



PASSIONFORTRUTH

WHERE NEW LIFE BEGINS

Acts 13-14: The Gentiles are in the Synagogue? Part 7 - Jim Staley 2024

Is the darkness closing in around you, and you're not exactly sure what to do? What does it mean to be a light? We're going to talk about it in Acts, chapters 13 and 14. Peter goes to prison. Paul gets stoned. He's giving the gospel and still has a smile on his face. How do we do that in the midst of chaos? Stay in the spirit of joy. How to get the spirit of joy coming up right after this.

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Hello, everyone! Jim Staley, [Passion for Truth Ministries](https://PassionforTruthMinistries.com), and yes, welcome back to our *Going Through the Book of Acts* series, where we are going verse by verse, trying to find the original intent, language, all the expressions, learning the different people groups, going back to the original—in short, to discover exactly what the Bible says, so that we can do Bible things in Bible ways. That's what this ministry is all about.

So, thank you for taking the time, wherever you may be found, from sea to shining sea or over the seas. We're grateful that you're spending this time with us. We are in a deep dive right now through the Book of Acts. We are halfway through. The first half of the Book of Acts is all about, really, the apostle Peter, and then that shifts in the last 14 chapters into the missionary journeys of Paul. And what we've been discovering, I should say, over the last several weeks in this series is that what we've known all about the Book of Acts from a traditional Christian, Western perspective is not exactly what the Bible teaches when you go back to the original language.

We learned all that straight from the Book of Acts. Chapter 10 is one of our most controversial broadcasts that we've had, and I encourage you to go back and watch that if you can. We were talking about, "Can Christians eat pork? Can we eat unclean animals?" And we learned that we cannot use Acts, chapter 10, as a proof text for that, and we learned all about *why*. So, if you haven't watched that, I encourage you to go back and watch it.

Today, we're going to walk through chapters 13 and 14, and next week, we are going to hit the big one. That's right—I call it the big one. It's Acts, chapter 15. It is literally one of the most misunderstood chapters in all of the Book of Acts, probably equal with Acts, chapter 10. It's going to be controversial—you're not going to want to miss it, for sure.

All right, let's dive over to **Acts, chapter 13**, and let's start working through it, verse by verse. Without further ado, read it with me now: **"*Now in the church that was at Antioch, there were certain prophets and teachers.*"** Now, before we go any further, I want to bring something up that I brought up last week very quickly. This word "church" here is not a good rendering. This is us reading back into the scriptures what we have today as a church. But back then, there was no such thing. It was called in the Greek an *ecclesia*. An *ecclesia* is specifically a congregation or a community. Really, it's just an assembly, is what the word *ecclesia* means. And in the first-century context, they didn't make up this word. It already existed, and they used it for synagogue congregations, okay? And so, because the church is still meeting inside of synagogues on Saturday afternoon and then Saturday night, the early Messianic believers that believed in Yeshua would meet in homes on Saturday night when the sun came down—that was called the first day of the week. And so, that's why it said that they met on the first day of the week. Eutychus falls out of the window—we'll find that out in a later chapter.

But all that to say is that this word here really should be just *ecclesia*. They should have translated it as "assembly," not as "church." Because what this does is it puts in a framework in our mind of modern-day Christianity. And so we see synagogue, we see Jews meeting in synagogues, Christians meeting in churches, and we infuse that back into the text, and we create this unnecessary separation in the first century that did not exist.

There was no separation between Jews and the Jews that were Messianic, meaning they believed in Yeshua, the Messiah. And so, I really need to point this stuff out, that as we walk through the Messianic, early Hebraic Christian roots of our faith, we *cannot* read back into the text things that we already believe. Okay, so let's keep going here and see what else we can find.

Alright, so here are the **"*Certain prophets and teachers: Barnabas, Simeon, who's called Niger, Lucius of Cyrene, and Manaen, who had been brought up with Herod the Tetrarch, and Saul.*"** Now, Herod the Tetrarch—just so you know—this is the son of Herod the Great. He was one of the governors over one of the regions here in this area. He's the guy responsible for John the Baptist getting his head chopped off. So, that's the Herod that we're talking about. And what's fascinating is this Manaen guy—we don't know a lot about him—but he was brought up in the household of King Herod. So, this guy has some royal connections, and God is putting together, really, an Avengers team that's made up of every type of person here, from authoritative to royal to humble to rich. And so, this is a fascinating thing.

Of course, you've got Saul—Paul—who ends up being one of the greatest rabbis, having studied under one of the greatest rabbis, Gamaliel, of the first century. And God uses this incredible group of people to spread His Word. Saul and Barnabas are just chosen to work

together as teammates, and we're about to see the power of what that looks like as we move forward.

Okay, so as we go back to the text: **"² As they ministered to the Lord and fasted, the Holy Spirit said, 'Now separate to Me Barnabas and Saul for the work to which I've called them.'** **³ Then, having fasted and prayed, they laid hands on them and sent them away."**

This is important because, as the Holy Spirit speaks, He speaks because they ministered to the Lord and fasted. Guys, we all want to hear from God. Everybody that's in the sound of my voice—if you're a believer in the Messiah—you want to hear from God. And it is so across the board that hearing from God is connected to ministering to Him and fasting, the two things that we're not very good at.

