

Acts 2-9 Series

God Advances in Acts, Part 4 “Breakout”

L’Amable Bible Chapel

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I. Franck

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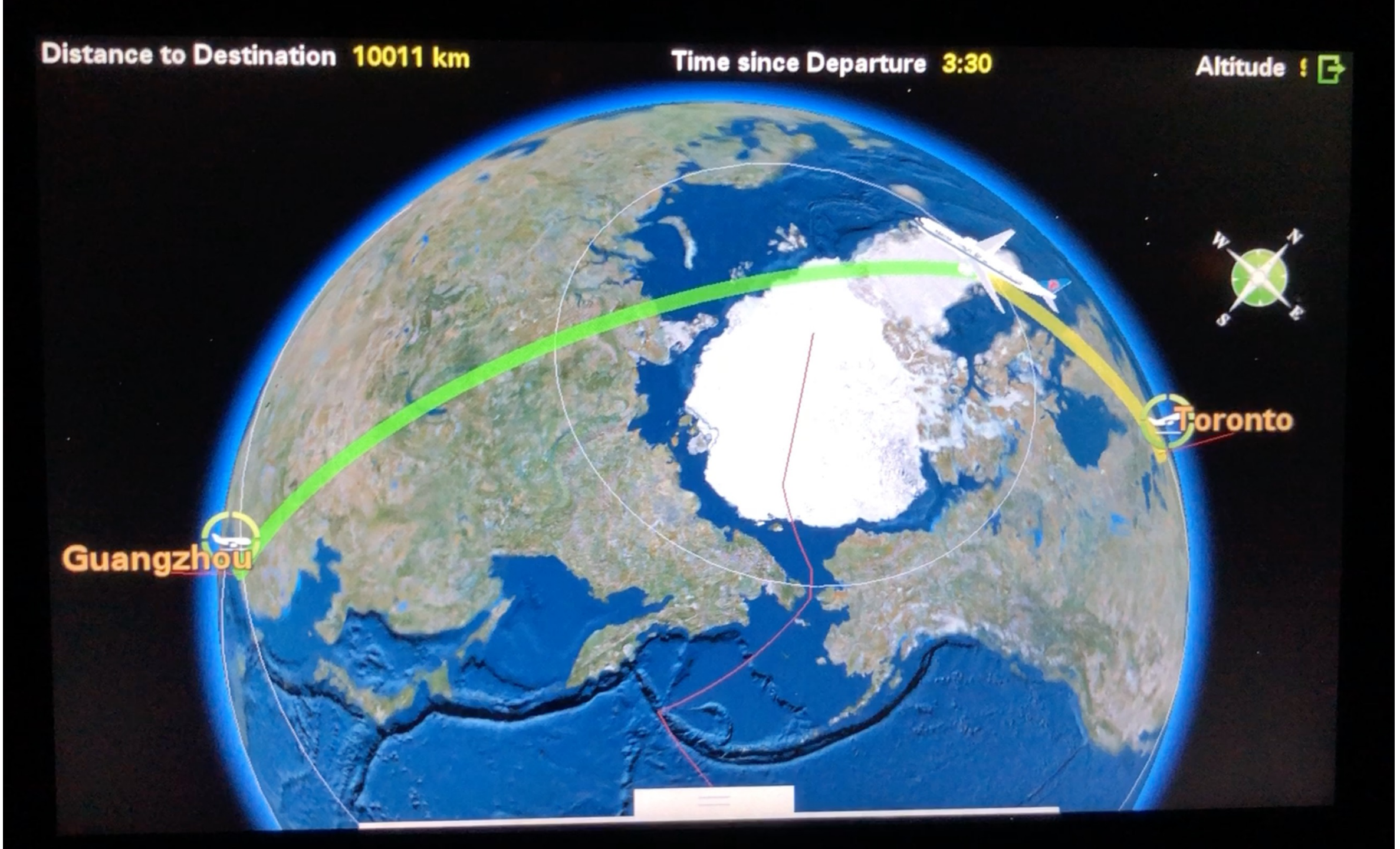
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Introduction

