

**PREFACE**

*“Thank God for yesterday’s meeting. I felt that it was a very God-glorifying session. I enjoyed all the different brethren testifying how the Holy Spirit has affected them. I see that there is a connection of the messages pastor preached in this conference to the book of Acts with respect to the ministry of pastor, especially in the time of the great apostasy. I thank God for pastor making a U-turn (moving onto the epistles Philippians to Titus then now back to Acts). It is not tiring for me to hear it again. It was a very blessed privilege. Even in the arrangement of these books, there is such a beautiful link: pastor showed us the identity crisis concerning Yeshua Christ, and last night pastor showed from Acts the identity crisis concerning the messenger. It is a continuation of the Gospelic books. In the Gospels, there is the bodily presence of Christ, and in Acts, Christ is ruling in heaven. It captures for us the ascension of Christ. Pastor even gave the example of how Elijah the prophet disappeared, and some people out of unbelief were checking if he fell somewhere, but really, to see that Christ’s ascension is a great privilege and blessed were those that saw it. Christ said that it was expedient for Him to go so that the Holy Spirit may descend. I marvel how pastor can see all these things! Christ had to ascend so that the Holy Spirit may be given from heaven above and Christ’s ministry may be exercised in all parts of the world simultaneously. Acts 1 narrated the choosing of one to take over the office the Judas. From that, pastor showed to us why they were in such haste. It is in God’s wisdom that Matthias was appointed to fill the 12<sup>th</sup> apostleship office. If it had not been filled, then Paul would have been like the 12<sup>th</sup> apostle and it would be harder to see the special calling of Paul. The 12 apostles were for the circumcision while Paul was sent to the Gentiles. It was an introduction to show us who Paul is and his calling, the apostle to the uncircumcision. Pastor very systematically covered the whole book of Acts. The message, as pastor used drama to bring it out, has a message for us to see. In chapter 2, the day of Pentecost was such a big event when the Holy Spirit came upon the 120 present in the upper room in Jerusalem. What was the purpose of the Holy Spirit visiting them? It was to empower the apostles to fulfil the Great Commission. Pastor reminded us of the Great Commission and Christ’s promise, ‘Lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world.’ It is not just in the geographical sense, but also in relation of time. It is very comforting especially to the ministers of God. Pastor said that in the book of Acts, there is no ‘Amen’ when it ends, because the Holy Spirit is still working strongly and Christ is still ruling above, continually protecting the church. The Holy Spirit also used others, like Peter, Philip and Stephen. They were emboldened to preach the Gospel of Yeshua Christ. I see why pastor brought these characters out: it is to introduce Paul. We see that at the stoning of Stephen, that’s the occasion God used to introduce Paul. Even after Paul experienced the Damascus experience, he was not involved in the ministry immediately. But for 17 years, he was in Tarsus in Cilicia and Arabia. And God used Barnabas to bring him out and introduced him to the ministry. He was prepared by God. He had this special calling. He was not behind the chief of apostles. His calling was not after man, he did not learn the Gospel from man, but from Christ Yeshua. He received direct revelation from Christ Yeshua. When Paul studied the Scriptures during those 17 years, he saw Christ in the Old Testament. We can see his calling, his preaching, his messages, and all the signs of the apostles were the proofs of his special calling. I felt that this time, pastor gave from a very fresh perspective. The fresh perspective brought yesterday was when pastor said that many could not recognise the special calling and grace given to Paul. Even in Jerusalem, in that conference, James always termed it as ‘Barnabas and Paul’, only later on did Luke phrase it as ‘Paul and Barnabas’. Luke was able to see the special calling of Paul. Even Barnabas could not recognise that calling. They found it hard to accept Paul’s messages. Another thing is that King Agrippa and Festus loved to hear the preaching of Paul. But they also could not recognise the calling of Paul. So that really indicted me to examine myself. It is one thing to like preaching and say that pastor’s messages are very deep and nice. But it is another thing to see the special calling and ministry of the servant of God. Today, many hear preaching. But ultimately, as in the way Paul finished the book of Acts with the quote from Isaiah: ears have they but they hear not, hearts have they but they understand not. Even this (the identity of the servant of God) is revealed by the Holy Spirit. This is the attestation of the Holy Spirit: but many forsook Paul. Only Luke was with him. That is the reality for the minister of God. Therefore, I see that as pastor preached on the identity crisis of Christ Yeshua, likewise it was with Paul in the days of his ministry; so it is with the servant of God today!” Response of Eliezer Pandey (Naigaon, Maharashtra, India) to pastor’s discourse on “Identity Of Those Anointed With The Holy Spirit” from the book of Acts, Part 1, Cameron Highlands, Pahang, Malaysia; 22 December 2016 AD*