

Book of ACTS > Dr. Luke's story of EARLY Church

THEME Verse > AGENDA of Jesus for Church as He ASCENDS

Risen Jesus: "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

11.19 those scattered because of the persecution that arose over Stephen

KILLED MESSENGER – COULD NOT STOP THE MESSAGE

CHRISTIANS LOST TREASURES BUT NOT TESTIMONY

THE WIND JUST BLEW THE FLAME HIGHER

ANTIOCH > Mediterranean Civilization met the Syrian Desert

3rd LARGEST City in ROMAN EMPIRE

Antioch the Golden - CAPITAL CITY of Syria - "Queen of East"

½ Mill Jews, Grks, Persians, Chinese, Indians/ Citizens of Rome

Busy Port - Military Stronghold / Business, Commerce & Politics

Dedicated to Sex / Swathed in Superstition / Challenge to Gospel

Unlikely Setting – Great 1st C Church – MODEL 21st C Church

1. Vision for Community 2. for Congregation 3. Cosmos

1. Vision for the Community

a. God's Sovereign Leading

8.1,4 great persecution broke out against church at Jerusalem...
Those who'd been scattered preached the word wherever they went

From Antioch > Gospel LAUNCHED TO ENDS OF EARTH

b. God's Spirit-filled Leaders

BUILDING THRIVING CHURCH IN ANTIOCH

Not Plan of MAN / Intensive Research / Crusade of the Apostles

Peter - Apostle to Jews // Paul - Apostle to the Gentiles

Chapter: AFTER Focus on PETER / BEFORE Focus on PAUL

Holy SPIRIT uses "LAY" People / UNNAMED & UNKNOWN

Handful of wandering Christians who shared their contagious faith

BURDEN that CHRIST BE EXALTED OVER PAGAN CITY

Most Effective EVANGELISM – GOSSIP, HOLY TALK

85% come to Christ /SOMEONE THEY KNEW INVITED THEM

Personal INVITATION Most Effective Method / Church Growth

1 Reason People NOT COME to X – they’re NOT INVITED

NOT FAMILIAR WITH CHURCH – CLUB?? – COST?

strange customs, rituals, unfamiliar people, procedures

Study USA on Dechurching / 40 mill LEFT / Why? Media Answer: Racism, Homophobia,

Clergy Abuse, Corruption, Injustice, Political Fight

Study: # 1 MOVED, # 2 Got LAZY/BUSY, # 3 INCONVENIENT

30 mill WAITING TO BE Invited BACK!

MICHAEL GREEN "One of the greatest tragedies in...church is that people do not, by and large, talk about Jesus. That is extremely foolish. Jesus is the supremely attractive One. If we exclude from our conversation the only real winner that we have, we are of all people the most to be pitied. If a church seriously wants to evangelize, my advice would not be to hire a famous preacher; it would be to open the mouths of the people in the pews. Everyone has a story to tell, the story of God's dealing with the soul. Everyone can invite a friend to a meeting. Everyone can say what a difference Jesus has made. It is not difficult. It springs naturally to many who have recently discovered the beauty of Jesus for themselves."

c. God's Saving Love Great News of Bible, God Loves & Gives

God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son... John 3.16

...Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me Gal 2.20

Christ loved us and gave himself up for us as a fragrant offering and sacrifice to God Ephes 5.2

Antioch Believers learned LOVE for SHARING w/ all People...

HELLENISTIC JEWS Evangelized FELLOW JEWS

v. 20 there were some of them, men of Cyprus and Cyrene, who on coming to Antioch spoke to the Hellenists also, preaching the Lord Jesus

MESSIAH OF ISRAEL was Relevant to Pagan Gentiles

People of Mediterranean LOOKING FOR DIVINE LORD

Giver of Salvation and Immortality to their Devotees

Jesus of Nazareth - Living Lord / Mighty God and Savior

INSTANT SUCCESS / SEED Fell in FERTILE GROUND
WORD OF GOD ON LIPS / HAND OF GOD ON THEIR LIVES
MEET SAVIOR of WORLD / FOLLOW HIM as LORD & GOD

80 yr O Woman NoCal – Prayed for Ministry OUTSIDE Church
Lord led her to PRISON Ministry – Men in Prison in their Town
Bible Studies / Pastoral Care > Helping Families when Released

2. Vision for their Congregation

- a. Recognized the Work of God NOT Easy to See Across Cultures
- v. 23 “he came and saw the grace of God”

What does GRACE of God look like CITY/ No Sunday Schools?