God is advancing…

8 *“But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth.”*



God is advancing…

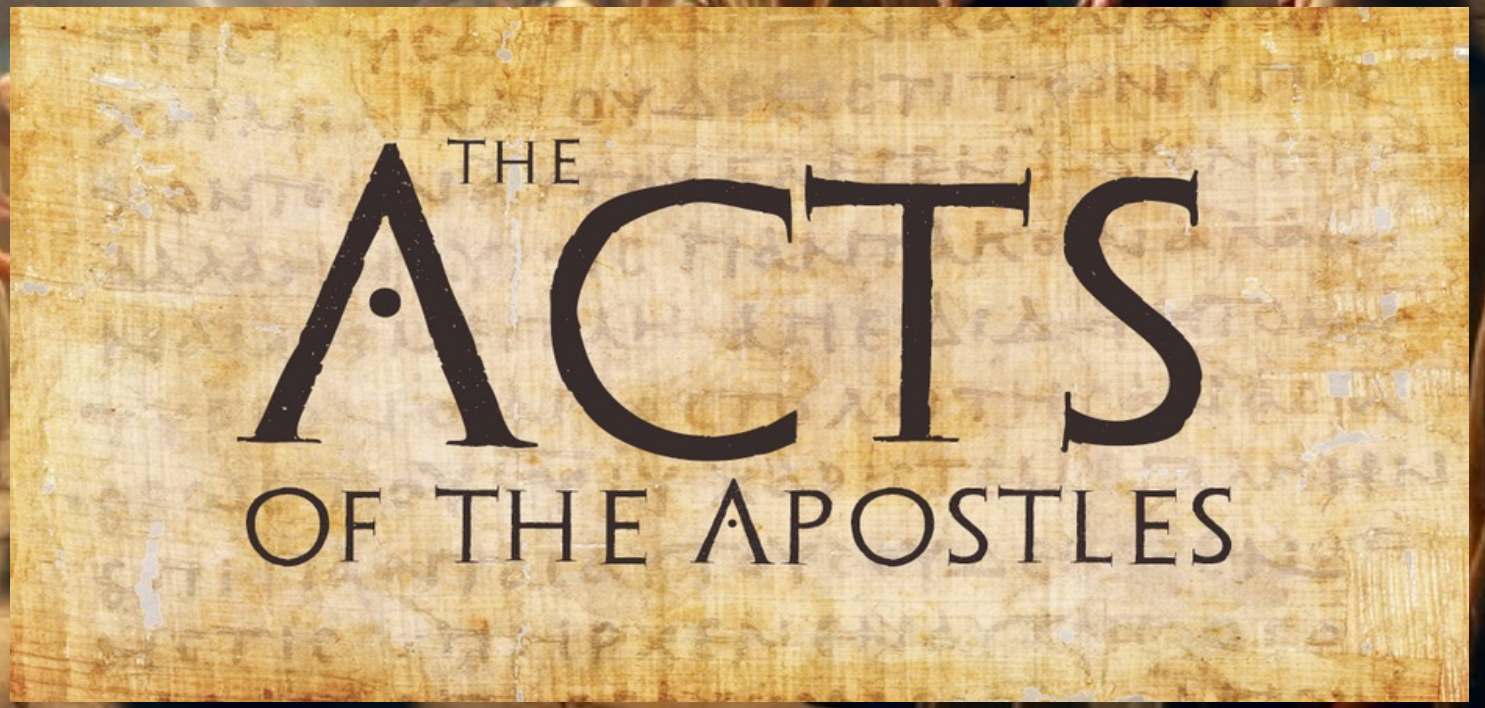
In only a few years, the Good News will spread though the Eastern Roman Empire



Power…Proclamation…Persecution

God advances in Acts with Power, and people respond in spite of Peril and Persecution. The outcome is Progress. Today we will see the beginning of Breakouts…





Last time… *Persecution…*

7 [9] While they were stoning
him, Stephen prayed, “Lord
Jesus, receive my spirit.”
[60] Then he fell on his knees and
cried out, “Lord, do not hold
this sin against them.” When
he had said this, he fell asleep.
8 [1] And Saul approved of their
killing him.

- Stephen’s preaching leads to his persecution and martyrdom
- Disruption of the young church follows…
- What will happen?

Breakout!

What is a breakout?

- *An activity that crosses socially accepted boundaries…*

What are boundaries?