Ministering to Him—**how do we minister to Him? By ministering to the least of these, by ministering to other people, by worshipping Him, by praise, by reading the Word, by spending time with Him**—that's ministering to Him. He loves it when we minister to other people—that's ministering to *Him*. Yeshua made that very clear in one of His sayings during His ministry.

But more important than that is the fasting part. **Fasting is so critical because if we fast, what we're really saying to God is that we're willing to die. We're putting aside the very thing that we actually love the most on this planet**, which is food. And we want to starve our physical body so that our spirits can be more in tune. We're willing to—because if you fast long enough, you will die. So that's why **Isaiah, chapter 58**, says this is a time of fasting for breaking off the chains and loosening the yoke of the enemy in your life. Fasting is a critical thing, a critical discipline, I should say, that every believer in Christ should have. It's a powerful, powerful tool to hear the voice of God and to stay tender toward Him.

It's also very, very difficult to fast when you're in known sin. So, fasting on a weekly basis allows us, as believers, to check ourselves. In the first century, they fasted twice a week. I think it was Tuesdays and Thursdays. They fasted from sunup to sundown. That is a discipline that's been lost in mainstream Christianity today. But wonder why we don't hear enough from God? Maybe it's because we're not taking time out and really pressing in through fasting.

Okay, so, **"⁴ Being sent out by the Holy Spirit" in verse 4, "they went down to Seleucia, and from there they sailed to Cyprus."** And as you can see on your map, you can see where that's at. **"⁵ And when they arrived in Salamis, they preached the Word of God in the synagogues of the Jews. They also had John as their assistant."**

Now, I thought that Paul was the apostle to the Gentiles. What in the world is he doing going into the synagogues to preach to the Jews? Well, it's because God said, "Look to the Jew first and then to the Gentile." So, although he was primarily the apostle to the Gentiles, everywhere he went, because *he's Jewish*—he's not a Gentile, he's not a Christian from the perspective of growing up as a Christian or converting to anything—all he did was take what he knew as a

Jew, and he adopted Yeshua as Messiah into his theology, his Messianic theology, and then began to share the gospel, or the good news of what happened to him and what other people can do to be saved as well. He naturally would go to his kinfolk first to see how many would receive the gospel, and then he began to move into the Gentile communities, and we'll see that.

Alright, so let's continue. ***"⁶ Now, when they had gone through the island to Paphos, they found a certain sorcerer." And this is when it gets interesting—"a false prophet, a Jew whose name was Bar-Yeshua, or Bar-Jesus, ⁷ who was with the proconsul, Sergius Paulus, an intelligent man. This man called for Barnabas and Saul and sought to hear the Word of God. ⁸ But Elymas the sorcerer (for so his name is translated) withstood them, seeking to turn the proconsul away from the faith."***

Now, I just want to bring this up because I think this is really incredible and very ironic. Number one, this sorcerer was named Bar-Jesus. Well, in the original tongue, it would have been Bar-Yeshua, which literally means "son of Yeshua." This guy was as far away from the Son of Yeshua, or the Son of God, as you can get. He's an imposter. So, what we have here is a prophetic foreshadowing of what the enemy, Satan, loves to do. He loves to creep into people that have high levels of authority and then fabricate his own power and authority to draw them in and control them. This is fascinating because this proconsul is right under the top of the top. He's a governor of this region of the Roman Empire, and he has this sorcerer as his right-hand man, if you will. It's kind of like the old Pharaohs that had the magicians, right? They had their magicians there that could copy what Moses did. The reason why is because they're tapping into the demonic realm.

So, this sorcerer is withstanding Paul and Barnabas. Now, why would the proconsul want Paul and Barnabas to come in and hear the word? Because he's fascinated by spiritual, supernatural things, and he's hearing through the grapevine that Paul and Barnabas are healing people. There's a ruckus in the city, and the proconsul wants to know what's going on, so he brings them in. We already know that he's bent toward spiritual things because he has a demonic sorcerer giving him insight.

Well, this sorcerer is scared out of his mind. Why? Because, one, he doesn't want to be expelled from his post. He's probably making money off the proconsul, and he's looking at Paul and Barnabas as a threat. This word that is going to come is going to be a threat. *Anytime*, ladies and gentlemen, that you have a word from God, it's going to threaten the enemy. And when the enemy is threatened, he is going to withstand you.

Now, this is a principle that we can use in life, in everyday life. Understand that when you are walking in the truth, the enemy is not going to like it. This is why we don't fight against flesh and blood—we fight against the principalities and powers of this present darkness. So, if you are making any kind of waves in the spiritual realm, and you're growing closer to God, you're being a witness, you're helping the poor, and you're making an impact in the kingdom, you're going to get attacked. This is just the way it's going to work.

But watch what happens, and let's learn a new principle of how to move forward in trials, tribulations, or things that come against you. Here we go: ***"⁹ Then Saul, who is also called Paul, filled with the Holy Spirit—filled with the Ruach."*** That Holy Spirit, if you're new to Hebrew, is the word "*Ruach*," or Spirit, literally is the same word in Hebrew as "wind." So Paul is filled with the wind of God. God's breath is in his lungs, and he is about to breathe out the power of God. And here's what he says:

"⁹ Paul, filled with the Holy Spirit, looked intently at him ¹⁰ and said, 'O, full of all deceit and all fraud, you son of the devil, you enemy of all righteousness! Will you not cease perverting the straight ways of the Lord? ¹¹ And now, indeed, the hand of the Lord is upon you, and you shall be blind, not seeing the sun for a time.' And immediately, a dark mist fell upon him, and he went around seeking someone to lead him by the hand."

