

PREFACE

“Pastor says that the name ‘Paul’ means ‘little’. Thank God that this day God used His servant to magnify and vindicate the very person and ministry of Paul the apostle. As what Jedidah said, this honour was given to the servant of God because he is one who is drunk with Paul. It is so beautiful when pastor brought out the story of Paul from the Book of Acts. The men whom God used are never obtrusive; it is the Holy Spirit that raised them up and worked in them to bring them to the forefront. This book of Acts is, in fact, the acts of the Holy Spirit and of the apostles, and especially so of Paul. Pastor helped us to see the macro and sweeping view of Acts; it is very heart-warming to see the work of the Holy Spirit in Paul, even in raising him up and bringing him to the forefront of the stage even in the period of time when there was a transition of the New Testament era. Pastor showed us the special calling of Paul. The Holy Spirit is very strong in pastor to give us the very understanding of the book of Acts. Therefore I felt the extraordinary rain that came today is also the attestation of the strong mighty presence of the Holy Spirit in our midst in enabling our pastor to bring such an awesome message to us. It is also the quiet working of the Holy Spirit attesting to us the niche and significance of this book of Acts in the Scriptures. Many things pastor said were very startling but were all proven from the Scriptures (Acts and even the epistles). Earlier this year, pastor had laboured to show us why the book of Daniel is so important amongst the Major Prophets and why Daniel is such a luminous star. For the book of Daniel brought forth the prophecies of the coming of Yeshua Christ. Today, we are shown why Paul was such an extraordinary luminous star. He was even compared to Peter and James, to show us that he is the 13th apostle, meant for the whole world and especially to rescue the church from the danger posed by the Jewish church in bringing confusion to the doctrines of grace. This part of the message is just out of this world; it is really the Holy Spirit to show us such beautiful truth. In this sense, there is also the importance of the role of Paul not only to define and propagate but also defend the Gospel. It takes a Paul whom God had trained up, revealed the truth in such an exceptional measure, and revealed Yeshua Christ in him to bring forth the Gospel in such precision especially the doctrine of Justification by Faith. Pastor helped us to read between the lines and between accounts: there was the drama, even in the contention between Paul and Barnabas and the tension between the apostles themselves and Paul. It shows us the slowness and tepidity of the apostles and leaders at that time to acknowledge the extraordinary grace given to Paul the apostle. Even in this is a very important lesson for the church and for us to learn. It always spells our spiritual downfall when we do not acknowledge the nature and extent of the grace in the servant of God, just like in the days of Yeshua Christ, when many could not acknowledge who He is, the same happened in the days of Paul and also in our days. Pastor also mentioned that John the Baptist was sent before Christ Yeshua and Paul was sent after Christ Yeshua. Down the generations to our times, thank God for raising up His servant to rediscover and preach and defend the Gospel in this great apostasy. Pastor spoke of people who could not reconcile the book of James and Romans, whether it is Justification by works or Justification by faith – and advocate a median – this underlines the confusion in Christendom today. Through His servant, we are brought to understand the Gospel of grace, especially with respect to the subjective aspect of the Gospel. The example of Barnabas also hit me hard. Barnabas had all the opportunity to follow and to acknowledge the grace in Paul, yet he would not. It is also to my shame that instead of acknowledging his ministry, pastor has all these years to commend himself and defend for his ministry. It is really very solemnizing to see the end of Barnabas who went into apostasy as testified in history. Thank God for the arrangement of providence that surrounded the life of Paul. Thank God for the Holy Spirit Who actually used Luke as well to show in detail the story of Paul. Paul was cast into the oblivion for 14 years. Yet that was also the time when he actually studied the Scriptures; the Lord also gave him the revelation of the truth so that he had the confidence to bring it to the leaders of the Jewish church and also to others when the occasion arose. I felt this message is very experimental. It is repeated in our midst. God raised up another Paul in these eschatological times to defend the Gospel. This is the continuation of the works of the Holy Spirit. I was also impressed by the example of Luke, who was in the background and quiet but slowly drawn to Paul and became addicted to Paul’s preaching and ministry. I pray that God the Holy Spirit will attest to my heart this blessed heritage of the Gospel I have, through the lineage which God has raised up through the centuries. And in the little role that we can play, we may be used as vessels of grace for the advancement of the work of God. This day, thank God we can have another reunion of sorts with many brethren coming back: Joy Tan and our three Nepali brethren. Thank God we can have the fellowship with one another.” Rhoda Soh’s Sabbath vespers in response to presiding pastor’s sermon, ‘Acts Of The Apostles: The Ministry And Life Of Paul, The 13th Apostle’, Johor Baru, Malaysia; 14 November AD 2010