People BORN, BROKEN, BATTERED by Sins and Sinners

People trying to Break Free of Slavish Passion

Seeking Liberation from Bondages, Addictions, and Perversions

NEW Creations in X / WORKING OUT THEIR SALVATION

Royal Highway of Salvation – Sometimes Walking Backwards

FAITH NEEDS be ENCOURAGED – Barnabas Perfect Choice

would end up in prison one day?" MOST RAISED HANDS

PASTORS MEETING = ANGELS ON EARTH

How many in Church last Sunday? / Hoping LESS than YOURS
MORE? Wrong / Compromise, Worldly, False Teaching

GENEROUS SPIRIT OF BARANBAS - REJOICED in Lord
NOT "That's not like we're doing things down at HQ in Jerusalem"

COMMON DENOMINATOR: JESUS -- NOT Forms or Style
HAD DIFFERENT TRADITIONS, HERITAGE, CULTURE
MET IN DIFFERENT LOCATIONS, TIMES, PERSONALITY
v. 23 exhorted them all to remain faithful to the Lord w/ steadfast purpose
EXHORT: PERSEVERE in WHOLE-HEARTEDNESS
EACH BELIEVER, CHURCH, FELLOWSHIP IS DIFFERENT
Cannot & Shouldn't hold them TO OUR Standard / BUT GOD'S

c. Realized His Limitations UNIQUE ACT OF HUMILITY

v. 25,26 "Barnabas went to Tarsus to look for Saul, and when he had found him, he brought him to Antioch"

ABOUT 10 yrs EARLIER - Barnabas brought PAUL to Jerusalem
EVERY Paul Needs BARNABAS / NO BARNABAS, NO PAUL
NOT AN EASY SEARCH / Paul SEPARATED FROM FAMILY For FOLLOWING JESUS /
Probably DISINHERITED for FAITH

WHEN BARNABAS SAW GENTILES RECEIVING THE LORD
KNEW was a TASK FOR THE APOSTLE TO THE GENTILES
"Better to put 10 men to work than to do the work of 10 men" D.L. Moody

Established PRINCIPLE: TEAM LEADERSHIP IN ANTIOCH

13.1 prophets and teachers, Barnabas, Simeon who was called Niger, Lucius of Cyrene, Manaen a lifelong friend of Herod the tetrarch, and Saul

"Barnabas" - Simeon called Niger = a Black African

"Lucius of Cyrene" from North Africa

"Saul"- Pharisee from Tarsus

"Manaen" brought up with Herod the Tetrarch

ETHNIC AND CULTURAL DIVERSITY IN ANTIOCH

"prophets and teachers" 2 DIFFERENT WAYS OF MINISTRY

Prophet: Spontaneous, Impulsive, Fast / Unpredictable

Teacher: Methodical, Predictable, Slow Moving, Traditional > BOTH!

d. Recognized the Authority of Jesus

v. 20 "preaching the Lord Jesus"

v. 21 hand of Lord was w/ them, & great number believed turned to Lord

v. 26 in Antioch the disciples were first called Christians.

LATIN SUFFIX "ian" = "Belonging to the Party of"

Followers of Herod = Herodians / Follow Christ = CHRISTIANS

Who are they? Always talking about CHRIST = Christians

PROBABLY an INSULT, MOCKING their Constant ref to Christ

INSULT came to WEAR as BADGE OF HONOR – Life GOAL!

Jesus - Jesus' person and work, Jesus' love for sinners, Jesus' perfect life and sacrificial death, Jesus' resurrection and offer of forgiveness. Stay on the issue of Christ... Not the church or denominations or religion or theological differences or doctrinal questions. Speak precisely of Jesus, the Savior.

Charles Swindoll

e. Rested upon the Foundation of Scripture

Acts 11.21 Lord w/ them, great number who believed turned to the Lord

Acts 11.24 great many people were added to the Lord

Acts 11.26 whole year they met w/ the church & taught a great many peeps

HOW can LEADERSHIP of JESUS be SEEN or MEASURED??

How Church, Members, Plans compare w/ SCRIPTURE

That Time WAS OT --- AND NEWLY FORMING N.T.

STANDARDIZED DOCTRINES being FORMULATED

PAUL AND BARNABAS RETURNED TO ANTIOCH

14.22 ...strengthening disciples & encouraging them to remain true to **the** faith, "We must go through many hardships to enter the kingdom of God

"THE FAITH" A NOUN TO DESCRIBE BODY OF TEACHING

Antioch CHURCH grew Strong under APOSTOLIC TEACHING

v. 26 "for a whole year they taught great numbers of people"

ANTIOCH: What is Xtian's relationship to Law of Moses? Temple?

Live out Lordship of Jesus under Lord Caesar?

How to be free in Christ while remaining a slave of men?

SO A CHURCH GOD CAN USE HAS:

THE SAVIOR AS ITS SOVEREIGN

THE SCRIPTURES AS ITS STANDARD

THE SPIRIT AS ITS STRENGTH

3. Vision for the Cosmos (World)

WHOLE JESUS for WHOLE Person for WHOLE WORLD

CONCERN FOR WHOLE PEOPLE / Physical & Spiritual Needs

PHYSICAL NEEDS – Shared by PROPHET NAMED AGABUS

BEFORE N.T. > LIVING MESSENGERS of God to Church

EXAMPLE OF CONCERN OF BELIEVERS – they Gave

GOOD REASONS WHY THEY SHOULD NOT BOTHER

- 1) They were just trying to get their own ministry started
- 2) Had no building or regular meeting place of their own
- 3) Big task of trying to reach Antioch - city of 1/2 million
- 4) Famine was to be global – INCLUDING THEM!

