



PASSION FOR TRUTH

WHERE NEW LIFE BEGINS

Book of Acts

A Deep Dive into Chapters 13 and 14

By Jim Staley

Introduction: Discovering the True Intent of the Scriptures

In this installment of our series on the Book of Acts, we delve into chapters 13 and 14, exploring the original language, context, and meaning of the text. This deep dive aims to strip away centuries of interpretation that may have skewed our understanding, helping us to grasp the scriptures as they were intended. This approach is crucial to doing "***Bible things in Bible ways***," a foundational principle of our ministry.

The Shift from Peter to Paul: Understanding the Structure of Acts

The Book of Acts is divided into two distinct parts. The first half focuses primarily on the apostle Peter, while the latter half shifts its attention to Paul and his missionary journeys. This transition marks a significant development in the spread of the gospel, particularly as it extends beyond Jewish communities to the Gentiles.



The Misunderstood Terminology: Church vs. Ecclesia

One of the critical discussions in our study is the use of the term "church" in modern translations of the Bible. In Acts 13, the term "church" is derived from the Greek word "Ecclesia,"

which more accurately means "assembly" or "congregation." This is significant because the early believers, including those who accepted Yeshua as the

Messiah, were still very much integrated within the Jewish synagogues. The modern interpretation of "church" creates an unnecessary separation between Jews and Messianic believers that did not exist in the first century.

The Power of Fasting and Prayer: Keys to Hearing God's Voice

Acts 13 emphasizes the importance of **fasting** and **prayer** as a means to connect with God and receive divine guidance. The Holy Spirit's instruction to separate Barnabas and Saul (Paul) for the work of the ministry came after the community engaged in fasting and prayer. This practice is often neglected in contemporary Christianity, yet it was a staple in the early church. Fasting, in particular, is a powerful discipline that aligns the believer's spirit with God's will, making it a critical tool for spiritual growth and discernment.

Paul's Missionary Journey: To the Jew First

Despite being the apostle to the Gentiles, Paul consistently began his ministry efforts in the synagogues, preaching to the Jews first. This was not just a strategic decision but also a reflection of his own identity as a Jew. Paul's approach



At Antioch in Pisidia

¹³ Now when Paul and his party set sail from Paphos, they came to Perga in Pamphylia; and ¹⁴ John, departing from them, returned to Jerusalem. ¹⁴ But when they departed from Perga, they came to Antioch in Pisidia, and ¹⁵ went into the synagogue on the Sabbath day and sat down. ¹⁵ And ¹⁶ after the reading of the Law and the Prophets, the rulers of the synagogue sent to them, saying, "Men and brethren, if you have ¹⁷ any word of ¹⁸ exhortation for the people, say on."

¹⁶ Then Paul stood up, and motioning with his hand said, "Men of Israel, and ¹⁹ you who fear God, listen: ¹⁷ The God of this people ¹⁸ Israel chose our

underscores the inclusive nature of the gospel, which was first revealed to the Jews and then extended to the Gentiles. His method highlights the continuity between the Jewish faith and the belief in Yeshua as the Messiah.

Confronting Spiritual Opposition: The Encounter with Bar-Jesus

One of the most dramatic moments in Acts 13 is Paul's confrontation with **Bar-Jesus**, a Jewish sorcerer who was an attendant of the proconsul, Sergius Paulus. This encounter illustrates the spiritual warfare that accompanies the spread of the gospel. Bar-Jesus, whose name ironically means "son of Yeshua," represents a false prophet who opposes the truth. Paul, filled with the Holy Spirit, rebukes him, resulting in Bar-Jesus being struck blind. This event not only demonstrates the power of God but also the authority that believers have over demonic forces when they are aligned with God's will.

The Power of the Holy Spirit: Paul's Authority in Action

Paul's ability to speak directly into the spiritual realm and command the forces of darkness is a powerful reminder of the authority that comes with being filled with the Holy Spirit. His rebuke of Bar-Jesus was not just a verbal confrontation but a spiritual declaration that the forces of darkness must submit to the authority of God. This incident also serves as an encouragement to believers

today to exercise their spiritual authority through prayer and fasting, particularly when faced with opposition.

Conclusion: The Impact of Faith and Obedience

The story of Paul's journey in Acts 13 and 14 is a powerful testament to the impact of faith and obedience. Despite the challenges and opposition, Paul and Barnabas continued to preach the gospel, trusting in God's power to overcome obstacles. Their journey serves as a model for believers today, reminding us that faith, coupled with fasting and prayer, can move mountains and bring about God's will in even the most challenging circumstances.

In our next session, we will explore Acts 15, a chapter that is often misunderstood and highly controversial. This pivotal chapter will challenge many traditional interpretations, so be sure to join us as we continue our journey through the Book of Acts.



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