of G-d. The leaders want the people to discern and respond to G-d's revelation regarding what had just been read.

Verse 16: *“Paul, rising up, motioned down with his hand, and said, ‘Men of Israel and the ones fearing G-d, listen!’”*

Motioned down with his hand: Paul was a very well-known Jewish individual because of his stature, within Judaism, as a Pharisee. These people were likely welcoming him, and were presumably excited to hear what he was going to say.

Men of Israel: Those who are descendants of Jacob.

The ones fearing G-d: These were Non-Jews. Gentiles who feared G-d.

Note: In those days, a synagogue was a gathering place for both Jew and Gentile.

Listen: We need to listen and hear in order to be able to respond in obedience.

Verse 17: *“The G-d of this people, Israel, He has chosen our fathers; and this people He exalted in the sojourning in the land of Egypt. And with an uplifted (exalted) arm He brought them out of it.”*

Chosen: G-d chose them by means of a covenant.

Our fathers: The fathers are associated with promise.

Exalted: (Same word as *uplifted*) He lifted them up for the purpose of making a distinction between them and others. He lifted up the people and He lifted up His arm – this teaches us about the close relationship/the unity that G-d wanted to establish, by a covenant, between Himself and His people.

It: Egypt. The exodus from Egypt is a paradigm, giving us a picture of redemption.

Note: Paul is showing God's work among his people in order to bring them to the spiritual location whereby they can receive the promises of God. We will never receive the promises of God outside of a personal relationship with Messiah Yeshua.

Verse 18: *“About 40 years He suffered them in the wilderness.”*

He suffered them: He tolerated them or put up with them.

The wilderness: The purpose of that wilderness experience was to impart faith into them.

G-d wanted them to learn how to trust Him. If what they went through in the wilderness was a blessing to them it was because they trusted G-d. Those who had a lack of faith, and refused to trust in G-d, found the wilderness a burden.

Verse 19: *“He destroyed the seven nations in the land of Canaan, and He gave an inheritance to them, their land.”*

He destroyed: G-d destroyed them because of their unwillingness to respond to Israel.

Them: The children of Israel

Verse 20: *“And after these (things) about four hundred and fifty years they were there, and He gave to them judges unto Samuel the Prophet.”*

After these (things): After they inherited the land.

Note: In this Scripture, by alluding to *Samuel*, G-d is exalting prophecy. Paul is showing the people what G-d's prophetic plan was and still is.

Verse 21: *“From there, they sought a king. He (G-d) gave to them Saul, the son of Kish, a man from the tribe of Benjamin, for forty years.”*

From there: At the end of that time of Samuel.

Forty years: This number almost always brings to the text a transition, a change. G-d gave the people Saul - they desired an earthly king, but this was not G-d's desire for them. He submitted to the request of the people, however, to show, and teach, them that His ways would be better. (In the same way G-d's initial desire was for the people to enter into the Promised Land and not spend 40 years in the wilderness. It became His purpose to keep them there, in order to change their stubbornness, their lack of faith, their unwillingness to trust Him.

Verse 22: *“And having removed Saul He raised up to them David for king. Which also He spoke a testimony, ‘I have found David, the one of Jesse, a man according to My heart. Who will do all the things of My will’”*

Raised up: This is a word of resurrection. G-d wanted to bring a new understanding or revelation to His people, in order for them to walk upon the proper pathway.

A man according to My heart: David wanted to think in the ways of G-d. David desired G-d's will.

All the things of My will: David wanted to please G-d in not only the big things but in the small things as well.

Verse 23: *“From this one, of the seed, according to the promise He raised up for Israel a Saviour – Yeshua.”*

Of the seed: ‘The Seed’ is foundational in the covenant that G-d made with Abraham (Genesis 12v7). It is the foundation for the promise being manifested and established.

The promise: This is a good Biblical indicator of what is important. Paul is speaking about **the promise** and reminding the people to be mindful of the prophetic promise of G-d – namely, Messiah.