EXCUSES Often Given: "We give money to missions, isn't that enough?"

"We cannot send Bill, he is need to work in our church"

"Don't those other countries over there have their own religion?"

IF ANTIOCH made EXCUSES – Gospel Never Come to US

a. Loving Deeds

1) Willingly NOT COERCED BY LEADERS

v. 29 "disciples determined...to send relief to the brothers living in Judea"

MIDDLE AGES: ARMIES of the FRANKS WERE BAPTIZED

RIGHT HANDS High Out WATERS OF BAPTISM - wield sword

SOME XTIANS BAPTIZED HOLDING WALLET Out of Water!

2) Gave Proportionally v. 29 "every one according to his ability"

Biblical PRINCIPLE Plagiarized by KARL MARX – ATHEIST

PIG & CHICKEN WALKING DOWN THE ROAD ONE DAY

Saw ROADSIDE DINNER "Breakfast Special: Ham and Eggs"

CHICKEN SAID "that sounds good"

PIG "It's terrible, you it's just Offering, for me total sacrifice"

3) Gave Wisely v. 30 "sending it to elders by hand of Barnabas and Saul"

Trusted Couriers HAND funds to a RESPONSIBLE PARTY

MORE \$ EMBEZZLED Out of Church than Given to Mission

Then in CHAPTER 13 > DEPLOYED MISSIONARIES

b. Living Words

1) United in Worship – to One Another AND TO God

Holy Spirit spoke // Missionary call to ISAIAH in TEMPLE

2) Sent their Best v. 2 "Set apart for me Barnabas and Saul"

"LET'S SEE HERE – MUST BE SOMEONE WE CAN SPARE"

LOTS OF PEOPLE THEY'D GLADLY SEND FAR AWAY

anyone you cannot get along with would make great missionary!!

THEY SENT BEST LEADERS / MOST GIFTED SERVANTS

God DESERVES our BEST & BRIGHTEST – Sons & Daughters

TEMPLE OF GOD ADORNED w/ FINEST Gold and Stones

MISSIONARY THRUST > Work of the HOLY SPIRIT

COMMISSIONING AGENT? - BOTH Holy Spirit & the Church

vs. 3,4 ...they placed their hands on them and sent them off. The two of them, sent on their way by the Holy Spirit,

v 3 "they sent them off/ v 4 sent on their way by the Holy Spirit"

BALANCE - Spirit sent them, by telling Church to do so

Church sent them, because told to do so by Spirit

BALANCE: Healthy CORRECTIVE to 2 Opposite EXTREMES

INDIVIDUALISM - "lead by God" w/out affirmation of Church

INSTITUTIONALISM - decisions made by Church Authorities

BALANCED MINISTRY OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

Inward Call to the Worker Outward Confirmation by Church

Commissioning by the Church Sending by Holy Spirit

c. United in Witness For Community, Congregation, & Cosmos

13.3 “fasting and praying they laid their hands on them and sent them off”

REAL CHURCH / People & Problems / NOT PERFECTION

DIFFERENCES MADE Secondary TO PRIMARY CONCERNS

Need to be GRIPPED by FACT: HELL is REAL as Kamehameha PARK

Filled NICE PEOPLE, MORAL PEOPLE, RELIGIOUS PEOPLE

PEOPLE THAT DO NOT KNOW JESUS

Only WAY OUT is Jesus - Trust FULLY in HIM 4 Salvation

“The evangelistic harvest is always urgent. The destiny of men and nations is always being decided. Every generation is strategic. We are not responsible for the past generation, and we cannot bear full responsibility for the next; but we do have our generation. God will hold us responsible as to how well we fulfill our responsibilities to this age and take advantage of our opportunities.”

Billy Graham

CONVICTION: BELIEVERS IN ANTIOCH JOINED HANDS

Congregational Prayer

“Great and amazing are your deeds, O Lord God the Almighty! Just and true are your ways, O King of the nations! Who will not fear, O Lord, and glorify your name? For you alone are holy. All nations will come and worship you, for your righteous acts have been revealed.” (Revelation 15.3,4). We thank you Lord for being a promise keeper. You said you will build your Church. We see this promise fulfilled through the pages of Acts. And today men, women, boys, and girls are worshipping Jesus from one end of the earth to the other. Thank you for calling us into your Church and equipping each of us with the gifts of your Holy Spirit. Help each of us to discover and develop how to best serve for your glory and the good of others.

Ask the Lord to Strengthen you in your Service for Him

“How lovely is your dwelling place, O Lord of hosts! My soul longs, yes, faints for the courts of the Lord; my heart and flesh sing for joy to the living God...Blessed are those who dwell in your house, ever singing your praise!...For a day in your courts is better than a thousand elsewhere. I would rather be a doorkeeper in the house of my God than dwell in the tents of wickedness. For the Lord God is a sun and shield; the Lord bestows favor and honor. No good thing does he withhold from those who walk uprightly. O Lord of hosts, blessed is the one who trusts in you! (from Psalm 84.1-12). Amen.