FIVE-DAY THEOLOGY COURSE

ACTS

The Spirit of God in Mission

TAUGHT BY

Lec SK. KIERU

Unit 4 notes

Chapters 8, 9, 10, 11, 12

Day 1: Understanding Acts and Preparing for Pentecost · Day 2: The Spirit-Empowered Church in Jerusalem and Beyond · Day 3: The Gentile Mission and Paul's Missionary Expansion · Day 4: Paul's Missionary Journeys, Jerusalem and Rome

Day 5: Final examination (2026-10-09)

Based on Acts: The Spirit of God in Mission by Denzil R. Miller. Africa's Hope, 2017.

CHAPTER 8 · UNIT 4 · DAY 3

Paul's First Missionary Journey

The Antiochian outpouring launches the Gentile mission; ministry on Cyprus and in Asia Minor; planting indigenous churches

Taught by Lec SK. KIERU

Source: Acts: The Spirit of God in Mission - Denzil R. Miller (Based on Chapter 8)

Chapter purpose. This chapter studies the launch of the Gentile mission: the Antiochian "outpouring" sends Barnabas and Saul, they minister on Cyprus and in Asia Minor, they plant indigenous churches, and they report to the sending church in Antioch.

The transitional period ended with the door opened to Gentiles. Now the Gentile mission begins with a powerful move of the Spirit in Antioch, the sixth of the seven key outpourings. The author writes it as an "outpouring" in quotation marks. Keep those quotation marks.

Bible reading: Acts 13:1-14:28

Before beginning this chapter, read Acts 13:1-14:28. Each part of the lesson then has its own shorter reading: Acts 13:1-3, Acts 13:4-12, Acts 13:13-52, Acts 14:1-7, Acts 14:8-20, Acts 14:20-23, and Acts 14:24-28.

Learning Objectives

• State the result of the powerful move of the Spirit in the church in Antioch, and show how this "outpouring" confirms Luke's empowerment-witness motif.

• Identify, from Acts 13:1-4, who cooperated in sending the missionaries to the field.

• Explain what part the demonstration of spiritual gifts played in the conversion of Sergius Paulus to Christ.

• State three important indigenous church-planting principles learned from Paul's first missionary journey.

• Explain what it means that "the gospel ministry is more than just talking."

Before This Lesson, Read Your Bible

Acts 13:1-14:28

Before beginning this chapter, read Acts 13:1-14:28. Keep your Bible open. The chapter reviews a shorter passage before each part of the lesson.

The Big Idea

The Gentile mission was launched by a powerful move of the Spirit in the church in Antioch, the Antiochian "outpouring."

The Gentile Mission Begins

• We now progress in our study to the period of the Gentile mission. This is the third part of Jesus' missionary agenda as outlined in Acts 1:8.

• The church has already extended into Jerusalem, Judea, and Samaria. The time has now come for it to expand to the "ends of the earth."

• The "ends of the earth" in Acts 1:8 corresponds to the Gentile mission.

• The Gentile mission begins with a powerful move of the Holy Spirit in the church in Antioch. We call this move of the Spirit the Antiochian "outpouring."

• It is the sixth of seven key outpourings of the Holy Spirit in Acts and the first outpouring during the Gentile mission (see Table 2.1).

The Story: The Antiochian "Outpouring" (Acts 13:1-3)

There were prophets and teachers in the church at Antioch. These included Barnabas, Simeon (also called Niger, or the Black Man), Lucius (from Cyrene), Manaen (the foster-brother of King Herod the tetrarch), and Saul. Once, during a time of worship and fasting, a prophetic word was given. In this word the Holy Spirit instructed the church to set apart Barnabas and Saul for the missionary ministry to which He had called them. After more fasting and prayer, the leaders laid their hands on the two missionaries and sent them on their way.

Commentary on the Antiochian "Outpouring"

• The church's Gentile mission was launched by a powerful move of the Spirit in the church of Antioch, the Antiochian "outpouring."

• We have put the word "outpouring" in quotation marks because what happened in Antioch cannot technically be termed an outpouring of the Spirit, as are the other six key outpourings in Acts.

• It could more accurately be termed an action or move of the Spirit. We are calling it an outpouring, however, to maintain continuity in our terminology.

• It must be noted that this powerful move of the Spirit points to one or more prior outpourings of the Spirit in the church in Antioch.

• Luke has already described the beginning of the church in Antioch in 11:19-26. The church was started by Christian refugees who fled Jerusalem during the persecution that broke out after Stephen's martyrdom.

• It quickly grew into a powerful multiethnic church. Under the guidance and care of Saul and Barnabas and other talented leaders, it became a truly Spirit-anointed missional church.

• It was from this congregation that the church's first ever intentional missionary effort was launched and the Gentile mission officially began.

• Luke locates a pneuma event (that is, an event marked by a direct intervention of the Holy Spirit) near the beginning of each of Paul's three missionary journeys. These interventions of the Holy Spirit are more specifically located at the launching of new missionary initiatives, as indicated in Table 8.1.

• These pneuma events are significant because they let us know that all of Paul's missionary ministry was empowered and directed by the Holy Spirit.

• The Antiochian outpouring is yet another key example of Luke's empowerment-witness motif first presented in 1:8: "You will receive power... and you will be my witnesses."