Before I read the last verse, listen—this is pretty incredible. Paul looks right into the eyes of this man who is being completely taken over by a demonic entity, and he says, "The hand of God be against you. You are now blind for a time, you son of the devil." He is so righteously angry that this man is trying, through a demonic spirit, to prevent them from giving the gospel to the proconsul, which could make a major difference.

Remember the centurion that came to know the Lord in the Gospels and how that was such a big deal? He's a Roman centurion, and now he's helping the Christians behind closed doors. So Paul speaks into the spiritual realm. He has no direct communication with this guy; he speaks the truth into the spiritual realm, and the demonic entity must submit to the Word of God.

This is powerful because, in your life, no matter what happens, if you are walking with the Lord, the power of the living God lives inside of you. **Stop conversing and start casting down principalities and powers of this present darkness.** Call them out for what they are. And literally, prayer is what blinds the enemy. Let me say that again—**prayer is what binds the enemy and blinds the enemy.**

If you want the power of God to begin a work in your life, or if someone you're working with or in a relationship with is blind to a specific truth, the only way to penetrate the blindness is through fasting and prayer. That's the only way to break it off.

So if you're in that situation right now, I want you to just admit it and, in the comments, say, "I'm going to fast and pray for such and such a situation." You don't have to be specific if you don't want to, or you can be specific if you want to, and have God keep you accountable. But I encourage you—write in the comments right now, "I'm going to fast and pray for the scales to be dropped."

Think of how many times God uses this analogy both metaphorically and physically. The very person who is causing blindness to come upon this sorcerer was once blinded by God Himself. Don't you find that incredible? Paul, on his way to Damascus, was knocked off his horse and blinded by the light of God, prophetically showing for three days that he couldn't see straight.

God had to rewire his mind so that when he got hands laid on him and he was humbled, the Father opened his eyes. How many of us walk for a time and are blinded to what we cannot see, but we don't have the humility to allow someone else to help us and walk us through into the truth?

This is what I want to read in **verse 12**: It says, **"¹² The proconsul believed when he saw what had been done, being astonished at the teaching of the Lord."** Brothers and sisters, did you know the power of God speaks for itself? Paul doesn't even give the gospel. This proconsul just saw immediately. He had already known the power of the sorcerer; he had already experienced the power of the sorcerer. And all of a sudden, he experiences a greater power. In one minute, the very guy that's on his payroll, who's tapping into all kinds of things, is blinded and on his hands and knees looking for someone to take him by the hand, while the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob takes His place on the throne, and God honored the prayer of Paul. That's the relationship that Paul had. He was so in tune with the Spirit that when he spoke, God backed him up. Many of us would not even have done that. Many of us would not have even gone out on a limb. And it's that faith that we have to go out on a limb for God to meet us there. Wow.

Let's keep going. **"¹³ Now they're going to move into Antioch. When Paul and his party set sail from Paphos, they came to Perga in Pamphylia, and John, departing from them, returned to Jerusalem. ¹⁴ But when they departed from Perga, they came to Antioch in Pisidia,"** which is in the Galatia region, which you can see on your map. This is in the middle of Turkey. This is the area of the Galatian churches—this is what the book of Galatians is all about.

I have an entire book on the Book of Galatians, a verse-by-verse study. And when it comes out, you can see when it will be available on our website at passionfortruth.com. **"¹⁴ But when they departed from Perga, they came to Antioch in Pisidia and went into the synagogue on the Sabbath day and sat down."** Once again, they're in the synagogue on Shabbat. **"¹⁵ And after reading the Law and the Prophets, the ruler of the synagogue sent to them, saying, 'Men and brethren, if you have any word of exhortation for the people, say on.'"** So they're inside of the synagogue, and this is a very Jewish atmosphere. Paul and Barnabas look Jewish. They are Jewish. They would never let a Gentile stand up and speak at all. So they're not playing the part—they are the part.

It's important to remember that Paul is Jewish. He comes from the tribe of Benjamin. Everything about him is Jewish, and they're very comfortable with Paul and Barnabas. They know that they are Jews traveling with a good reputation. They don't know them personally, but they ask them to speak if they have any kind of word. And they give this incredible word.

In **verse 16**, Paul says, **"¹⁶ Men of Israel, and you who fear God..."** By the way, what does that mean, "You who fear God?" He's talking to both the Jewish community inside the synagogue *and* the Gentile proselytes—those that are called "God-fearers" who are in the process of converting to Judaism. So he's speaking to both native-born Jews from the House of Israel, which would have been the tribes of Benjamin and Levi, and also a little bit of Simeon.

He's also talking to the Gentiles who are in the process of converting to Judaism. That's what that little phrase means.

"¹⁷ The God of this people, Israel, chose our fathers and exalted the people when they dwelt as strangers in the land of Egypt. And with an uplifted arm, He brought them out of it. ¹⁸ Now for a time of about forty years, He put up with their ways in the wilderness. ¹⁹ And when He had destroyed seven nations in the land of Canaan, He distributed their land to them by allotment. After that, He gave them judges."

