

Shavuot – Pentecost, The Spirit, and New Creation

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MAIN VERSES

[Deuteronomy 16](#) • [Leviticus 23](#) • [Matthew 13:33](#) • [Acts 2](#) • [Exodus 3](#) • [Exodus 19](#) • [2 Chronicles 7:1](#) • [Isaiah 65](#) • [Isaiah 66](#) • [2 Corinthians 5:17](#) • [Acts 1:8](#) • [Exodus 32:28](#) • [Luke 24](#) • [Acts 28:31](#) • [Romans 8:11](#) • [Genesis 1](#)

Thank you, Al. Was that good? So I'm so happy that Al was able to do the portion this week because I believe yesterday was also a very special day for Al. If I'm not mistaken, it was his birthday, right? Was that correct? Happy birthday, Al. And thank you.

Welcome, everybody. We're so glad to see you again this month. We're glad to be back in the fellowship hall. Not everyone gets excited about that. I surely do.

Do we have any visitors here today? We're not trying to point you out. Any visitors here today? All right. Well, thank you for visiting for your first time. Don't forget to stop by the visitor's table. We have a special gift for you if you haven't already received it.

Upcoming Events and Announcements

Let's see here. Men's Bible study this coming Tuesday night. Men. Thank you. Yes. Yes. Men. When is men's Bible study? Today. Where is it going to be? Jason's house. That's right. If you don't know where Jason lives, I believe the address is on the website, or you can speak with Jason after services.

So, yeah. Also, tomorrow we will be doing our annual Shavuot celebration, June 9th at 2 o'clock at the Rush Pavilion. The address is on your handout. It's also in the newsletter and on the website and on the Facebook page. No excuses. Rain or shine, we will be there. It was supposed to be pouring down today. God saw fit. So this is good. Hopefully the Father will see fit tomorrow to give us this weather. If not, if it's pouring down, if it's a thunderstorm, we're still going to praise the Lord. We just might wear some clothes that we can get wet in, okay?

Okay, we are under a pavilion, but rain or shine, it's going to be great. And bring cheesecake. Address is in the handout. Bring chair, food to share. And please bring umbrellas just in case it rains.

When you drive up to the Greenway, there will be a guard station there. And the guard will walk out and they will say, hey, why are you here? And they might ask you to pay a fee to enter in. You will tell them, I am here for the Founded in Truth event at the Rush Pavilion. Allow me to pass, please. And then they will say, welcome to the Greenway. And they will step back and allow you to enter. Everyone got it? Please do that. There will be someone there to direct you to the pavilion. There will be a parking lot, and there's a very short walk over to the pavilion. You may drop off people and food at the pavilion if you need to park over there. They don't want you to park over there permanently.

So, everybody excited about Shavuot tomorrow? Everybody, this is my son Benjamin. Can you say hi? Can you say Shabbat Shalom? Shabbat Shalom.

A New Teaching Series

I also wanted to make a special announcement. We will be starting a new series next month. I've been speaking with Jason and Pete and Gideon about this specific series. And it's not a series that we've heard actually taught in church. We've heard it and read this information online. In seminary this gets taught. Theological Bible schools. I feel like it's important because I want to do a series on the Torah and dive into it. But before we dive into the Torah, we need to know a couple things about the Bible. And so we're going to do a quick two-part series starting next month, starting with what is the Bible and what the Bible is not, followed up by how to read the Bible, how the Bible is written starting in [Genesis 1](#), and how to read through the story of the Bible. As the authors have actually written it. So don't miss that. I'm kind of excited about it. Just a little bit.

Youth adult gathering June 15th at Sina's house. There will be—yes! Yes, there will be grilled burgers, hot dogs for dinner. Feel free, young adults, to bring a dessert, snacks, drinks. More details next week. If you're interested in joining, get in touch with Ben or Jonathan or Sina or anybody over there. So, yes.

Also, who's looking forward to an event that's happening this coming fall? Sukkot 2019, guys. We have the plans underway. Registration will be open soon, by June 14th. Possibly before, I don't know. But Sukkot 2019, we will be at the same location we were last year, at South Mountain Family Campground, October 13th through the 21st. More details to come. Good.

Image Bearer Youth Initiative

And I believe that wraps that up for me. I would like to invite Pete to come up here representing the Fit Youth, as well as everyone else who was asked to come up here beforehand. Is this you two? No, no, you're him. And we'll hand, hopefully, unmute the mic. Huh? I had to give mine up to... I don't remember muting it, so it should be on.

Everybody, Pete Wilson! The Pete Wilson. So if you look up at the stage here, standing before you, you will notice that we are wearing similar attire. This is the very first teen fundraiser for, well, specifically for the teen retreat that's coming up in August. August 2, 3, and 4, still time to cancel your family vacations.

So this is a design that was a collaboration between the kids and Matthew and my wife. And this is what we've come up with. This is the image bearer shirt. It's a bear. Because it's a bearer. You're an image. We're still working on naming the bear, but there's a very lovely story that goes along with it.

Ah, Jason, you're the best. If you look at this graphic behind you, that website right there, teespring.com forward slash stores forward slash founded in truth youth, and you can purchase T-shirt, flowy tank for the ladies, kid-sized T-shirts, coffee mugs, stickers, and phone cases, all with the Image Bearer logo attached to them. As the seasons change, we'll be adding more things to the store. Baseball tee and hoodie coming this fall. That's right.

So, it does say Founded in Truth on the back right here. Don't forget. Well, I did, but I know, right? Shameless. Okay. So we are very excited about it because all the money from this is going to go to the teens. Most immediately for the teen retreat, but hopefully in the future for some other things that I have been rattling around in my head that not everyone knows about yet. And travel plans. So we're very, very excited and we hope that everyone will not only go there and get themselves something to wear, but get one for a friend. Give it as a gift.

It's great for Father's Day. It's great for what else is happening? Do you give gifts at Shavuot? You can give a gift of a t-shirt. Fourth of July. That's right. You can get multiple colors. Anyway, that's all we have about that. Thank you.