Raised up: This is the second time that this word is used (see 13v22)

For Israel: Yeshua, the Saviour, was raised up on Israel's behalf. Saviour, in the Scripture, means to save us from our sins.

Verse 24: *“John proclaimed, beforehand, a baptism of repentance for all the people of Israel. “*

John: John the Baptist was revered, respected, and accepted by all of Israel. No one wanted to challenge that John was one sent by G-d.

Beforehand: Before His coming - referring to Messiah.

Note: The G-d fearing (gave G-d priority) Gentiles believed in the G-d of Israel because of this promise – a promise of a Redeemer, a Restorer, a Saviour.

Verse 25: *“John, fulfilling his course said, ‘Who do you suppose me to be? NOT am I He. Behold one is coming after me whom I am not worthy to loosen the sandal of the feet.’”*

Fulfilling his course: Completing what G-d had given him to do.

NOT am I He: John denied that he was, in any way, the Messiah.

I am not worthy: Matthew 3v11

Verse 26: *“Men and brethren, sons of the stock of Abraham, and the ones who, in you, are fearing G-d – to you is the word of this salvation sent.”*

The stock of Abraham: Those who have Abraham’s DNA, genes. The character of Abraham’s spiritual DNA was **faith**. He believed what G-d said and was changed by the covenantal promise of G-d.

To you: It is to a narrow group of people - those who have an expectation of G-d's faithfulness, believing that G-d will bring about His promise - the greatest aspect of that promise being a Saviour who will deal with our sin.

The word: G-d brings transformation through His Word.

Verse 27: *“For the ones dwelling in Jerusalem, and their leaders, this One they did not know, nor the voices of the prophets, those each and every Shabbat which are read, they condemned him and fulfilled what the Scripture said would take place.”*

This One: Messiah

Did not know: This is not a word of ignorance, but one of rebellion.

Voices of the prophets: The best place to learn about Messiah is through prophecy – all of the prophets.

Verse 28: *“Without cause of death finding, they asked Pilate to lift Him up.”*

Without cause of death finding: They did not find a reason to put Him to death.

Lift Him up: It hints to the crucifixion, being raised up.

Verse 29: *“When all things were fulfilled concerning Him, which had been written, they took Him down from the tree. They set Him in a tomb.”*

Fulfilled: This is a different word to the one we used in 13v25. It means to ‘make perfect’.
From the tree: Being placed on a tree was a fulfilment of prophecy (Deuteronomy 21v22-23, Galatians 3v13)

Verse 30: *“But G-d raised Him from the dead.”*

But: In contrast to what they thought or expected.

Verse 31: *“Who appeared, upon many days, to the ones who went up with Him from Galilee into Jerusalem. Who are His witnesses to the people.”*

Chapter 13

Part 3: Acts 13v32-52

Verse 32: *“We evangelize you; to the fathers the promise having been made.”*

Evangelize: The message of the promise of redemption.
To the fathers: This is emphasised in the text. This could refer to the patriarchs and their faithful response, or it can refer to previous generations who were looking for, and waiting for, the promise to be revealed. This promise has now become accessible to this group of people. There was an opportunity for that promise to become a reality in these people's lives.

Verse 33: *“For G-d, fulfilling this to their children, us, He raised Yeshua. As also in the Second Psalm it has been written: ‘My Son are you. I today have begotten you.’”*

Fulfilling: This word for fulfilling has to do with ratifying it, bringing it into reality.
To their children: He ties this promise back to that patriarchal hope - what the other generations were looking for, expecting, desiring.
Us: These people, like us, have an opportunity to take hold, by faith, of the good things of G-d.
Second Psalm: Paul gives them truth and then he gives a Biblical support, from Psalm 2v7, for that truth.
My Son: Sonship is emphasised. Sons serve, and fulfil the objectives of their fathers. That is what Messiah does.
Begotten you: To give birth to. Yeshua **eternally** existed before He was conceived, by the Holy Spirit, in the womb of Mary. We associate a birth as the beginning, but we ought not to. A child was alive at conception, and throughout its time in the womb it existed. This “begetting” speaks of a revealing or a releasing into the world of someone who already existed. On that day, in Bethlehem, G-d the Father revealed or released His Son, who had always existed, into the world.

