

The Antioch Church (Acts 11-15)

- A. Geography: Capital of Syria. Highly cultured, but it's social life was debased, sensual and shocking. Jews formed a large portion. 3rd largest city in the Roman empire. Pop. 500,000. 3rd largest city in Roman empire. It was called queen of the East, 2nd only to Rome and Alexandria.
 - 1. Antioch in the early church become an organized center for world evangelism and missions. From what I know of scripture it was the best example of a NT church. It has been my desire to have a NT church.
 - a. When someone makes clothing, they go out and buy a pattern. They look at a catalog and say, "That is what I want".
 - b. Someone desires a model car that will perform to their needs. They look at different models, compare specifications, gas mileage, consumer reports, and they make a decision, "That's what I want."
 - c. We need scriptural prototype of the church God wants. I realize there are many types of churches available to attend. Not all of them are scriptural. Some are personality based and human inspired. I have desired to be scripturally based and Holy Spirit. I see that in the Antioch Church.
 - 2. Most books are written about the Jerusalem church. It was a great church; big church. There was sectarianism, bigotry and religious hang ups.
 - a. Most charismatic churches pattern after the Church in Corinth. There was lack of order and misuse of gifts at times. There were issues of division and immorality (I Corinthians 3:1).
 - b. There was good in each church and we can draw upon and learn from each of them. I think we can all agree there is no such thing as a perfect body of believers.
 - c. Acts 11:19-26 – Prototype of a pioneering church.

Acts 11:19-26 Now those who were scattered after the persecution that arose over Stephen traveled as far as Phoenicia, Cyprus, and Antioch, preaching the word to no one but the Jews only.

20 But some of them were men from Cyprus and Cyrene, who, when they had come to Antioch, spoke to the Hellenists, preaching the Lord Jesus.

21 And the hand of the Lord was with them, and a great number believed and turned to the Lord.

22 Then news of these things came to the ears of the church in Jerusalem, and they sent out Barnabas to go as far as Antioch.

23 When he came and had seen the grace of God, he was glad, and encouraged them all that with purpose of heart they should continue with the Lord.

24 For he was a good man, full of the Holy Spirit and of faith. And a great many people were added to the Lord.

25 Then Barnabas departed for Tarsus to seek Saul.

26 And when he had found him, he brought him to Antioch. So it was that for a whole year they assembled with the church and taught a great many people. And the disciples were first called Christians in Antioch.

I. Evangelism & Discipleship (Vs. 20 & 23)

- A. Follow up. Evangelism and follow up go together. To some evangelism is proclaiming (vs. 20). But notice they also followed up with new believers and gave them encouragement. The biggest weakness in churches is either no evangelism, and no follow to evangelism. Evangelism & Discipleship go together!
 - 1. First called Christians in Antioch. It wasn't a complimentary term but these people had real conversions and had the attention of the sinners of the city. Barnabus' name meant encouragement. New believers need encouragement and teaching.
 - 2. Jesus vision is when sinners are preached to, converted, baptized, disciplined and a part of the local church. The church at Antioch fulfilled this. (Matthew 28:18-20).

Matthew 28:18-20 And Jesus came and spoke to them, saying, "All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth.

19 "Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit,

20 "teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, [even] to the end of the age."

Amen.

II. Teaching (Vs. 26) The Antioch church fulfilled Jesus vision of making disciples by teaching.

- A. Teaching is important because people perish for a lack of knowledge

Acts 13:1 Now in the church that was at Antioch there were certain prophets and teachers

Acts 15:35 Paul and Barnabas also remained in Antioch, teaching and preaching the word of the Lord, with many others also.

- 1. Jerusalem council: The early church had to correct false doctrine as we do today

Acts 15:1-12 And certain men came down from Judea and taught the brethren, "Unless you are circumcised according to the custom of Moses, you cannot be saved."

2 Therefore, when Paul and Barnabas had no small dissension and dispute with them, they determined that Paul and Barnabas and certain others of them should go up to Jerusalem, to the apostles and elders, about this question.