Supporting Our Community

A couple more quick announcements. The offerings, as we do every week, you can text in any amount at 704-275-0752. We also give online, and we have the handy box at the back. Guys, thank you so much for your offerings. None of the things that we do here would be possible

without that. The chair that you're sitting in, the teen retreat that's coming up, the men's retreat that happened earlier this year, the women's retreat that happens, all the Bible studies that go on, none of those things would happen without your support, and we really appreciate that. For those of you who are out online, if we edify you with these teachings, consider supporting us so that we can keep bringing them to you.

And teachers, don't forget your attendance boards in the back. It's time to bless the kids. Kids know what's up. All the adults are like, well, how did I? Please stand up. We're going to bless the children and thank God for the greatest asset he's given to us as a community, which is our legacy.

Blessing Our Children

This is a tradition we love to do. We love to hold up what's called a chuppah. It's a shawl over the children that represents God's blessings over them. If we could have four capable people to hold the corners of the chuppah. You may not have the microphone because we did that once. It's a clicker. Okay, shoot, I'm going to pray, okay?

Alvina Malkinu, our Father, our King. Father, we thank you for this Shabbat, this one day of the week that you've carved out of creation to give to us as a sign, as a symbol of your reign and covenant love for us. Father, we ask that your spirit of peace and joy would be upon this place today as we fellowship in the name of Yeshua.

And Father, I ask that you would bless the young men here as Ephraim and Manasseh, that they would be fruitful in all of their ways, even as Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, the patriarchs of our faith, that you would instill in them a sense of wisdom and the spirit of courage, Father, endurance to be fruitful in all of their ways, growing up in a generation that is far from you, that they would be the priests, Father, that bring the world close to you.

And Father, the young ladies here, I ask that you would bless them as Rachel and as Leah, even as Sarah and Rebecca, the matriarchs of our faith, that you would instill in them the focus that they had, Father, the endurance and the patience, Father, and the youth. And Father, always chasing after that for their generation.

We thank you, Father, in the name of Yeshua, for allowing us to gather today. In Yeshua's name we pray. Amen.

There you go, bud. Yeah. Mommy's right there. There you go. Put this right over here. I know we've got a couple people missing today. I know Mimi's watching. Hey, Mimi. And Angie's

watching from afar. I know Rita's watching. What's up? So everybody who couldn't make it today or watching from afar, Shabbat Shalom to you.

Preparing for Tomorrow

As we get ready, so I have to have an outline to contain my excitement for this specific topic because this is, if you enjoy the Bible and love to kind of nerd out on the Bible, this is definitely a topic that you can geek out on. So tomorrow, as you know...

We will be celebrating a biblical festival known as Shavuot. It is the second of three pilgrimage feasts after Passover listed in [Deuteronomy 16](#), where all of Israel was invited to come to Jerusalem and bring their tithe from their grain harvest. A day when we're called to come before God and bring a tribute, a blessing of gratitude for all he's given to us in the season that we've gone through.

And you may know this day by another name: Pentecost, which means 50, because it occurs seven weeks plus a day after first fruits. And you see, Shavuot — everyone knows Shavuot — comes from the word Shavua. Every week when we conclude Shabbat, we look at each other and we say Shavua Tov, which means have a good week. So Shavua means weeks, Shavuot is the plural — it means weeks. So literally, Shavuot means the festival of weeks, because it's seven weeks after first fruits. And of course, Pentecost means the festival of the 50 — not quite as climactic, but all the same.

So something incredible would take place when Israel gathered in Jerusalem around the temple according to [Leviticus 23:15-22](#). Israel was commanded, wherever they lived, to bring two loaves of bread, which we'll probably be talking about a little bit tomorrow. Fascinating. Has anyone ever read that verse? I don't think I actually put it in here. Did I? I did! Here we go.

The Festival Offerings

So here's the actual verse. This is what [Leviticus 23](#) says, and this is one of my nerd-out moments because I get to make the presentation. "From wherever you live, bring two loaves made of two-tenths of an ephah of the finest flour, baked with yeast, and the wave offering of the firstfruits of the Lord." So Israel is going to bring the firstfruits of leavened bread. Verse 20: "The priest is to wave the two lambs before the Lord as a wave offering together with the bread of the firstfruits. They are a sacred offering to the Lord for the priest."

Now, I know sometimes when we get into Leviticus and we talk about offerings, we kind of glaze over the details and we're like, "Okay, like, da-da-da, it's a sacred offering and they're going to kill another animal and the blood goes here and that's pretty neat and there's something about bread." Are you reading the details of verse 20? Go ahead and just take a moment and reread verse 20. The priest is to wave two lambs — or rams, I should say — two rams, two lambs. The priest is to wave two animals along with two loaves of bread.

No one else is entertained by this except for me. Okay, one for you guys, zero for me.

This is what we know from the Mishnah, at least from the first century: roughly what the loaves of bread looked like. They were not challah bread. They were dimensional, square, rectangular loaves. I usually bake replicas of them every year for Shavuot. I'll try to bake them tomorrow with horns on the end, kind of like the top of an altar.

But there is a bit of discussion in the rabbinic community about how the priest waved two living animals. And more concerning to me — or not concerning, I'm more interested in what the faces of these animals looked like when they were being waved by, I'm sure, this very buff priest.

So many of you know my dog, Dora. She's a Weimaraner. I don't have a lamb or a ram or sheep. This is what I have — a full-size hunting dog, a Weimaraner. And I know for a fact what facial expression she makes when I pick her up and swing her around. So we're going to have two of those with the two loaves of bread at the same time.

Are you getting fascinated with this like I am? Join the — okay.

So there's a book that illustrates this idea, and I took a slide from it. You can purchase it at Amazon. It's called the Corbin Minka, a pictorial guide to the offerings. And this is what this artist — the snufa, the waving — illustrated of what took place. There's no possible way that that illustrates what actually happened. Two little lambs cuddled up together, smiling. It's like a lamb sandwich with an extra order of meat, right? Double meat being waved through the air in the temple.