Verse 34: *“He raised Him from the dead, no longer anymore to return into corruption. For thus He said, ‘I will give to You the faithful mercies of David.’”*

He raised Him: G-d the Father raised Yeshua from the dead.

From the dead: Resurrection has a very important implication for us. Resurrection is associated with victory as it denies or halts any elements of decay/corruption. Resurrection also speaks of a kingdom of purity, holiness, righteousness. All these things are in opposition to decay.

Corruption: Decay

I will give to You the faithful mercies of David: A quote from Isaiah 55v3. G-d brought about a faithful outcome. Many times, David’s administration manifested kingdom truth.

Verse 35: *“Also in another place it says, ‘I will not allow your Holy One to see corruption.’”*

In another place: A quote from Psalm 16v10.

I will not allow your Holy One to see corruption: This is the second time that we see this phrase (see 13v34), but this time we see the word ‘Holy’ inserted into the text. That which is holy is set apart by G-d for a purpose. We are being sanctified, made holy, by the work of the Holy Spirit in our lives. We are going to be transformed into instruments that reflect the glory of G-d and not reflect corruption.

Verse 36: *“For David, in his own generation, he served the purpose of G-d. He was made to sleep, and was added to his fathers, and he saw corruption.”*

He served: We are called to be servants of the will and purposes of G-d.

Made to sleep: He died

Was added to his fathers: Gathered to them

He saw corruption: His body decayed.

Verse 37: *“By means of the resurrection, the One who G-d raised, He did not see corruption.”*

G-d has raised: G-d the Father raised Yeshua from the dead. Yeshua was superior to David.

Verse 38: *“Therefore let it be known to you, men and brothers, that on account of this One is proclaimed to you the forgiveness of sins.”*

Known: Not just from the point of intellect, but to know it experientially.

The forgiveness of sins: This is the good news. Through the work of Messiah, the shedding of His blood, He redeemed us from our sins. If we do not recognise our sinfulness and the problem of our sin, realising that it was the reason for Messiah dying on the cross to pay the penalty, then we have been taught an inadequate gospel.

Verse 39: *“And from all these things which you are not able by the law of Moses to be justified. In this (One), everyone who believes, is justified.”*

The law of Moses: The law of Moses is good, true, holy, perfect – but it cannot justify us before G-d.

Justified: It is only through Messiah Yeshua that we find justification – the good news is that our sins are forgiven through the work of our **only** Saviour, Messiah Yeshua. That justification is necessary for G-d to receive us unto Himself.

Verse 40: *“Therefore watch out that does not come down upon you what was spoken of by the prophets.”*

Spoken of by the prophets: The prophets spoke about a people who were stiff necked, unbelieving, and refused to trust G-d.”

Verse 41: *“Look out, those of you who are scoffers, those who wonder, or those who conceal the work I will work in your days- a work which you will not believe even if someone should detail it to you.”*

Scoffers: Those who hear the promise of G-d, as fulfilled through Messiah Yeshua, and they scoff at it.

Those who wonder: They just think and think and think but never respond to the message of salvation.

Those who conceal it: They hide it, they do not take hold of it, they bring it to nothing – they destroy it for themselves and they do not share it with others.

Verse 42: *“After the synagogue was departed by the Judeans the Gentiles begged, for the next Shabbat, to be spoken to them these words.”*

The Judeans: These are the Jewish leaders who hold fast to the traditions of the elders and not the Word of G-d.

Words: A rhema word -see chapter 11v14. Paul is speaking words of transformation.

Verse 43: *“They went out of the synagogue and many of the Jews followed and the proselyte worshippers were to Paul and to Barnabas. They were speaking to them, and persuaded them to remain in the grace of G-d.”*

Went out of the synagogue: The synagogue time was over.