He goes on and goes through the entire history of Israel, all the way down to **verse 24**: After John had first preached, before His coming, the baptism of repentance to all the people of Israel. ***"²⁵ And as John was finishing his course, he said, 'Who do you think that I am? I am not He. But behold, there comes One after me, the sandals of whom I am not worthy to loose.' ²⁶ Men and brethren, sons of the family of Abraham, and those among you who fear God, to you the word of this salvation has been sent. ²⁷ For those who dwell in Jerusalem and their rulers, because they did not know Him, nor even the voices of the prophets which are read every Shabbat, have fulfilled them in condemning Him. ²⁸ And though they found no cause for death in Him, they asked Pilate that He should be put to death. ²⁹ Now when they had fulfilled all that was written concerning Him, they took Him down from the tree and laid Him in a tomb. ³⁰ But God raised Him from the dead. ³¹ He was seen for many days by those who came up with Him from Galilee to Jerusalem, who are His witnesses to the people. ³² And we declare to you glad tidings—the promise which was made to the fathers. ³³ God has fulfilled this for us and our children in that He has raised up Yeshua, as it is also written in the second Psalm, 'You are My Son, today I have begotten You.'"***

And he goes on, and he starts speaking prophetically, pulling from the prophets and the Psalms—these quotes from the Old Testament. And watch this particular quote that he gives. He says in **verse 35**, ***"³⁵ Therefore, He says also in another Psalm, 'You will not allow Your Holy One to see corruption. ³⁶ For David, after he served his own generation by the will of God, fell asleep—meaning died—was buried with his fathers, and saw corruption; ³⁷ But He whom God raised up saw no corruption.'"*** Now, the reason why this is so important is because they believed that this Messianic Psalm was connected to David. They believed that David was talking about himself when he said, "The Holy One will not see corruption." But Paul is pointing out, "Look, he can't be talking about himself because he died, and by the mere fact that he died, by default, his body became part of the earth and saw corruption, whereas Christ rose from the dead." He's trying to point out that these Messianic Psalms that David wrote were about the Messiah, and that Yeshua was the answer to that.

In **verse 42**, we see this: ***"⁴² So when the Jews went out of the synagogue, the Gentiles begged that these words might be preached to them the next Sabbath."*** This is amazing if you think about it. We've been taught our entire Christian life that the Gentiles and the Jews did not operate together—they were kind of against each other—but we're seeing that the Gentiles of this city are listening to the gospel of Yeshua through the apostle Shaul (Saul), or better

known by his Roman name, Paul, and they want to hear more. And where are they hearing it? *In the synagogue.*

Another thing to point out from the Hebraic perspective is that the Gentiles are begging that these words might be preached to them. It doesn't say "tomorrow," it says "the next Sabbath," which tells us that they are used to going to synagogue, or they're used to hearing the gospel—or hearing the Word of God, I should say—*on the Shabbat*, which is the seventh day of the week, which is Saturday, okay? Just like when God rested on the seventh day in creation, they're still resting on the seventh day. That's the fourth commandment given to Moses and to all mankind: "Remember the Sabbath day and keep it holy." Alright, but that's a whole other discussion.

Now, watch what happens here. On the next Sabbath, almost the entire city comes together to hear the Word of God. But when the Jews saw the multitudes, they were filled with envy. Now get this—so you've got Jews in the synagogue, you've got Gentiles in the synagogue, and they all want to hear more about what Paul has to say. But what they didn't expect is the leaders of the synagogue did not expect that hundreds and hundreds, if not thousands, of people would come back the next week, as word spread throughout the region, to hear Paul and Barnabas.

Remember, these are guys that are travelers from outside, from out of town. All these Jewish rabbis did, all the leadership did in the synagogue that day—which couldn't have been more than 120 because that was the average size of a synagogue in the first and second centuries—was ask them, "Hey, would you give any kind of exhortation? Would you guys like to say anything? Since you're visitors, we want to honor you." They had no idea what they were asking for. And the next thing you know, hours later, after giving an exposition of the entire Prophets, all the way to the gospel of Yeshua, now everybody in the synagogue wanted to hear *them* preach.

Now imagine—the pastor says, "Hey, would you like to come up and preach?" And the next thing he knows, two hours later, everyone wants to hear more of this traveling pastor, and the original pastor is like, "What's going on here?" And he starts to get jealous. It is unfortunate, ladies and gentlemen, that today, jealousy is found almost more in religious hierarchies of leadership than anywhere else. **Jealousy and envy will always bring division**—always. It leads to death.

I watched it in my own former congregation—those that would get jealous and try to make their own way, making something for themselves. Every single time, it ends up in destruction of themselves. It will destroy a work of God; it will divide the power of God, and the Holy Spirit becomes grieved because people are more out for themselves than they are for the Kingdom. Rather than just allowing the Holy Spirit to use someone in a great capacity and not take it personally that the people don't want to hear them preach, or that someone else is a better speaker, they get jealous. The moment that happens, the enemy is right in front of them.

So, going back to the text here, the next week, the Jews were very upset, and now they're getting very indignant against the message. That's why it says in **verse 45**: ⁴⁵ ***But when the***

Jews saw the multitudes, they were filled with envy and contradicted and blasphemed. They opposed the things spoken by Paul. ⁴⁶ Then Paul and Barnabas grew bold and said, 'It was necessary that the Word of God should be spoken to you first, but since you reject it and judge yourselves unworthy of everlasting life, behold, we turn to the Gentiles. ⁴⁷ For so the Lord has commanded us: 'I have set you as a light to the Gentiles, that you should be for salvation to the ends of the earth.'"