I love this imagery. So tomorrow during the celebration, we're not going to do it, but this is when this would have taken place — at the temple in the tabernacle, something like this according to the Bible. There's really no edifying application with this point. I just wanted to talk about a priest. I wanted to talk about his name had to be Shlomo, and he lifted weights all year long, and this was his only job. All right, it's time for Shlomo to wave the sheep in the air.

So thank you for indulging me on that.

Unleavened and Leavened Bread

Okay. So what was the last pilgrimage feast that Israel celebrated earlier in the year? What was it? Passover. That's when everyone went to Jerusalem last time. And we saw bread was used there as well, right? Bread was used at Passover as well, but what kind of bread was it at Passover? It was unleavened bread.

Okay, so we have a contrast. We have unleavened bread at Passover. God commanded all of his people to remove the leavening from their homes and not eat it for a solid week — like, no leavening in your home at all. And this is symbolic of kind of removing Egypt from your life, removing the past life of slavery, removing the culture that would have gone with you, infused, if you will, symbolically in the bread. You're leaving that behind. You've been freed from that and you're walking forward, which makes sense since Passover is celebrated as a festival of freedom from slavery.

But here at Shavuot, God commands his people to bake leavened bread. It's a new bread. It's a new lump, if you will. Not made with yeast that they didn't have time to bring from Egypt or with leavened bread that they allowed to rise in Egypt. No, it's a new bread made after God's redemptive power frees them from slavery.

It kind of reminds us of the parable that Yeshua speaks of in describing the kingdom of God in [Matthew 13:33](#). Remember, he talks about the kingdom of God being like a woman that took and mixed in some yeast and 60 pounds of flour. And that's how the kingdom of God spread as something new, something that starts out with just the flour and the water, but then there's something divine that takes place, something that is powerful from God that infuses it.

This was the day that the harvest after the freedom from slavery to Egypt was offered to God. Do you see that? The harvest that came up after Israel was freed from Egypt was offered to God. That's so beautiful and poetic in a way, at least for me.

Pentecost in Acts 2

We see this day also specifically mentioned in the New Testament, right? Where something incredible happens in Acts chapter 2. The followers of Jesus find themselves in what city? It's not a trick question. Jerusalem — celebrating Shavuot, just like the Bible tells them to. But instead, the story emphasizes something a little bit different than what it did in Torah. Instead of it emphasizing them offering a blessing to God, we see that God is offering them a blessing from him.

So if you would turn with me in your Bibles or open them to Acts chapter 2. If you don't have a Bible app on your phone, you can open Safari on your phone and just type in [Acts 2](#) in the Google search there. And turn with me to Acts chapter 2. I'll get this. I need to make that my wallpaper. That just makes me chuckle every time. It didn't happen like that. There's no way the lambs are just like, yeah, swing me around in the air between two pieces of bread.

Acts chapter 2, verse 1. And we're going to allow Luke to present us with his angle and his viewpoint and vantage point of the story of what took place. The Pentecost after Yeshua died and rose again. Verse 1.

I know we've taken the story for granted, and I know we've read it a thousand times, and I know we already know what to expect. But if you read that for the first time, can you imagine? The fire came to rest upon them.

The Fire from Heaven

So Ben's sitting here, and what looks like fire comes and sits on his head. What would you do? I'm just saying, it's kind of weird when fire starts appearing upon everyone. Do we grab water? Do we tackle them? What do we do here?

All of the followers of this rabbi from Nazareth — this rabbi who preached of the coming kingdom of God, the time when heaven and earth would collide in a way that was only foretold by the prophets, who was lifted up in death but was raised from death, defeating the powers of evil just like [Daniel 7](#) states, and given all power and authority in both heaven and earth — these followers, the followers of that rabbi, are celebrating Pentecost, 50 days after Yeshua resurrected and defeated death. Freeing humanity from the enslavement of sin and the oppressive powers of this world. Kind of riffing off the original Passover story. And then suddenly, as they're there in Jerusalem celebrating Shavuot, a sound like rushing wind from heaven and tongues like fire appear and rest upon them.

And are you seeing this with your mind? Are you visualizing this? What is that? Whoa, it's kind of chaotic, but really divine in a sense. And then they begin to speak in different languages that the same spirit has allowed them to.

So what elements do we see in this story? We see sound that's like what? Rushing wind? Just a big chaotic thing. We have fire that's coming down from where? Well, Luke — and the Bible is a narrative. It's a unified story and it's formatted like one big story written by multiple authors across a very long period of time. And so Luke as an author is giving us, sure, a historical account, but as an author, does Luke have options of how he can tell the story?

Luke's Compositional Choices

Kind of breaking into what we're going to be talking about next month a little bit. But does Luke as an author have options of how to tell the story of what happened? Of course he does. He can emphasize certain things. He can not mention other things. I mean, it's not like this was a video camera recording. He's writing the story with specific details that he is vetting for you to read and to understand something. And he's probably not including some other details of what happened that day as well because he wants you to be focusing on these. Understand? You're good? Okay.

So turn with me to verse 5 or scooch down to verse 5. Now there were dwelling in Jerusalem Jews to mount men from every nation under heaven. And at this sound the multitude came together and they were bewildered because each one of them was hearing them in their own language and they were amazed and astonished saying, are not these who are speaking Galileans like those guys up north? How is it that we hear each of us in our own native tongue? Parthians and Medes and Elamites and residents of Mesopotamia, Judea, Cappadocia, Pontus, Asia, Phrygia, Pamphylia, Egypt, parts of Libya belonging to Cyrene and visitors from Rome. Both Cretans and Arabians as well. We all hear them telling in our own tongues the mighty works of God. All were amazed and perplexed, saying to one another, what does this mean? But others, mocking, said, nah, they've already busted out the wine, man. It's celebrating. It's Shavuot. They're already filled with wine.