Many of the Jews: The Jewish leaders had left (13v42), but many of the Jewish people were still present.

Proselyte worshippers: G-d fearers

Persuaded them: Paul and Barnabas were encouraging them to remain in the grace of G-d.

The grace of G-d: This includes the promise that was spoken, mercy, faith, the forgiveness of sins and being justified.

Verse 44: *“For the coming Shabbat almost all the city was gathered to hear the Word of G-d.”*

The coming Shabbat: A week later

The Word: In this passage of Scripture there is a strong emphasis on the Word of the L-rd.

Verse 45: *“But the Judeans, seeing the crowd, were filled with envy and they spoke blasphemously against what was being said by Paul.”*

The Judeans: See chapter 9v22

The crowd: Jewish individuals and G-d fearing Gentiles (the proselytes) who were interested in the promises of the Word of G-d and the truth of Scripture.

Verse 46: *“But Paul and Barnabas spoke boldly saying, ‘To you, it was necessary, first to speak the Word of G-d, but since you have rejected it and have judged yourselves not worthy for eternal life,’”*

But: In contrast

Was necessary: They had a divine mandate to speak to the Jews first.

Rejected it: They did not want to live according to Kingdom truth.

Eternal life: Kingdom life

Verse 47: *“behold we turn to the nations. For thus the L-rd commanded us: ‘I have set you for light of the nations. For you to be for salvation, until the ends of the earth’”*

Light: Revelation.

Verse 48: *“The nations, hearing, rejoiced and glorified the Word of the L-rd. And they believed as many who were ordained for eternal life.”*

The nations: The Gentiles

They believed: Believing is not in the passive. This means that they were not made to believe, but they chose to believe. Because they believed, and committed themselves to the Kingdom, there was an outcome – they were set apart (*ordained*) for eternal life based on the fact that they had first believed.

Eternal life: We experience eternal life today - not just when we die.

Verse 49: *“The Word of the L-rd was carried throughout all of this region.”*

Verse 50: *“The Judeans stirred up the pious (G-dly) women, the honourable women, and the principals of the city who stirred up a persecution upon Paul and upon Barnabas, even that they cast them from their district.”*

Stirred up: Set people against each other.

Principals of the city: The main leaders of the city.

Verse 51: *“But these shook the dust, that was upon them, from their feet, and they went into Iconium.”*

Iconium: A place called Konya in Turkey today.

Verse 52: *“The disciples were made full of joy and also the Holy Spirit.”*

Made full of joy: There is a connection between obedience, joy, and the anointing of the Holy Spirit.

Chapter 14

Part 1: Acts 14v1-13

Verse 1: *“It came about in Iconium that the same thing took place - they entered into the synagogue of the Jews. And speaking thus, Jews and also Greeks believed, a great multitude.”*

Same thing: A tradition, custom, a habit, or a way of life.

Synagogue: The word ‘synagogue’ did not originate with the Jewish people, but is a Greek word meaning to bring together i.e. a gathering place. Not only Jewish people gathered in these places, but others gathered there as well.

Verse 2: *“But the unbelieving Judeans rose up upon and did evil to the souls of those Gentiles against the brethren.”*

Judeans: Those who practiced the traditions of the elders, and were not particularly knowledgeable in the Word of G-d (Matthew 15v5-9).

Rose up upon: They caused a stir.

Did evil: Their behaviour was not in line with the will of G-d.

To the souls: To the very essence of

Verse 3: *“Therefore, much time they dwelt there, and spoke boldly and frankly upon the L-rd to the witness of the word of His grace. It was given signs and wonders, manifested through their hands.”*

Much time: For a long time

They dwelt: They did not run away from the situation.

Upon the L-rd: They were standing upon the foundation of Messiah Yeshua.

The word of His grace: The purpose of the grace of G-d is to bring us to the purposes of G-d, in order that we might be used to manifest G-d's presence.