Now, there's one thing to bring out here before we go any further. A lot of people, when they look at Israel in the Old Testament, see it as God's chosen people, and this part is really important. Okay, if you didn't listen to anything I just said, listen to this. It is a setup for the whole rest of the New Covenant. You have to understand what I'm about to say.

In the Old Covenant, people look at it and think, "Okay, God gave the commandments to Israel. God gave this covenant to Israel. Now He's giving this covenant to the Gentiles." What they don't understand is this verse right here: "I have set you as a light." Who's He talking to? He's talking to Israel. "I'm setting *you, Israel*, as a light to the Gentiles, that you should be salvation to the ends of the earth." Now, the word "salvation" in Hebrew, incredibly, is "Yeshua." It is Jesus. The Hebrew word for "salvation" is "Yeshua."

So let me read that again: ***"⁴⁷ I have set you as a light to the Gentiles, that you should be for Yeshua to the ends of the earth."*** We are supposed to be Yeshua to the ends of the earth. This is the original mission that God gave Israel. It was not, as traditional Christian theology teaches, that God had a group of people called Israel, and now He has a group of people called the Gentiles. There's no such thing.

Let me just go to **Jeremiah 31** real quick, and let you read it for yourself. Don't believe me and what I have to say—believe the Scriptures themselves. It says this: ***"³¹ Behold, the days are coming,' says the Lord, 'when I will make a new covenant with the House of Israel and with the House of Judah.'"*** Now, I'm not going to go through the rest of this; you can walk through it on your own. But there is no house of Gentiles, ladies and gentlemen. This is the only time in the entire Bible that it's prophesied that a new covenant is going to come, and the new covenant is with *only* two groups of people and one entity combined together: it's the House of Judah and the House of Israel. That's who the new covenant is for.

There's nothing in there about the house of Gentiles. You are either part of the northern kingdom or you're part of the southern kingdom. Period. End of story. You are out of covenant unless you are part of Israel. This is what **Romans 11** is all about, right? It's what **Jeremiah 11** is all about. It's what **Ezekiel 37** is all about—the two sticks coming together, one in the hand of the Messiah. This is the one new man of **Ephesians 2**. This is the coming together of Israel under Yeshua as King.

Okay, and so, why is that so important? The concept is that God gave this message, or this mission, to Israel, and it's to be a light to the nations. It was to be a light to the Gentiles. They were supposed to bring the Gentiles in to be part of Israel. It was never supposed to be an

exclusive club membership, like we've all been taught—an exclusive club membership for Israel, and then now we've got an exclusive club membership for Christians. That is not how it is. It became an exclusive club membership because of Israel's disobedience and rebellion; they chose to leave the Gentiles out. They chose to not be a light. They chose to make it an exclusive club. It was never supposed to be that way.

God says He inhabits the praises of His people, *Israel*, is what that word says in Hebrew. So at the end of the day, *we are supposed to be part of Israel*. That is just a fact. If you don't believe me, watch [Identity Crisis](#), and you will absolutely be convinced that we've been taught wrong. We are grafted into the root, which is Yeshua, and the tree is Israel, which has two branches: the House of Israel in the North (the northern ten tribes) and the House of Judah in the South. And all of those two houses that believe in the Messiah become saved. It becomes the whole House of Israel, and it is *all* connected to the root.

If there's any conversion, okay, it's conversion to the people of Israel. That's why Paul says that you were once far off from the covenants of promise, but now you are brought near to the covenants of promise. So the Gentiles were never allowed to be part of Israel, but now, through Christ, the Gentiles can be part of Israel, and they're subject to the covenants of promise. What covenants of promise? The covenants that God gave Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Moses, and David—all of the covenants that were stripped from the Gentiles—they had no access. We are now supposed to be a light.

This is why Yeshua, my friend, says in the Gospel, while sitting right there at the base of Mount Moriah with the Temple up there (by the way, the Temple was called the light of the world), and He must have been looking up there—maybe it was evening, and the Temple was glowing—and He says, "My friends, *you* are the light of the world. Go and be a light, first to the Jew and then to the Gentile." What's He doing? He's re-establishing the original plan that He gave Israel—be a light.

Let me just speak this into your life right now. Some of you are in dark scenarios. Some of you don't really care about theology right now; you're just struggling. You're in a dark place. You're in a difficult place. I'm telling you that it is so inbred in all of us to try to have control over our situation. This is for someone out there today: try to have control over our situations. And I'm telling you what you need to do is just shut your mouth and be a light. Stop telling everybody what to do. Stop telling everybody they're wrong about this, or they need to do this, or they need to be a better person here. Just be a light yourself.

There's nothing that will attract people faster who are in the dark than being a light. But as long as you're just telling everybody that they're in the dark, you're in the dark, and there's nothing attractive about that. You're in the dark no more than them, and you don't know it. But when we are a light to the nations, when we put on the jersey and start playing the game, doing Bible things in Bible ways, and loving people the way Christ loved them through compassion—**we need to have compassion for one another**, ladies and gentlemen—when we begin to move

with compassion **and look past people's darkness into the potential light that's inside of them**, and then fan it into flame.

Have you ever tried to start a fire, and it's just not working out, but you've got this little bitty flame at the very bottom of the fireplace below the wood? What do you do? Do you look at the flame and go, "I can't believe that flame is so small. Look at all this wood that it needs to be consuming. This should be a giant, raging fire. Instead, it's a smoldering fire, right?" No. What you do is you begin to lightly blow on that small flame, and when you blow on that flame, it grows.