Three Signs of Pentecost

So the thematic elements of the story. Rushing wind, fire that descends from where? Heaven. And then languages that are proclaiming something. Okay, so fire. Fire. And let's start because, spoiler alert, [Acts 2](#) has so many different elements in it from across the biblical story. We have elements from [Genesis 1](#). We have elements from [Exodus 19](#) and [Exodus 32](#). We have elements from [Isaiah 11](#), [Isaiah 33](#), [Isaiah 24](#), [Isaiah 59](#), specifically [Isaiah 65](#) and 66. Luke is drawing in these details to remind us of the biblical story that's already been told that we should be familiar with. And we're going to try to explore some of the details here.

From Burning Bush to Sinai

So fire. Where is an instance where fire and language, where is an instance where something is spoken out of a fire? The burning bush, [Exodus 3](#). Yes, you nailed it. That's good. [Exodus 3](#), the burning bush. So what happens in [Exodus 3](#)? Let's meditate on this a little bit. Moses goes up

onto the mountain of God, Har Elohim, and there is a bush burning with fire. And God speaks to Moses. He gives him the mandate to bring his people out of Egypt and bring them back to that mountain. This is going to be Mount Sinai. But what's neat is the word for bush in Hebrew is *sinneh*. So the *sinneh* was on fire and God spoke from it. Sinai. What do you think of when I say, if I said the Hebrew word Sinai? What do you think of? Does any other names pop up in your head? Sinai. That's good. It's kind of a word play here. It's a little bit different. There's a hay instead of a yoke, regardless. Mount Sinai. That's interesting. Interesting.

So Mount Sinai. And it can be assumed, of course, we know Deuteronomy says he's on Mount Sinai now. So what happens on Mount Sinai? Okay. Moses does what He says from the fire that came out of the Sinai, and God's voice spoke. What's going to happen again on the Sinai, fire's going to come down, God's going to speak. He goes into Egypt, the Exodus account happens, people come out, all of Israel comes to the mountain, and then God gives his people his, what's translated as law, the Torah. For what purpose? Why was Israel given the Torah? In order to be a kingdom of priests and a holy nation. In order for them to be set apart and to be a light to all nations, as the prophets put it. You will be a kingdom of priests and a holy nation. God is giving them a mission when he gives them the Torah. It's the same mission that's given to all of mankind in [Genesis 1](#). Be my image bearers. You will be the people that take the justice and the reign and the righteousness and the mercy and the love of my kingdom to the world.

A few verses later, down in verse 18 in [Exodus 19](#). So then what happens next? Next is 20, where we have the Ten Commandments are given, the Ten Words. The people of God then accept their vocational calling as God's covenant people, as the image bearers. These are going to be the kingdom of priests. The priests are the ones who, in a general sense, are the mediators between heaven and earth. That's kind of a universal meaning amongst our religion. These are going to be the mediators that connect heaven to earth.

Fire Descending From Heaven

Where else do we see fire coming down? So we see fire coming up in the bush, not quite coming down from heaven, but okay, it kind of leads us into the Sinai experience. And we know that God came down in the fire on the mountain. Can we keep kind of tracking with this idea here? Where else in the biblical narrative does fire come down from heaven? Elijah, okay, smokes all the prophets. It comes down, what's it hit in Elijah? What's it come down on to? An altar, okay, an altar. Where else does fire come down on an altar? In the tabernacle in the inauguration of the temple, right? Okay, so I already have the slide set. I didn't include Elijah, but I did include [2 Chronicles 7:1](#), which is the inauguration of Solomon's temple. And look at

the language that's used here. When Solomon finished praying, inaugurating the temple, fire came down from heaven and consumed the burnt offering and the sacrifices. And what was the result of the fire coming down from heaven? The glory of the Lord filled the temple.

Whenever heaven and earth collide in the Old Testament, these elements seem to be present. Again, here's the language that Luke uses in Acts chapter 2. In the day of Pentecost arrived, they were all gathered in one place, and suddenly there came a great sound in heaven of mighty rushing wind, and it filled the entire house. I'm starting to see why Luke is emphasizing some of these details in Acts chapter 2. He wants you to understand something. And there's many more details we can explore, specifically in [Isaiah 59](#) and 11. But he wants you to understand that this is a theophany of God's power happening, just like what happened with the burning bush, just like what happened at Mount Sinai, just like what happened when fire consumed the offerings of the altar on Mount Carmel or in the tabernacle or in the inauguration of his holy place, his temple. Luke is attempting to tell you that here, his presence makes his dwelling real. His dwelling among humans. Here, heaven and earth are colliding, not with explosions on a mountain or sparks flying off of an altar. Here, heaven and earth are colliding in the human beings that follow Yeshua.

From Every Nation

And now we have people from every nation gathering around, a mixed multitude, if you will. Like Luke stops his narrative of explaining to you the fireworks and the noise and all the racket and the fire that's showing everything. He stops and he lists out 15 countries. And we typically take that for granted, don't we? If you were writing a story, would you do that? Like, and then there was fire. And then, like, everyone was like, whoa. And then the fire came down and set them. And then they started speaking with tongues because the Holy Spirit of the one and only God of all creation filled them. And they were speaking in tongues and the wind. And here are the list of countries where everybody came that was currently in Jerusalem. We take that for granted, but I wouldn't stop. There was a mixed multitude there. There was a bunch of people there. This is the map. Here's the map. And this is important because this is the map where most of the countries represented in the [Acts 2](#) account came from.

Why would Luke go through the effort to say all of these countries? He's trying to drive a point home because he's an author and he has specific details for a reason. What point is he trying to drive here? Everybody from the known world was there. And everybody from the known world experienced God's voice speaking to them about his kingdom. That's powerful. That's powerful.