Hands: Hands speak of authority.

Note: These miracles had a message to them. The nature of them spoke loudly of this truth that they were sharing about. Restoration, change, new beginnings. Through the gospel we have a new beginning, but we also have a different reality (we are a new creation).

Verse 4: *“And there was a schism among the multitude of the city. There were those that were with the Judeans, and there were those who were with the apostles.”*

A schism: Disagreement. Whenever the Word of G-d is manifested (its power, truth, purpose, intent) it divides.

Verse 5: *“And there came about a dissent (uproar) among the Gentiles and also the Judeans, with their leaders. They wanted to stone them.”*

Wanted to stone them: There was a destructive influence.

Verse 6: *“This being made known they fled into the Lycaonian cities of Lystra and Derbe and the regions surrounding them.”*

Verse 7: *“And from there they were evangelizing.”*

They were evangelizing: As they left they continued to proclaim the good news.

Verse 8: *“There was a certain man, in Lystra, without power in his feet, and he was sitting. He was lame from his mother womb, and had never walked.”*

Certain man: There was nothing particularly unique about him.

Without power: He had a disability.

Sitting: This is written in the Greek imperfect. This means it was true in the past. It is true in the present time, but we can anticipate a change in the future.

Had never walked: Walking was very distant, very far away from him. i.e. an impossibility.

Verse 9: *“This one heard Paul speaking. Who (Paul) looking intently seeing that he had faith to be saved,”*

This one heard: He had an opportunity at this time. If he had missed the opportunity he might not have had the opportunity again. We need to ask G-d to make us mindful of spiritual opportunities that He sets before us, so that we can take advantage of them and not squander them when they come our way.

Verse 10: *“he said in a loud voice. ‘Rise up upon your feet! Be straight.’ This one leapt up and walked.”*

Be straight: Paul spoke the outcome of a spiritual surgery. One not done with a knife, but with the sword of his mouth.

Walked: Only Yeshua has the power to bring change into our circumstances – a change that G-d desires in our lives.

Verse 11: *“The crowd, seeing what Paul did, lifted up their voices and said to the people of Lycaonia, ‘The gods, in the likeness of men, have come down to us.’”*

The crowd: The emphasis has been on the crowd in this chapter.

What Paul did: What the Holy Spirit did by means of Paul.

Verse 12: *“They proclaimed that Barnabas was Zeus and Paul was Hermes since he was the primary speaker.”*

They proclaimed: They did a very dangerous thing - they interpreted G-d's miracle, the releasing of His power, in light of their culture. Whenever the truth of Scripture comes it destroys many aspects of culture and human tradition.

Verse 13: *“The priests of Zeus, being before their city, brought bulls and also wreaths and set them upon the gates, and with the crowd he wanted to sacrifice.”*

Bulls and also wreaths: Religious things used to worship their gods.

Wreaths: Crowns of flowers.

Chapter 14

Part 2: Acts 14v14-28

Verse 14: *“The Apostles Barnabas and Paul, hearing, tore their garments and rushed into the crowd proclaiming and saying:”*

Tore their garments: This was a sign of mourning, a sign of repentance or a sign of great displeasure (inward emotional pain). It is usually done before G-d. Paul and Barnabas were grieved that tribute was being paid to them rather than to the One True G-d - the G-d of Israel.

Rushed: Shows intensity and the seriousness of the situation.

Verse 15: *“Men, why are you doing these things? We are like you, men who are evangelizing you, that from the futile things you turn to the Living G-d - who made the heaven and the earth and the sea and all that is in them.”*

Why are you doing these things: They want them to understand that this is the wrong response.

Evangelizing: Giving them the message of redemption – good news.

Futile things: If we are not worshiping G-d, or if we are not worshiping Him in the proper way, then everything that we do is futile.

Turn to (literally: upon) the Living G-d: It means to place something on (E.g. Like a foundation). G-d is the right foundation to build our lives upon. When our lives are rooted in Him then we will be a people who produce good fruit.