What did we learn the Hebrew word for wind is? "**Ruach**," which is the same Hebrew word for "**spirit**." So when you blow on someone's flame, when they're supposed to be a large flame, you blow the Spirit of God gently into their life, and their flame will begin to grow, and they'll become what they were originally meant to be. We need to be a light, my friends. This entire chapter, or two, is literally all about that. Paul and Barnabas are trying to be a light. The Jews don't want the light—they're rejecting the light. But the Gentiles see something that they've not seen inside of the synagogue. They're seeing life. They're seeing power. They're seeing the persuasiveness of the prophets coming to life in front of them.

Ladies and gentlemen, we need to be a light. Going back to the Scriptures, we need to hurry along here. In **verse 49**, *"⁴⁹ The word of the Lord spread throughout all the region. ⁵⁰ but the Jews stirred up the devout and prominent women, and the chief men of the city, raised up persecution against Paul and Barnabas and expelled them from their region."* And watch this—I love this—*"⁵¹ But they shook off the dust from their feet against them and came to Iconium. And the disciples were filled with joy and with the Holy Spirit."* I love that. He says, "Look, man, we were persecuted; they were expelled from the region," but they shook off the dust from their feet. And then it says, "They were *filled* with joy and the Holy Spirit," because it wasn't about them.

Can I ask you, brother and sister, do you take things personally when someone persecutes you? When somebody says something, do you immediately go, "Oh, they must have meant this," and you interpret it from your own insecurity, your own anxiety, your own traumatic background, and the backdrop from which you grew up? Do we take things personally? Why do we do that? Because we make everything about us. Instead of not taking it personally, just pray for that person.

Do you know that in the reverse of this, the joy of the Holy Spirit doesn't show up in your life? Listen, **the joy of the Holy Spirit does not show up in your life until you shake the dust off your feet and stop taking everything personally**. Just look at it as life. Just look at it as, "That person needs Christ. My husband is mean right now, but I'm not going to let that dust settle on me." You see, when someone shakes things up and the dust falls on you, you're letting the dust fall on you. *Shake the dust off*. Don't let that dust settle on you, ladies and gentlemen. Let it come off or when the dust settles, it will totally quench the joy of the Holy Spirit. Shake the dust off. That's what being a light is all about. Being a light—if you let the dust settle on a light bulb, it

will dim it, even if it's just a few lumens. Don't allow the dust to settle. **Keep moving. Keep trusting. Keep praising. Things that move don't collect dust.** So if you've got dust on you—if you've got anger on you, if you've got frustration on you—you're not moving. You're allowing your circumstances to dim your light.

Someone needs to hear this: Your anger is not their fault. Your anger is you choosing to let the dust settle on you because you're taking it personally. And yes, what they say might hurt. Yes, what they do might frustrate you. But at the end of the day, if your value system is in God and not in yourself—not in how you feel, not in how you look... I had a staff meeting this afternoon, and one of our editors brought this up. It was so good. She heard it on a podcast. It's just coming out of me, even now. I believe it's just a word from God that you need to hear.

Where is your value? Is your value in what you look like? Is your value in what you sound like, what you dress like, what you do for a living? Because if someone attacks that, then it's going to hurt. But if they can't—if your value system is in Christ—they can't attack that. There's nothing that will frustrate you, ladies and gentlemen, if your entire value system is with God. If somebody comes over and insults your house, and you get all upset, then you have too much value in your house. Well, let us get to the place of idealism, where being a light is truly allowing just the light bulb to exist. The shade is taken off, the lamp is uncovered, so the only thing people see is the light. Our value should be in the light and not in anything else. My friends, the joy of the Holy Spirit *depends* on us doing that.

All right, let's go back to the text. Let's finish up **chapter 14**. We only have a few minutes left now. ***"¹ Now it happened in Iconium that they went together to the synagogue of the Jews again and spoke, so that a great multitude of both the Jews and the Greeks believed. ² But the unbelieving Jews stirred up the Gentiles and poisoned their minds against the brethren. ³ Therefore, they stayed there a long time, speaking boldly in the Lord, who was bearing witness to the word of His grace, granting signs and wonders to be done by their hands."*** When you stand out, when your life is on the line, my friends, God will back you. Never back down from sharing the gospel in truth, sharing truth in love—God will back you.

"⁴ But the multitude of the city was divided: part sided with the Jews, and part with the apostles. ⁵ And when a violent attempt was made by both the Gentiles and the Jews, with their rulers, to abuse and stone them, ⁶ they became aware of it and fled to Lystra and Derbe," which you can see on your map—where they're headed and where Paul's missionary journeys were going—the cities of Lycaonia and the surrounding region. And they were preaching the gospel there. ***"⁸ Then, in Lystra, a certain man without strength in his feet was sitting, a cripple from his mother's womb, who had never walked. ⁹ This man heard Paul speaking. Paul, observing him intently and seeing that he had the faith to be healed, ¹⁰ said with a loud voice, 'Stand up straight on your feet!' And he leaped and walked. ¹¹ Now when the people saw what Paul had done, they raised their voices, saying in the Lycaonian language, 'The gods have come down to us in the likeness of men!'"***

Now, one thing to point out about this is that Paul is not just going up to everybody and trying to heal them. He's observing what God is doing in this moment. So he sees this man, crippled—this crippled man has no idea of the power that's living inside of him. But Paul is observing to see what the situation is. Would the Holy Spirit allow him to do this? He's observing this man's faith. Is he open to what's going on? And God gives him the discernment to realize that he absolutely has the faith to be healed. So he just speaks it, and the man stands up.