Peter's Proclamation and the Three Thousand

Peter then proceeds in Acts chapter 2 to give a sermon explaining that what these men are witnessing is the fulfillment of prophecy, that God has done and is doing exactly what he promised to do. And here it is through this person of Yeshua. He ends his sermon in verse 37. Now when they heard this prophecy, they were cut to the heart and said to Peter and the rest of the apostles, Brothers, what shall we do? And Peter said to them, Repent and be baptized, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins, and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. For the promise is for you and your children and all who are far off, everyone whom the Lord our God calls to himself. And with many other words he bore witness and continued to exhort them, saying, Save yourselves from this crooked generation.

So those who received his word were baptized and were added that day about 3,000 souls. Does it say 3,000 souls? It says about 3,000 souls. Luke could count and go take a census of every country, every nationality of the Judeans that were there. He couldn't round up a number and be like, yeah, there were 3,001, 2,900, about 3,000. About 3,000 came to know and pledge allegiance to King Yeshua. 3,000 are raised to life in the kingdom of God.

Luke's Gospel and Its Sequel

Again, kind of tracking with different stories from the earlier biblical account. How does Luke end his gospel? I'm jumping along. I hope you guys are tracking with me. Are we still okay? Acts is the sequel to what book? Luke. Luke. Luke wrote Luke, the Gospel according to Luke, and then he wrote Acts, kind of a sequel.

The 40 Days of Teaching

How does Luke end his narrative of the Gospel account in Luke chapter 24? Anyone remember the very last line? He ends it talking about how Yeshua lifted up and ascended into heaven, ascended up into heaven. Kind of like how Moses ascended up into the mountain for how many days? 40 days? And then Luke, writing [Acts 1](#), what detail does he give us? Well, for these 40 days, Yeshua was teaching the disciples. He was appearing to them and teaching them for 40 days. Kind of like how God was giving the teaching to Moses for 40 days and then Yeshua was giving it to mankind. If the authors are tracking with the Sinai story, what happens when Moses comes down from the mountain? If we can make that connection. What happens when Moses comes down the mountain? Does he find all these Israelites that have pledged their souls in covenant with God, fully embracing their mission and vocational calling to be the image bearers

of God that he has equipped them to be? Is that what he finds when he comes down the mountain? No, they built a golden calf. Idol worship. 40 days, you saw the fire.

Then what happens? Well, because of the sin of the golden calf, God's wrath is then poured out upon the Israelites through the Levites. And [Exodus 32](#), 28 gives an account. It says that because of this incident, on that day, about 3,000 of the people died. About 3,000 people died at Sinai for rejecting and breaking their allegiance to God through worship of an idol, here...

3,000 at Sinai, 3,000 at Pentecost

Here, 50 days after Yeshua defeats death, about 3,000 are raised to life from sin and death and pledge their allegiance to the king and his kingdom. It's powerful the way that Luke is almost vaguely drawing in different elements to try to let us know that as a future generation, we wouldn't be here today if this event never occurred. And these men, they're not local, right? The men, the 3,000, are they local? They're not local. So where were they going to go back after the festival? If they've embraced their covenant standing with God, if they've been filled with the spirit that equips mankind to do the work of God as a kingdom of priests, to be the image bearers that they were always meant to be, to equip them to speak and do the kingdom work, where are they going to go now? They're just going to hang out in Jerusalem because that's where the temple is, right? So they want to be close to God, right? They're going to go back home.

From 120 to 3,000 Ambassadors

Man, that's cool. Went from 120 to 3,000 ambassadors of the kingdom of God going forth from Zion. The word of the Lord is going forth from Zion and overtaking the known world just like that. It's the power of the Spirit. It's the power of God's plan. That gets me excited because I'm living evidence that this took place, and so are you. So the story of the Bible starts with creation, right? Matt's going to start talking about [Genesis 1](#) again. Oh, no. No. So it starts out with creation. We know this. And what's the first? How does this Bible start out? In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth. And the earth was without form and void and darkness upon the face of the deep. We're going to talk about all of that next month. I'm super excited. But this verse, how verse two ends: And the spirit of God moved or hovered upon the face of the waters. It's such a majestic image that you get in your mind. The next thing that happens, the dry land comes forth in the waters.

It's fascinating because during Yeshua's baptism, he equates the Spirit kind of flopping its wings like a dove. A dove coming down over the waters and God, this is my son. I love that. The Holy Spirit kind of with its wings gliding over the waters. Kind of like the dove that Noah sent out from the ark over the waters and then dry land appears in the story. So what is it here that's hovering over the waters? The Spirit. The Spirit. The Holy Spirit. This is the Holy Spirit hovering over the waters.

Creation to Rebellion

And from what we can tell in the narrative, the Spirit's almost waiting. It's waiting for a command from God to partake in cultivating creation. The Spirit's not just randomly on the sidelines. The Spirit is there partaking in the creation of the world. And we know the story well. Page 3, mankind eats the tree of knowing good and evil, defining evil and good for themselves apart from God's wisdom and reign. Instead of listening to his voice, they listen to the voice of the animal. And quickly, these humans turn violent in nature, taking for themselves whatever they want, living at the expense of others, rejecting God's justice and his good creation with their warped sense of justice. And the story continues in the Bible until we reach the prophets who foretell of something God is going to do to deal with this. And they foretell of a day when God is going to deal with the hurts and the pain and the trauma of life. How God, with his peace, will soothe these wounds where the violence that we enact on each other will be a thing of the past.

The Vision of New Creation

It says our weapons will be turned, our guns will be turned into garden tools. Okay? What else are we going to use them for in that day when God's kingdom perfectly engulfs all of his creation? Just as illustrated in [Genesis 1](#). What else are we going to use our guns for? Well, garden tools—make a plow so we can grow tomatoes and invite people over to eat tomatoes from the garden that we plowed with our guns because what else are we going to do? That's a really cool image. That's what Isaiah talks about. That's what's coming. A time when orphans and the lonely find families and feel God's love through security and protection given to them. Isaiah speaks of a time when the wolf will lie down with the lamb, where the lion will eat grass. Big old teeth, good for nothing. It's kind of strange, right? Why does Isaiah phrase it like that? Well, because no animal will live at the expense of another. No one will live at the expense of another, just like in the garden. How will this happen? Well, God says he's going to bring forth a new creation, a creation so different, so radical in contrast to what we see in the world, so

subversive to what we're subjected to outside of these walls that it can only be described as a new heaven and a new earth by Isaiah in [Isaiah 65](#) and 66.