Who made: G-d is sovereign over this world, but we should have an anticipation for what G-d is going to do in the future - when He transforms what He has created.

Verse 16: *“G-d, in the former times (previous generations), permitted all the nations (Gentiles) to go in their own way.”*

To go in their own way: G-d has given revelation, but when people reject Him He moves away from their lives.

Verse 17: *Nevertheless, He did not leave them without a witness of Himself of doing good works. For from heaven He provided them rain and a season of fruitfulness with fullness of food, and joy (gladness) of their hearts.”*

Note: G-d did not compel/force humanity to accept Him, but He did give them a witness that testified about Him: *rain to bless them with all types of food, and glad hearts.* The response to both of these gifts from G-d should be thanksgiving and praise to G-d.

Verse 18: *“And these things they were saying, and with difficulty they stopped the crowd from sacrificing to them.”*

With difficulty: The people wanted to carry on their cultural religion and just adapt it to Paul and Barnabas.

Verse 19: *“There were Jewish individuals that went from Antioch and Iconium and they persuaded the crowd, and having stoned Paul they dragged him outside the city thinking that he was dead.”*

Jewish individuals: The Judeans.

Dragged him outside the city: Jewish law demands that no matter who the person is they need to be buried. There is no mention of this here for Paul. Not burying someone brings shame onto the dead individual, and they wanted to shame Paul.

Verse 20: *“The disciples gathered around him and after doing so he stood up, and went back into the city. The next day he departed with Barnabas for Derbe.”*

He stood up: A hint of resurrection.

Verse 21: *“Evangelizing also that city and discipling many. Then he turned in to Lystra and Iconium and into Antioch,”*

Verse 22: *“he strengthened the souls of the disciples, encouraging them to remain in the faith; and that through many tribulations it is necessary to enter into the Kingdom of G-d.”*

Note: Nothing that the enemy did caused Paul to change what G-d commissioned him to do – he continued to evangelise and disciple individuals.

Encouraging: Encouragement is always based upon truth.

Tribulations: It is a word that relates to persecution and **not** one related to the wrath of G-d. As believers we are not going to experience the wrath of G-d (1 Thessalonians 5v9).

Necessary to enter into the Kingdom of G-d: Before the Kingdom of G-d is established it is necessary to go through much tribulation.

Verse 23: *“Commissioning with the hand elders in every congregation, praying with fasting they committed them to the L-rd in whom they had believed.”*

Note: Paul, Barnabas, and the other apostles were very committed to setting things in order in the local congregation. The most powerful vessel for the work of G-d to be accomplished is through the local congregation.

Commissioning: Could be possibly translated ordaining, voting, with the laying on of hands

Committed them to the L-rd: They believed in the L-rd and now they were called to live under/submit to His authority.

Verse 24: *“Passing through Pisidia they came to Pamphylia,”*

Verse 25: *“And speaking in Perga the Word they went down to Attalia.”*

The Word: Many things were being done, but they were all founded upon the Word (the right foundation).

Verse 26: *“There they sailed into Antioch; from there they were given from the grace of G-d for the work which they had fulfilled.”*

Given from: A word of committing to something. It is a provision or a handing over or a commissioning or a committing.

From the grace of G-d for the work: Paul and Barnabas had been committed to this work that they had just completed. The outcome of the work, that they had done, was because of G-d's grace. The grace of G-d not only saves us, but it also commissions us to do the works of G-d.

Verse 27: *“And now arriving, also gathering the church, they proclaimed what G-d had done with them and that He opened for the Gentiles a door of faith.”*

Opened for the Gentiles: They demonstrated Israel's call – to be a blessing to the Gentiles (Genesis 12v3)

Door: An access to faith.

Faith: Synonymous with truth. The truth of G-d needs to be responded to and it impacts every aspect of our lives.

Verse 28: *“They remained there not a little time with the disciples.”*

They remained there: Teaching, empowering, and edifying *the disciples* in the things of G-d.