Then the people believe that this is Zeus, that Barnabas is Zeus, and Paul is Hermes. And so they're about to bring sacrifices to Paul and Barnabas. Paul and Barnabas try to talk them down off the ledge, and the people even more want to bring sacrifices because now they're being humble. On top of being Zeus and Hermes, they're denying it, because that's just how humble of gods they are.

But here's what happens in **verse 19**: then Jews from Antioch—now, they just came from Antioch and Iconium—¹⁹ ***Then Jews from Antioch and Iconium came there,*** because, remember, Paul and Barnabas left. And now the Jews find out where they are, ***"and having persuaded the multitudes, they stoned Paul."*** So the very people that started out thinking they were gods just got turned around immediately and were persuaded that these guys were impostors. So they stoned Paul, ***"dragged him out of the city, supposing him to be dead."***²⁰ ***However,***—this is a big "however"—***"When the disciples gathered around him, he rose up and went into the city, and the next day, he departed with Barnabas to Derbe."***

This is important to point out: there's a principle here. One, people are fickle, and the faster someone bows at your feet is as fast as they'll put a knife in your back. Being almost 50 years old—I'll be 50 probably by the time most of you watch this—I can tell you that in my five decades of being alive, I've learned a few things here and there, and one of them is to be very careful of people who flatter you quickly. Proverbs talks about that because those who flatter quickly and are convinced that easily can be convinced right back that you're the devil themselves. I've watched it in real-time. I've had it happen to me, and we need to take that as a principle. Be very careful.

That's why the Bible says to be *slow* to lay hands on those who are going to be elders. Be very slow, because once you do, it's very difficult to take it back. Watch how they operate, and it's the same even for choosing a mate, right? Don't be hasty in choosing a spouse. Be very careful. Allow the Holy Spirit to show you what that looks like. And young people, some of them make mistakes. Older people make mistakes too, and a lot of it has to do with haste. We do things too fast, and then we go, "Oops. I probably shouldn't have done that, right? I regret moving that fast." So we need to take our time.

The second thing I want to point out from this scripture is this—let's go back to this verse—is that Paul was supposed to be dead. Now, these people are not dumb. They stoned this guy to death. This is not the first time they've ever stoned anyone. They killed him. I'm totally convinced that they killed him. They knew he was dead. They knew how to check a pulse. They knew how to find out if someone was dead, and they thought he was dead, so they took him out of the city

and dropped him. And I love this word, one of the most powerful words in the English Bible: "however..." They thought he was dead. However, when the disciples gathered around him, he rose up.

Guys, this is so important. When you get to a place in your life where you are wishing that you had not been in the situation that you're in, or you're down, you need brothers and sisters around you to encourage you. It's their praise to the Father, it's their prayers on behalf of you, and it's their frequency of life that will bring life back into you. That's why the Bible says, "Do not forsake the assembly," the ecclesia. Don't forsake those who are around you, of like mind, who can keep you accountable, who can love you and encourage you. It's with great patience and careful instruction, the Bible says, that we need to give to one another. Give an account for the hope that's in you, but do so with gentleness and respect. All of these scriptures that I'm spouting off are connected to community. We must be connected to one another in some way, shape, or form. If you're out in the middle of nowhere and you can't, then so be it. Then find a community online that can encourage you. Share what's going on in your life, and let people into those quiet places, into those dark places, and watch what the Holy Spirit does.

All right, so when we go back to **verse 21**: *"**21 They preached the gospel to that city and made many disciples. They returned to Lystra, Iconium, and Antioch,**"* the very places where they just got stoned, and they went back to where they just got run out of town, *"**22 Strengthening the souls of the disciples, exhorting them to continue in the faith, saying, 'We must, through many tribulations, enter the kingdom of God.'**"*

It is so critical, my friends, that we understand that you sometimes need to go back and face your fears. And in **the process of facing your fears, you will see the fruit of your life**. You will see the fruit. Paul and Barnabas would have never seen all the disciples growing if they didn't go back. Do you think it was easy to go back to Iconium, to go back to Lystra, to go back to the very places where they got run out of dodge, the very places where people were throwing things at them—from insults to rocks? He's probably still got bandages on his head, and he's going back to the very place where he was hated the most. And in the time and the moment that he faced his fears, he saw the fruit of all of his labor.

My friends, we need to face our fears. And for somebody listening, stop going in the direction of letting fear push you down the road. Turn around, look fear in the eye, and deal with what you need to deal with. Do the right thing, and 90% of the time, it's going to be in the direction that you fear the most.

Because when you turn around and you look at the enemy, and you see fear, he doesn't want you to go in that direction. He's trying to scare you from going in that direction. Fear prevents the power of God and your destiny from materializing. **Fear is the gate that prevents you from going across into the promised land**. Look at fear in the eye, tell it to get out of your way in the name of Yeshua, and move forward. Let the power of God be behind you and before you. For we have not been given a spirit of fear, ladies and gentlemen, but a spirit of power, love, and a sound mind.