This was the promise given to Israel about the promises that God will act upon. God will deal with things that drive this world to become darker. The New Testament authors understood this. They had witnessed the power of Yeshua. And when they went to retell the story of everything that God had done through Yeshua, they did it in the most forceful and weighty way, with the most impact possible. All in their very own unique way. It's beautiful.

Christ as the Center of Creation

So John, when he starts out his retelling of the story of Yeshua and what God had done through Yeshua, John starts his retelling of who Yeshua is by retelling the creation story of [Genesis 1](#). This new story of how all things in existence find their home in the person of Yeshua. In the beginning, in the beginning was the Word and the Word was with God. The Word was God and He was with God in the beginning. Through him all things were made. And without him, nothing was made that had been made. In him was life, and that life was the light of all of mankind. The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness does not overcome it. So obviously, John is kind of ripping off the story of [Genesis 1](#), but he starts his retelling of who Yeshua is by retelling the creation story of [Genesis 1](#). This new story of how all things in existence find their home in the person of Yeshua. Paul confirms this in [2 Corinthians 5.17](#). If you're in Christ, you have become a new creation. The old is gone. The new is here.

The Spirit's Creative Work

And then we come and jump again to [Acts 2](#), where we have the Holy Spirit once again making an appearance. The same Holy Spirit that we read in the pages of [Genesis 1](#), waiting, hovering, waiting to move, waiting to partake in creation, waiting to cultivate God's Word manifest. Pentecost is when this Spirit came once again to empower the creative work of God. And it's not the creative work of land and animals and grass and gravity and space. No, it's the creative work of the new creation that Isaiah speaks about. It's a creative work of a new creation that starts anew. The same Holy Spirit is doing the same job it was doing in [Genesis 1](#) and [Acts 2](#). I find that so—some would say edifying. Some would say, wow, that's overwhelming. I just think that's so cool. That's so cool that God would allow me to be a palette to be molded into his image that the world should see. You. When people see you, God wants to mold you so that they see him instead. His love and his justice and his reign and his participation in his created world. And so I say all that Bible nerd stuff to say that we're called to be groomed by the Holy

Spirit to become the hands and feet, the representative that Yeshua has left behind, to show the world what the kingdom of God looks like and feels like in all aspects of our life, show the world what it looks like when heaven collides with earth. The spirit that has been given to you was meant to cultivate something new, a new creation. And it starts right here. Acts chapter 2 is not the only chapter that Luke spends a lot of time detailing and adding in emphasis on different areas of the scriptural narrative. So this is something that gets me excited because I love it when I can realize that the Word of God was written for me to read.

The Bible Was Written to Be Read

Sometimes we don't realize that. Sometimes we view the Word of God as something foreign, and we have an honor to read it. But sometimes we approach the Bible as if the authors didn't care about us reading it, like it's just divine information. And that's not true. I heard someone say once that the Bible was written to a bunch of farmers, an illiterate generation. And the more that you read the biblical text, the more you realize, no, it was written to a very literate generation. Very much so. And it was infused with poetry and euphemisms and different varying genres to paint a clearer picture of who our God is.

Acts: Luke's Design

And Acts is no different. So turn with me to Acts chapter 2. Let's check out some cool things here. Go back a chapter—my excitement is getting ahead of me. So turn with me to Acts chapter 1. And again, this is the start of Luke part 2. Yeshua has come. He's shown the world what the kingdom of God looks like, what it feels like. He's fulfilling the very prophecies in Isaiah of healing the sick. The lame will walk, the blind will see. This is all what Isaiah writes will happen when the exile ends and his people are returned to him, the captivity and the oppression of slavery ends and they return to God. And let me turn to verse 6.

So remember, the gospel account that Luke wrote before this is Yeshua teaching his disciples about the kingdom of God that is here and now. And it is right here at our fingertips, if we choose to allow heaven to manifest itself on earth and show the kingdom reign of God.

But in verse six, his followers gather around him. One of them asks this question. They say, "Hey, Lord, are you at this time going to restore the kingdom of Israel?" There's a lot of speculation about what this question means. Is it like regathering the tribes? But he's already said he started the kingdom work in the whole book before this. Are they speaking from a nationalistic point of view? Like, when are we going to reign over all the world like we're always

supposed to do, with the power of King David? But he already said in Luke that's not what he came to do. Okay. I guess they're asking, when is it going to be complete? When are we going to see God's kingdom fully engulfed on earth, just like the prophets say it was? Like, we know you said it started. When's it going to happen?

Called to Be Witnesses

And Yeshua gives this very dissatisfying answer in verse 7. Okay, like, why? That's not a very satisfying answer, Yeshua. But he goes on. "Okay, I can't tell you when it's going to fully happen. I can't tell you when it's fully going to overtake God's good creation as the prophets say it will. But let me tell you how it's going to happen. Verse 8, these are the things you need to look for. But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you and you will be my witness in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria and to the uttermost parts of the earth." And after this he was taken up before their very eyes, and a cloud hid him from their sight.

Aren't you picturing yourselves being there, thinking, "That's it?" Like, that's the answer you're going to leave me with? I'm not going to tell you when it's going to happen, but here are the things you need to look for. What do they need to look for? They're going to be given power by the Holy Spirit that comes upon them. We know this is going to happen at Pentecost. And then what's going to happen? You will be my witnesses where? This is important. We're going to see some literary work by Luke here. Okay, you ready? Where? Jerusalem. And then where? Judea and Samaria, and then where? The uttermost parts of the world.