- *Language, religion, ethnic, culture & custom, regional practices—all can be boundaries…*

- What seems like a disaster for the church actually greatly advances the gospel
- There are sacrifices and challenges in the process

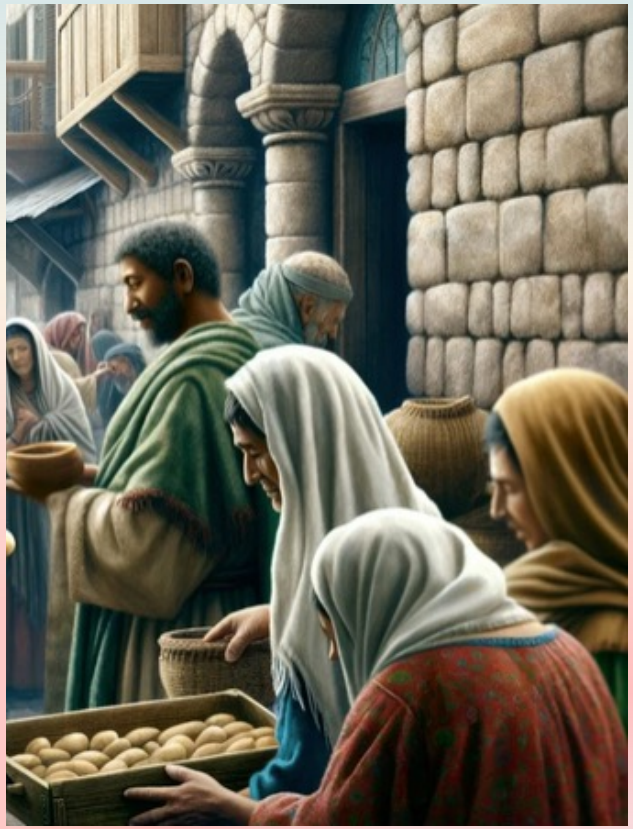
Acts 8: [1]…On that day a great persecution broke out against the church in Jerusalem, and all except the apostles were scattered throughout Judea and Samaria. [2] Godly men buried Stephen and mourned deeply for him. [3] But Saul began to destroy the church. Going from house to house, he dragged off both men and women and put them in prison.





Breakout #1: Philip in Samaria

4 Those who had been scattered preached
the word wherever they went. 5 Philip went
down to a city in Samaria and proclaimed
the Messiah there. 6 When the crowds
heard Philip and saw the signs he
performed, they all paid close attention to
what he said. 7 For with shrieks, impure
spirits came out of many, and many who
were paralyzed or lame were healed. 8 So
there was great joy in that city.



Evaluation…

- Only the Apostles stayed in Jerusalem
- Even the new Deacons were scattered
- Philip takes leadership and God affirms this ministry with miracles!
- Healing and deliverance!



One of the boundaries is ethnicity, combined with religion…often resulting in prejudice

Simon the Sorcerer

9 Now for some time a man named
Simon had practiced sorcery in the
city and amazed all the people of
Samaria. He boasted that he was
someone great, 10 and all the
people, both high and low, gave
him their attention and exclaimed,
“This man is rightly called the
Great Power of God.” 11 They
followed him because he had
amazed them for a long time with
his sorcery.





12 But when they believed
Philip as he proclaimed the
good news of the kingdom
of God and the name of
Jesus Christ, they were
baptized, both men and
women. 13 Simon himself
believed and was baptized.
And he followed Philip
everywhere, astonished by
the great signs and miracles
he saw.

Exposed but Entrenched!

- Kingdoms in conflict
- Simon is being freed, but with a lot of baggage…
- *Power/reputation/pomp*
- The power of God is indisputable



People who are deeply entrenched in sin can be used by Satan for disruption of God's work

God Advances!



[14] When the apostles in Jerusalem heard
that Samaria had accepted the word of
God, they sent Peter and John to Samaria.
[15] When they arrived, they prayed for the
new believers there that they might
receive the Holy Spirit, [16] because the
Holy Spirit had not yet come on any of
them; they had simply been baptized in
the name of the Lord Jesus. [17] Then Peter
and John placed their hands on them,
and they received the Holy Spirit.

A conflicted heart…

18 When Simon saw that the Spirit was given
at the laying on of the apostles' hands, he
offered them money 19 and said, "Give me
also this ability so that everyone on whom I
lay my hands may receive the Holy Spirit."
20 Peter answered: "May your money perish
with you, because you thought you could
buy the gift of God with money! 21 You have
no part or share in this ministry, because
your heart is not right before God.



