

BIGGER THAN YOU

Lesson 14 A Missionary-Sending Church

Acts 11:19-30; 13:1-52; 14:1-28

As followers of The Way fled persecution in Jerusalem, they carried the message of salvation with them to places previously unreached by the Gospel (Acts 8:1-4). But it was in Antioch of Syria where the church first became intentional about sending missionaries to the “ends of the earth”. From three different chapters in the Book of Acts we gather the story of the Antioch Church so that we may study a model of a church with a heart for obeying God’s mission.

Read Acts 11:19-26

1. How did the first carriers of the Gospel limit their ministry (verse 19)?
2. In Antioch certain believers began to preach to Greeks, as well as to Jews. Where were these men from?
 - a. They are unnamed. What do you deduce from that omission?
 - b. What was their message and what was the response (verses 20-21)?
 - c. Their teaching resulted in the planting of a new church. Why were they successful (verse 21)?
3. When the Greeks became believers, the church in Jerusalem sent a leader to minister to the new church (verse 22). [See Acts 8:14 for a similar occurrence.] Who was the leader chosen to go to Antioch?
 - a. See Acts 4:36-37 and Acts 9:26-27. Make notes about Barnabas.
 - b. What made Barnabas glad (verses 23-24)?
 - c. Think of your own church. What evidence of the grace of God do you see there?
 - d. What did Barnabas do for the church in Antioch (verse 23)?
 - e. According to Luke, the author, why was Barnabas’s early ministry in Antioch a success (verse 24)?
 - f. As the ministry in Antioch grew, Barnabas recruited some help. Who was it (verse 25)?
 - g. Why do you think the disciples were first called Christians at Antioch (verse 26)?

Read Acts 11:27-30

4. As we learned in Acts 2:17-18 where Peter quoted from the Old Testament prophet Joel, the gift of prophecy was a manifestation of the outpouring of the Holy Spirit. When Agabus prophesied that a famine would spread throughout the Roman Empire, what was the response of the Antioch Church?

Read Acts 13:1-3

5. What were the leaders of the church doing when the Holy Spirit told them to send out missionaries?

Read Acts 13:4-12

6. Saul and Barnabas took a helper and sailed to Cyprus. This is the beginning of their first missionary journey. Use the map on page 3 to locate the places named in these verses.
 - a. In Cyprus, they were invited by the proconsul to speak to him the word of God, but there was one who opposed them. Who was he and what was he?

- b. From the text, what evidence is there that Saul's harsh outburst was inspired by God (verses 9-11)?
- c. When have we seen God use blindness to enlighten a disbeliever before (Acts 9:8-9)?
- d. What was the response of the proconsul?
- e. Notice that Saul, who before this was called by his Hebrew name, now begins to be called by a new Greek name (verse 9). What is it? What might the significance be for the name change?

Read Acts 13:13-41

- 7. On the map, trace the travels of the missionaries from Perga to Antioch of Pisidia.
 - a. Arriving in a strange Gentile city with no known Christians, where did the missionaries begin to teach?
 - b. Compare Paul's sermon to Peter's Pentecost sermon in Acts 2. Were their messages similar enough that their converts would have similar faith?

Read Acts 13:42-52

- 8. The Jews who heard Paul preach invited him back to preach again on the next Sabbath. When the day came, almost the entire city turned out to hear Paul.
 - a. What was the reaction of the Jews (verse 45)?
 - b. What did Paul tell the Jews who rejected his message? Think of the significance of this turn of events.
 - c. Why did the Jews in Antioch of Pisidia reject the message of salvation sent to them personally?
 - d. What was the response of the Gentiles?
 - e. With what were the Gentile disciples filled (verse 52)?
 - f. What is the significance of this filling (Acts 2:38-39; 10:44-48)?

Read Acts 14:1-20

- 9. At Iconium, Paul and Barnabas began preaching again in the synagogue. Both Jews and Gentiles believed.
 - a. How did God confirm their message?
 - b. When a plot developed to mistreat and stone Paul and Barnabas, what did they do?
- 10. At Lystra, Paul healed a man crippled from birth, like Peter and John did in Jerusalem (Acts 3).
 - a. The crowd almost got out of control. What were they trying to do (verse 13)?
 - b. Paul preached about how God had already given them testimony of himself. Paraphrase Paul's point.
 - c. Under the influence of Jews from other cities, the crowd turned against Paul. What happened to him?

Read Acts 14:21-28

- 11. From Derbe, where many had become believers, the missionaries backtracked to revisit the places where churches had been planted. What did they do to strengthen and encourage these believers?
- 12. Eventually, Paul and Barnabas sailed back to Antioch of Syria to report all that God had done through them.
 - a. How did they summarize this report (verse 27)?
 - b. Why would the Antioch Church be interested in their report?
 - c. How do our modern day missionaries report to their sending churches?

13. In the *Bigger Than You Journal*, there is a description of the ministry of each of the Oak Hills Church long-term missionaries. Consider their missions as the Oak Hills Church's obedience to the words of Jesus in Acts 1:8. Read those descriptions and pray for each missionary and each mission outreach.

14. Compare the Antioch Church with the Oak Hills Church. What can we learn from the Antioch Church that sent out the early Christian missionaries?

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.

Acts 1:8



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