So again, riffing on the Isaiah vision of the word of the Lord going out from Jerusalem to the rest of the world. What is the goal of the gospel that Luke wrote about in the book of Luke? That God's kingdom would be made manifest in its fullest. That humans would take hold of their vocational calling to be image bearers of the God of justice, mercy, and grace, and to fill the world with God's love. Luke proceeds to design the entire book of Acts based off verse 8 and concludes how that's going to happen.

Luke's Intentional Structure

So can I invite you guys into some of the thick books I read—works by guys with PhDs? Some Bible nerd stuff. I love this. So in [Acts 2](#), the chapter after [Acts 1](#), which is where the statement is made in verse 8. Where does chapter 2 take place? What city? Jerusalem. Okay, so here we go. Jerusalem is the stage for chapters 2 through 7 of the book of Acts. Okay?

And then in chapter 8, verse 1, let's read the first line. You ready? Verse 1. Chapter 8. So we're in Jerusalem now. "On that day, a great persecution broke out against the church in Jerusalem and all except the apostles scattered throughout Judea and Samaria." You're supposed to go, "Oh, just like Yeshua said would happen in [Acts 1](#)." And Luke is telling this story to now highlight this. He's moving us through the prophecy that Yeshua announced in chapter 1 being fulfilled.

The Judea and Samaria narrative unfolds in chapters 8 through 12. And then in chapter 13 through 20, we have the missionary journeys of Paul and Barnabas to where? Geez, all over Asia and Greece, all over the world. Chapter 13 is the church in Antioch. 14 is Iconium in Turkey with Paul and Barnabas. 15, they kind of go back to Jerusalem. 16, they're back out. He has a vision about Mesopotamia. 17 is Berea, Athens, Thessalonica. 18 is Corinth. 19 is Ephesus. And 20 covers all throughout Macedonia and Greece. They're scattered everywhere. To the uttermost parts of the world. Luke's intentionally doing this.

Now, some of you are pretty savvy and realize that Acts doesn't end in chapter 20. Okay, Matt, but you still have like eight other chapters to cover. Well, finally, Luke concludes his sequel of his original work, the book of Luke, by highlighting Paul's journey in chapters 21 through 28. And where does Paul end his journey in chapter 28? In Rome.

From Jerusalem to Rome

Imagine all of this slowly, gradually, over 20 chapters, going out to the uttermost parts of the world. And then Paul—picture a nuclear explosion, how it sucks in before it—Paul gets sucked back in, back to Jerusalem, and then sent out to Rome, the heart of the known world, where the blood flows from.

I love that. I think that's so cool. Okay. How does Acts end? The very last verse is [Acts 28:31](#). To what end? Everything in the book of Acts—from Luke's standpoint, everything in Luke and Acts—what's the point? What is the point of everything we've been following? Everything ends with that.

The Spirit's Work

The Spirit was given to end with that. This is what it looks like when someone allows the Spirit of God to fill them. This is it. That's it. The Holy Spirit, in our day and age, is commonly portrayed as a display of power that causes miraculous healings and miracles during church

services, right? Conviction stirred in the heart. And these are all things listed as things the Holy Spirit can and will do.

But this is what everything the Holy Spirit does leads to, always. The proclamation of the gospel. The proclamation that God is doing something new and he's taking back creation and he's dealing with the darkness and he's dealing with sin with a capital S and he's dealing with our fallen status. He's dealing with it. That's the good news. That his kingdom is emerging and reigning over his creation just like it was always meant to do. And he's using his created beings, his image bearers, to go out into all nations and proclaim this message out of their mouths, with their hands, and with their feet.

A Life Transformed

That's the gospel of Yeshua. When a believer—someone who has pledged their life to Yeshua—begins to walk out their life driven by the Holy Spirit, it isn't the same life. It's just not. It's a life that produces a fruit that can only be felt or understood as God's.

When a believer sees a circumstance where mercy is needed, guess what? They do it. When a believer sees a need in a community, guess what? They do it. When a believer sees a place in the world that needs the light of God's kingdom, guess what? They pack up. When a believer sees oppression, they speak out against it. When a believer believes, things happen because there's a spirit at work that equips them to make things happen. And they have the name and the authority given by that spirit to be a life giver for God's kingdom.

That is the book of Acts. The book of Acts is the acts of Yeshua and his spirit manifest through his followers. And there's so much cool, neat Bible stuff in Acts. Like, that's the point. But this is what it looks like when believers believe, when God's kingdom expands through our hands and feet.

So the question comes, are you a believer that believes?

Because it should show. It should show because people should see the fingerprints of Jesus in everything that you touch. The Spirit of God grants you the fuel and tools to proclaim through your words and actions that His kingdom is here and it's not going anywhere. The Spirit of God equips you and fuels you to sit with the coworker who's mourning and give comfort because that's what Yeshua would do if he was here. The Spirit of God fuels and equips you to meet someone where they're at in their own life to tell them that there's a better way because that's what Yeshua would do if he was here. The Spirit of God fuels and equips you to walk into a

world that is wrecked with sin and disaster and offer hope because that's what Yeshua does because he is here. The Spirit of God fuels and equips you to meet the needs in this world.

Temples of God's Presence

You see, originally the temple was supposed to represent that meeting place of God on earth, heaven and earth in one place. The poor, the needy, the temple was an institute where the people of God were supposed to see the generosity of God, of heaven in their lives. Let me ask you something, just vaguely. At the time of Yeshua, was that the status? Is that how the temple was viewed? Yeshua had some words about that at one point.

But we see what do we see happen in Acts chapter 2 after the Spirit is given. We see God making his abode on earth not in a building, not in a mountain, not on an altar. We see God manifesting himself and his presence being seen in the human beings that pledge their allegiance to Yeshua. And then what do we see them do? We see them take it upon themselves to sell everything that they have so that they can give to the poor and the needy. They become the place where God's generosity is seen, like little mobile temples going around. Little dwelling places of God's presence.

When the Church Fails You

Guys, I have something to admit to you. A church will fail you. Church will fail you. Fellowships will fail you. This fellowship may at some point in your life fail you. And that is never an excuse. That is never an excuse though. Never. Never an excuse to forfeit the job you have as a follower of Yeshua. If your church community fails in an area of ministry, that's not an excuse for you to hide behind that hurt or that status of a failure and stop your work and what God has already proclaimed and given you the job to do. Never.