22 Repent of this wickedness and pray to the Lord in the
hope that he may forgive you for having such a thought in
your heart. 23 For I see that you are full of bitterness and
captive to sin."
24 Then Simon answered, "Pray to the Lord for me so that
nothing you have said may happen to me."
25 After they had further proclaimed the word of the Lord
and testified about Jesus, Peter and John returned to
Jerusalem, preaching the gospel in many Samaritan
villages.

Conflict & Correction…

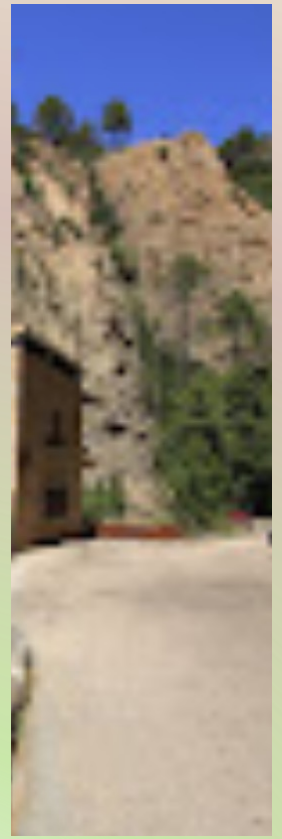
- The Apostles' ministry is still unique…and God affirms…
- A theological issue?
- Simon tempted by prestige
- Peter discerns and corrects
- Simon seems to respond
- Peter & John's preaching continues through Samaria



Simon's dabbling in sin and sorcery left chains which were hard to break!



Breakout #2: Philip and the Ethiopian



[26] Now an angel of the Lord said to Philip, “Go
south to the road—the desert road—that goes
down from Jerusalem to Gaza.” [27] So he started
out, and on his way he met an Ethiopian
eunuch, an important official in charge of all
the treasury of the Kandake (which means
“queen of the Ethiopians”). This man had gone
to Jerusalem to worship, [28] and on his way
home was sitting in his chariot reading the
Book of Isaiah the prophet. [29] The Spirit told
Philip, “Go to that chariot and stay near it.”

30 Then Philip ran up to the chariot and heard the man
reading Isaiah the prophet. “Do you understand what you
are reading?” Philip asked.
31 “How can I,” he said, “unless someone explains it to
me?” So he invited Philip to come up and sit with him.
32 This is the passage of Scripture the eunuch was reading:

“He was led like a sheep to the
slaughter,
and as a lamb before its shearer is
silent,
so he did not open his mouth.



33 *In his humiliation he was deprived of justice.*
Who can speak of his descendants?
For his life was taken from the earth.”
34 The eunuch asked Philip, “Tell me, please, who is the
prophet talking about, himself or someone else?” 35 Then
Philip began with that very passage of Scripture and told
him the good news about Jesus.
36 As they traveled along the road, they came to some
water and the eunuch said, “Look, here is water. What can
stand in the way of my being baptized?”

[37] [Some manuscripts include here] *Philip said, “If you believe with all your heart, you may.” The eunuch answered, “I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God.”*
38 And he gave orders to stop the chariot. Then both Philip and the eunuch went down into the water and Philip baptized him. 39 When they came up out of the water, the Spirit of the Lord suddenly took Philip away, and the eunuch did not see him again, but went on his way rejoicing. 40 Philip, however, appeared at Azotus and traveled about, preaching the gospel in all the towns until he reached Caesarea.

Evaluation…

- Philip is God's breakout leader!
- The Holy Spirit leads Philip!
- The heart is <u>ready</u>, but Philip must <u>explain</u> the Good News
- *Salvation and Baptism!*
- The Holy Spirit '*translates*' Philip for further ministry…



An open mind and a willing heart can overcome all boundaries! (But a guide may be needed)

Epilogue—An Interesting Parallel!

- *God is revealing a victory even greater than with Elijah!*
- The Holy Spirit is transforming the world!





Acts shows God advancing

Acts reveals Human factors

Acts reveals the Holy Spirit's power

Challenge—What Makes a Breakout?

- Some cultural prejudice…who is <u>our</u> group?
  But…God will move with willing people
- Are we willing to follow the leading of the Holy Spirit, the third Member of the Trinity?
- How are we advancing the Gospel? Can we accept earthly setbacks for heavenly gain?
- Can we be a guide or agent to turn people from sin and to the living Lord Jesus?

