



WEEK 5: The Church—it's not business-as-usual!

1. The First Missionary Journey of Paul (12:25—14:28)

Going: Syrian Antioch, Seleucia, Cyprus (Salamis to Paphos), Perga, Pisidian Antioch, Iconium, Lycaonia (Lystra, Derbe and surrounding region)

Returning: Derbe, Lystra, Iconium, Pisidian Antioch, Perga, Attalia, Seleucia, Syrian Antioch.

- **Messengers sent** (Acts 13:2-4)
- **Messengers proclaim the message** (Acts 13:5, 14-41 [esp. 38-39], 49; 14:1, 3, 7, 21, 25)
- **God confirms messengers/message** (13:11; 14:3, 8-10)
- **Jews and Gentiles respond to message with interest** (13:7, 42, 44; 14:4, 11-12)
- **Threats to message by Jews and Gentiles:**
 - Jewish threat:* contradiction and blasphemy (13:8, 45)
 - Gentile threat:* misunderstanding and syncretism (14:13, 18)
- **Defense of message by messengers** (13:9-10, 46-47; 14:14-18)
- **Jews and Gentiles respond to message with belief** (13:12, 43, 48, 52; 14:1, 21)
- **Threats to messengers by Jews and Gentiles** (13:50; 14:2, 5, 19)
- **Messengers leave the evangelized cities** (13:13, 51; 14:6, 20)
- **Messengers return to evangelized cities** (14:22)
- **Messengers established church leadership to protect message** (14:23)
 - Appointed elders in every church
 - Prayed for them with fasting
 - Commended them to the Lord
- **Messengers write letters to new churches** (e.g. Galatians)
 - To protect against false teaching
 - To warn against division
 - To encourage perseverance despite persecution
- **Messengers desire to return** (15:36)

2. The First Inspired Epistle of Paul (?) [i.e. Galatians]

- **The Author:** Paul writing from Syrian Antioch
- **The Recipients:** Primarily Gentile believers in newly-established Galatian churches (see Gal 1:2; 3:1). Probably included churches in Derbe, Lystra, Iconium, Pisidian Antioch, and surrounding areas (i.e. South Galatian theory)
- **The Date:** A.D. 49-50 (just before Jerusalem Council)
- **The Occasion & Purpose:** To reemphasize the true gospel of grace- salvation as a result of faith in Christ, not works.

3. The First Church-wide Council [i.e. the Jerusalem Council] (15:1-35)

- **The Issue** (15:1-3)
- **The Council Convenes** (15:4-29)
- **The Aftermath** (15:30-35)

APPLICATION:

- Discipleship is vital to Christ's mission for His Church!
- Discipleship must involve evangelism as well as teaching and shepherding!
- *We must be prepared to...*
 - Go out as God's messengers
 - Proclaim the message of Christ
 - Defend the message against false teaching and misunderstanding/misapplication
 - Defend against sin and divisiveness in the Body of Christ
 - Deal with consequences of standing for Christ (sacrifice, hardship, persecution, etc.)
 - Help other believers persevere through difficulties (encouragement, prayer, etc.)
 - Go out of your way to be a constant, consistent presence in the lives of other believers
 - Help to develop the next generation of leaders in the Church
 - Trust God for the results (see Acts 13:48; 14:23, 26)
 - Repeat above steps!

***How willing are we to become like Paul in these ways?**



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While they were ministering to the Lord and fasting, the Holy Spirit said, "Set apart for Me Barnabas and Saul for the work to which I have called them." – Acts 13:2 NASB

As a promising young Pharisee, Saul was raised on a steady diet of legalism, an approach to spirituality which enforced conformity to certain religious standards, whether scriptural or man-made. In other words, it was a come-and-be-like-us mentality. But then Saul's world got turned on its head on the road to Damascus. As an Apostle, Paul was tasked with going out into the Gentile world and leading others to a true knowledge of the Way. In order to do this, Paul became "all things to all men, so that [he] may by all means save some" (1 Cor 9:22). To the Jews, he became as a Jew, even though he wasn't under the Law of Moses. To the Gentiles, he became as one not under the Law of Moses, even though he was still under the Law of Christ. Paul had to quickly learn how to adapt to all kinds of people and circumstances for the sake of the gospel. Acts tells us that Paul was "set apart" for a particular work to which God had called him. Paul tells us in Ephesians that we too have been set apart for God's purposes: "For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand so that we would walk in them" (Eph 2:10). So how are you approaching your task? Are you waiting for everyone to come to you and become like you? Or are you setting aside your preferences and proclivities to engage the diverse world around you for the sake of the gospel?

- WHAT DO THE SCRIPTURES SAY?

Acts 12:25—15:35

- Paul's First Missionary Journey (12:25—14:28)
- Paul and the Jerusalem Council (15:1-35)
- *Summary* (16:5)
- Paul's Epistle(s): Galatians

- WHAT DID YOU HEAR BEN SAY?

- WHAT DO YOU HEAR GOD SAYING?

As you listen to the lecture and spend time in discussion with the men around your table, try and listen to what God may be trying to say to you. Write down those verses or thoughts that encourage or possibly convict you, so that you can remember them.

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- WHAT DO YOU NEED TO PRAY FOR?

If you heard God speaking to you today, it's vitally important that you take action. Maybe you need to confess. You might need God to clarify what He said or give you further direction. It could be that you simply need to express thanks to Him. During your prayer time around the table, be sure and provide one another with the opportunity to share a prayer request and to pray for them together.

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- WHAT TO READ FOR NEXT WEEK?

- Acts 15:36—19:20