3 So, being sent on their way by the church, they passed through Phoenicia and Samaria, describing the conversion of the Gentiles; and they caused great joy to all the brethren.

4 And when they had come to Jerusalem, they were received by the church and the apostles and the elders; and they reported all things that God had done with them.

5 But some of the sect of the Pharisees who believed rose up, saying, "It is necessary to circumcise them, and to command them to keep the law of Moses."

6 Now the apostles and elders came together to consider this matter.

7 And when there had been much dispute, Peter rose up and said to them: "Men and brethren, you know that a good while ago God chose among us, that by my mouth the Gentiles should hear the word of the gospel and believe.

8 "So God, who knows the heart, acknowledged them by giving them the Holy Spirit, just as He did to us,

9 "and made no distinction between us and them, purifying their hearts by faith.

10 "Now therefore, why do you test God by putting a yoke on the neck of the disciples which neither our fathers nor we were able to bear?

11 "But we believe that through the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ we shall be saved in the same manner as they."

12 Then all the multitude kept silent and listened to Barnabas and Paul declaring how many miracles and wonders God had worked through them among the Gentiles.

Acts 15:28-29 For it seemed good to the Holy Spirit, and to us, to lay upon you no greater burden than these necessary things:

29 that you abstain from things offered to idols, from blood, from things strangled, and from sexual immorality. If you keep yourselves from these, you will do well. Farewell.

III. Prophetic church:

Acts 11:27-30 And in these days prophets came from Jerusalem to Antioch.

28 Then one of them, named Agabus, stood up and showed by the Spirit that there was going to be a great famine throughout all the world, which also happened in the days of Claudius Caesar.

29 Then the disciples, each according to his ability, determined to send relief to the brethren dwelling in Judea.

30 This they also did, and sent it to the elders by the hands of Barnabas and Saul.

Acts 15:32 Now Judas and Silas, themselves being prophets also, exhorted and strengthened the brethren with many words.

IV. Worship/Prayer: Worship, fasting & prayer brought break-through, guidance, releasing of gifts and launching of ministries.

Acts 13:1-4 Now in the church that was at Antioch there were certain prophets and teachers: Barnabas, Simeon who was called Niger, Lucius of Cyrene, Manaen who had been brought up with Herod the tetrarch, and Saul.

2 As they ministered to the Lord and fasted, the Holy Spirit said, "Now separate to Me Barnabas and Saul for the work to which I have called them."

3 Then, having fasted and prayed, and laid hands on them, they sent them away.

4 So, being sent out by the Holy Spirit, they went down to Seleucia, and from there they sailed to Cyprus.

V. Giving (Generosity): I have been blessed and I like to be a blessing

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VI. Missionary support base: (Jerusalem had to receive persecution before they sent out ministers/ Antioch was a launch pad)

A. Acts 13:1-3 (Diversity within church)

1. Barnabus (Every day Joe)
2. Simeon (Niger) Jew by birth
3. Lucius of Cyrene (Greek city in upper Africa)
4. Manean (Grew up with Herod the tetrarch)
5. Saul (highly educated)

B. Home base (Prayer/Protection/ fellowship/ Financial)

Acts 14:26-28 From there they sailed to Antioch, where they had been commended to the grace of God for the work which they had completed.

27 Now when they had come and gathered the church together, they reported all that God had done with them, and that He had opened the door of faith to the Gentiles.

28 So they stayed there a long time with the disciples.

Acts 18:22-23 And when he had landed at Caesarea, and gone up and greeted the church, he went down to Antioch.

23 After he had spent some time there, he departed and went over the region of Galatia and Phrygia in order, strengthening all the disciples.

C. Visiting Ministers (Some churches stagnate by not bringing in outside ministries)

Acts 15:22 Then it pleased the apostles and elders, with the whole church, to send chosen men of their own company to Antioch with Paul and Barnabas, [namely], Judas who was also named Barsabas, and Silas, leading men among the brethren.

Acts 15:32 Now Judas and Silas, themselves being prophets also, exhorted and strengthened the brethren with many words.