Breakout #3* is coming in *Chapter 9. Today we see…

- Persecution & Scattering
- New opportunities, power, and miracles from the Holy Spirit
- New leaders & challenges
- Changed lives
- Regional advances

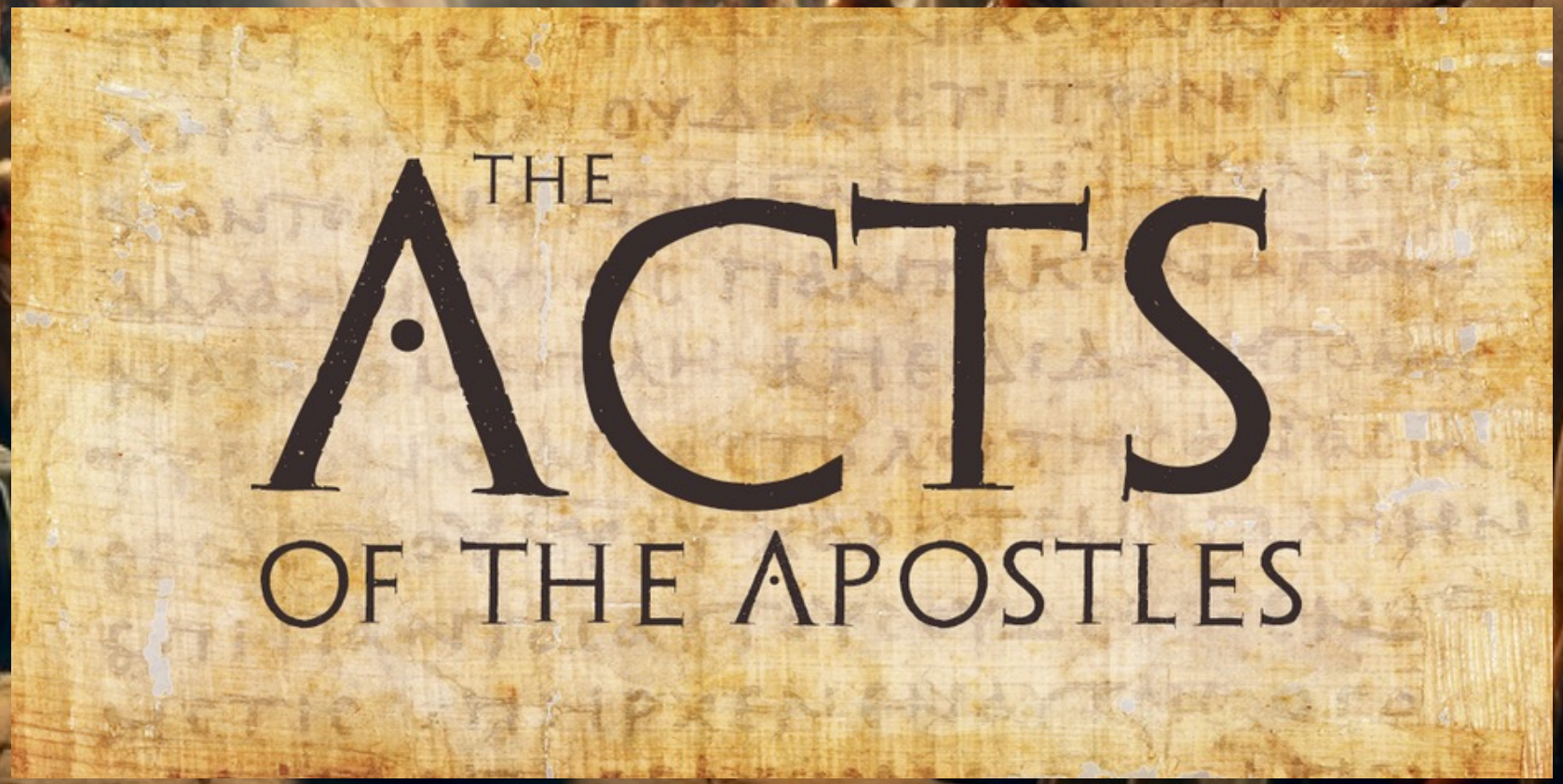


The advance of the Gospel was sparked across new boundaries by the persecution of Chapter. 7

Power…Proclamation…Persecution…

God advances in Acts, and people respond in spite of Peril and Persecution. Breakouts will spark the Progress of the Kingdom





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