God desires for us to walk in the truth and the same power that Paul did when he came up against the sorcerer. He said, "You son of the devil, get out of my way. You're blind." The next time the devil messes with your mind, you tell him, "In the name of Yeshua, I command you by faith, you are now blind, deaf, and dumb. Walk the dry places. You no longer have access or jurisdiction in my life." You have that authority, my friends, to speak to the devil with that kind of firm tone. "Get out of my way. Stop blinding her eyes, his eyes, my husband, my wife, my eyes. By faith, my eyes will be open. I will see what I cannot see."

If you're in a relationship problem right now, I promise you, you've got some blindness because you probably think that you're right. And the reality is, there's no one that's righteous, not even one. All of us have responsibility. And if we all grade ourselves on how great we think we are, on a scale of one to 10, from the gifts of the Spirit found in Galatians chapter 5—the fruit of the Spirit, I should say—when we stand before God, I promise you, it'll be cut at least in half. So if you think you're a five in patience, you're probably a two on His level, because He sees the depth of our depravity.

So knowing that all of us are unrighteous, none of us should be pointing the finger at anyone. We just need to be a light. And to be a light, you have to be in the light. To be in the light, you have to take time with the Light. You have to spend it with the Father. Get up with the Light. Go to bed with the Light. Walk with the Light. Rise up and give the Father the best of you in the morning. Amen.

"²⁷ Now, when they had come and gathered the assembly together the church together, they reported all that God had done with them and that He had opened the door of faith to the Gentiles. ²⁸ So they stayed there a long time with the disciples." They gathered all the troops together, expressed how the Gentiles were coming to Christ, stayed there a long time to disciple them, and began to grow the Light in those regions.

Now, Acts 15 is going to be critical next week. You do not want to miss Acts chapter 15. It is the pivotal point of the entire New Covenant. Rest on our understanding of Acts chapter 15. Did James say that the Gentiles don't have to do anything except for these four things, or is there more to the story? We're going to find that out next week. But in the meantime, I want to encourage you, brother—God has not called you to hide under a bushel.

I don't care where you're at. I don't care what you've gone through. I don't care even if you have sinned and fallen short of the glory of God, like the rest of us. The light that He put inside of you, through the blood seed of His Son, has so much potential it could burst open the darkness and make it flee. As fast as you turn the light on, how fast does the darkness go away? It is instantaneous. You can't even blink your eye, or you'll miss it. That's how fast your situation can turn around, my friends. All you have to do is turn the light on, turn off your mind, will, and emotions to what you want to do, and begin the process of loving people through compassion, giving them the gospel.

What is the gospel? *What is the gospel?* Let's just take two minutes and end this program with this. The Gospel of Jesus Christ, Yeshua, is that He was the Son of the living God, who came and cloaked Himself in humanity, and yet, while we were still sinners and breaking God's law, Christ, the Mashiach, died for us. He took on the penalty of what we deserve, for the wages of sin, or the payment of sin, is death. But the free gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ. If we believe on Him who died, we will live with Him. It's that simple—believing that you're a sinner, understanding that you need a Savior, and then accepting Him as your Lord and Savior—that saves you.

Now, that might be simple to you. How in the world does that relate to Acts chapters 13 and 14, to being a light in Paul's missionary journey, and to the power of God that works through him, and to the sorcerer that gets blinded, and to the devil and how he needs to be blinded in our own life? But if we don't know the gospel—the gospel for you right now, brother or sister, is to understand that Jesus Christ, Yeshua the Messiah, died to give you power over your flesh. When you're in a situation where you get angry or frustrated, whatever happens in your life, you have the power to live like Christ.

The temperature that He takes on your forehead the moment you get upset—that's who you really are. That's your real level of maturity and spirituality in Christ. How you handle yourself when you're triggered—*that is the real spiritual maturity*. And God says, "The image of My Son is placed inside of you. You have the potential. You have the potential to be a light. Be the gospel in your family. Be the gospel of Yeshua to your spouse and your children."

What does that mean? It means that you get up on the cross. You die for them. Yet while they're hurting you, *you die*. You don't insult. You don't return insult for injury. You don't throw fire on them. You give a glass of water for your enemy, you feed them, you compliment them, you love them in their own pain. You be Christ in your situation.

Paul went around and was stoned, and he became Christ in that situation. He loved people where they were at. He went right back to the very people that hurt him, and he didn't even care if he got stoned again. He just wanted to be a light. My friends, if you will choose to be a light, the darkness in your life will go away immediately.

So, Father, I just pray in the name of Your Son, Jesus, Yeshua, that people that are in the sound of my voice will repent for not being a light and for allowing the darkness of others to penetrate them out of their own insecurity, taking things personally and having a value inside of themselves instead of all of their value being found in You. God, I pray that You would free us all from our own selfish anxiety that revolves around us being valuable, and help us to understand that, God, without You, there is no value. There's no purpose. And I pray for those in tough situations of darkness that You would show them the light, help them to be a light, to stay in the light, and that the darkness will not touch them, regardless of the other person's decision. In Yeshua's name.

My friends, thank you so much for spending time with us in this broadcast. Thank you for being a part of our family and our ministry. Thank you for supporting us—those that do. Thank you for saying thank you and not being those that just take, but those that pay forward and partner with us to reach others in this movement. Go to passionfortruth.com right now. Check out all our resources. If you feel free to [partner with us financially](#), you can do that there. In the meantime, we love you. Don't forget about next week—Acts 15, a critical message you need to hear. Until then, I'm Jim Staley, and I'll see you in the next video.

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