Too often, and I know a lot of you used to go to a lot of churches, and perhaps some of you are here today at this fellowship, I'm so glad you're here. But maybe some of you are here today because a church failed you in the past, and so you left to hop to this church. I can tell you that that pattern will continue. That pattern will continue if you're not willing to accept what God has called you to do despite the churches or fellowships that you attend.

Some people would say, well, the church is the one that's supposed to be helping the poor. That is a correct statement. That's you. Too many times, and this is my experience, too many times we as believers, we as Christians, we hide behind our church. We truly do. We blend in with the crowds. It gives us some type of sense of security when we can hide ourselves. It helps us hide

our frustrations. It helps us hide our own failures. It helps us muffle the sound of our own sins in our lives when we can kind of blend in with the group around us.

It's so easy. For me, it's so easy. I've been able to blame the church for the mess that's in my own life when things don't go right in my life. Man, I've done that so many times. And I now realize that I'm just taking the spotlight off of me and my vocational calling because I have the same spirit that's supposedly fueling everyone else. So why don't I allow it to give life in my life and the lives around me?

Called to Step Up

The story of Acts of Yeshua and his spirit is about God calling you to step up. It's what it is. To step up, to acknowledge your sin, to repent and stand as a new creation. To receive the same spirit that raised Christ up from the dead and to allow it to raise you to life, not only to raise you up to life, but to raise you up to a life that impacts the world with God's power, strength, mercy, forgiveness, and love. That's an image bearer. We make a joke because it's a bear on the shirts, but that's an image bearer.

As we reflect on Shavuot and what took place in Acts chapter 2, there was really only one question that we as the readers of Luke's descriptions of the acts of Yeshua through his spirit driving his followers can ask. And that question is simple. Does the book of Acts describe you as a follower of Yeshua? Does the book of Acts describe you as a follower of Yeshua that has the spirit that is promised to you as a follower of Yeshua? Because that's what it's supposed to look like.

Guys, [Romans 8](#), 11 says, the spirit of God who raised Jesus from the dead lives in you, lives in you. And just as God raised Christ Jesus from the dead, he will give life to your mortal bodies by the same spirit living within you. You have become life givers as followers of this rabbi from Nazareth. The Spirit gives us life so that we can give it to others. It's like an infiltration of a dark, corrupt world with the light of rescue and righteousness that started in Jerusalem and went all over the known world, slowly forcing it to evolve to reflect the world that God is manifested in.

A Living Movement

Paul went to Rome. He lost his head there with these words being proclaimed. Guys, Rome fell. The empire of Rome fell. And what birthed out of it was essentially one of the first Christian

nations that overtook the world since and continues to grow because of the followers that believed.

Love Multiplied

We have several adoptive families here at Founder in Truth. Y'all are amazing. We have several foster families here at Founder in Truth. Y'all are kind of amazing. I think we have one family that just moved here that are planning on hopefully becoming foster parents. You guys are amazing. We have, what, over 20 volunteers that have committed themselves to support the foster care system, support the foster children, not only within the families of York County, but also directly to themselves. You guys are awesome. That's awesome.

The love that you give is not yours to give out. It's love that's being funneled through you because you're believing. I love it. Just like what's described in Acts.

Had a conversation with a nice lady in Mississippi. Rita's watching. What's up? Rita's watching. And I got a message from this lady. She watches from afar. She doesn't have a local fellowship, so she tunes in here every single week. And she's witnessed the testimony of you, of the families here who have committed themselves from doing something in a need that's in their local community. Foster care. And Rita and her nine-year-old daughter, Javila, two weeks ago, they began the registration process to become foster parents in Mississippi based on what they're seeing here. It's appropriate. It's always appropriate when you see the Holy Spirit move.

Image Bearers Everywhere

From Jerusalem to the rest of the world, from your homes to your neighborhoods to your workplace, from your fellowship to other fellowships to other fellowships to other families, you're called to be an image bearer of God. Husbands, you're called to love your wives. Wives, you're called to love your husbands. Parents, you're called to love your children. And it's supposed to be a divine love. When your neighbor offends you, forgive. Mercy. When your neighbor is in need, specifically that neighbor, meet that need. Don't be afraid to allow the Holy Spirit of God to use you to be the place where heaven meets earth in someone else's life.

A Call to Action

So we'll conclude. Worship team, you guys can come up. Guys, I don't know where you're at this Shavuot weekend, I don't know what things you face in your daily life. I don't know what areas of your life you may be muffling down, trying to snuff out or not be made known. I don't know

what areas of your life you may or may not have allowed the same spirit that is written on page one of the Bible to partake and cultivate into a new creation that God wants it to be.

But I want to encourage you today, if there is an area in your life that you're not allowing this same Spirit, the creative Spirit of God, to mold, don't go into tomorrow without first stopping and getting on your knees and letting that be known as a request to your God. This is why the Spirit was given. All the miracles are great. Prophecy, great. All that jazz, great. If it's not to the end of proclaiming the gospel and the kingdom of God through your mouth, through your hands and your feet, it's not the Holy Spirit. It's not.

So please stand. Join us as we conclude in worship, as we do each week, and meditate. Meditate on what took place 2,000 years ago that you're able to be here today to memorialize it. If you need prayer, we have a prayer team on both sides of the room. These are people that will pray with you. They will stand beside you and they will enter God's presence alongside you, supporting you, praying with you. Take advantage of that. Take advantage of that.

Father, we thank you for your love. We thank you for your mercy. Father, we thank you for not only Yeshua to be the model image bearer, but the spirit, the spirit that raised him to life to raise us to life so that we can walk out as his hands and feet in this world.

Closing Prayer

We thank you, Father, on this Shavuot as we once again celebrate your faithfulness to the promises. In Yeshua's name we pray. Amen.

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