• By showing this pattern over and over, Luke is trying to show his readers that any believer or any church can be used mightily by God if they will be filled with the Holy Spirit and remain committed to fulfilling Christ's mission.

13:1 Antioch

• Antioch, Syria, was called the "Queen of the East" and was the third greatest city

in the Roman Empire, after Rome and Alexandria.

• It was a cosmopolitan city and a commercial trading center. Its population was made up mainly of Syrians, Greeks, Jews, and Romans.

• Antioch was an ideal location for the emergence of a thriving missionary church and as a base for Paul's three missionary journeys.

Prophets and teachers

• Every healthy church should have prophets and teachers in its membership.

• Paul describes both ministries as grace gifts given by Christ to the church (Ephesians 4:7-11).

• Both are also charismatic giftings, and according to Luke, both operate by inspiration of the Spirit (Luke 5:17; Acts 2:17-18; 4:2; 5:21, 25, 28; 11:28; 13:9-12; 21:10-11).

• Jesus himself was a prophet and a teacher (Luke 24:19; John 3:2; 13:13), as were Paul and Barnabas (Acts 11:26; 13:1). Both ministries are needed in the church today.

13:2 Worshiping the Lord and fasting

• Luke sees the church as a worshiping body.

• Before Pentecost the disciples "stayed continually at the temple, praising God" (Luke 24:53). After Pentecost the newly Spirit-baptized believers spent much time together "praising God" (Acts 2:47).

• The Jerusalem believers praised God after Peter's report that the Gentiles had received the Spirit at Caesarea (11:18). Also in Jerusalem, the brothers praised God for what He had done among the Gentiles through Paul's ministry (21:20).

• Now, in Antioch, Luke pictures the church "worshiping the Lord." Prayer with fasting was also a common practice of the New Testament church (Luke 5:35; Acts 13:3; 14:23).

The Holy Spirit said

• Luke included this move of the Spirit in Antioch because he wanted his readers to know that Paul's missionary journeys were an initiative of the Holy Spirit.

• On this occasion the Spirit spoke to the church through a prophetic gift. The

message could have come through tongues and interpretation or, more likely, through the gift of prophecy (compare 1 Corinthians 14:1-5).

The work to which I have called them

• True apostles and missionaries are not self-appointed; they are called by God.

• Paul and Barnabas already knew their calling, and they knew God had sent them previously to Antioch. The issue here seems to be timing. The Spirit was saying that it was now time to begin the mission.

13:3 After they had fasted and prayed

• The church fasted and prayed after hearing the prophetic word concerning Barnabas and Saul. It seems that the church was testing the prophecy.

• Paul later wrote that prophecies must be tested. He said that "two or three prophets should speak, and the others should weigh carefully what is said" (1 Corinthians 14:29).

• We are to weigh prophecies by the Word of God and through prayer and fasting. No prophecy given in an assembly should be received until it is first tested and approved.

• The believers in Antioch could have also been seeking God's further insight and direction, or they may have been interceding for the safety and success of the two missionaries.

They placed their hands on them

• Just as apostles and missionaries are not self-appointed, neither are they self-sent.

• Barnabas and Saul were sent out by the church and by the Holy Spirit (compare 13:4).

• Paul himself later asked this question concerning missionaries: "How can they preach unless they are sent?" (Romans 10:15).

The Story: Cyprus: Spirit-Empowered Ministry (Acts 13:4-12)

Barnabas and Saul were sent on their way by the church in Antioch and by the Holy Spirit. With them was John Mark, Barnabas' nephew. The men traveled southwest from Antioch to the nearby coastal town of Seleucia. From there they

sailed to the island of Cyprus in the eastern Mediterranean Sea, disembarking at Salamis. There they preached the gospel in the local synagogue. They then traveled west across the island, preaching from town to town. Eventually, they reached Paphos on the western coast of Cyprus.

In Paphos, Barnabas and Saul met two men: the proconsul of the island, Sergius Paulus, and a Jewish sorcerer and false prophet named Bar-Jesus. The proconsul sent for Barnabas and Saul to visit him so he could hear the word of God. However, Bar-Jesus (also known as Elymas) opposed them and tried to turn Sergius Paulus from the faith.

As this was happening, Paul was again filled with the Holy Spirit and given divine insight into what God was about to do. He looked straight at the sorcerer and announced that the hand of the Lord was against him and that he would go blind for a season. Immediately it happened: Elymas began to grope about in darkness, begging for someone to take him by the hand. When the proconsul saw this, he was astonished and believed the apostles' teaching about the Lord.

Commentary on Acts 13:4-12

• Being sent on their way by the church and by the Holy Spirit, Paul and Barnabas arrived at Cyprus and began the primary work of missions, proclaiming the message of Christ.

• They moved systematically across the island preaching the gospel, and likely establishing congregations, wherever they went.

• It is also likely that there were already congregations of believers on the island that had been started by Christian refugees who fled because of the persecution begun after Stephen's martyrdom (8:1-4; 11:19-20).

• The meeting of Paul and Elymas is a classic power encounter. A power encounter is a situation in gospel ministry when the power of God is challenged by the power of Satan.

• Here the sorcerer Elymas opposed Paul and Barnabas and tried to turn Sergius Paulus from the faith. He probably did not do this by using rational arguments against the Christian faith. He more likely tried to turn the proconsul from the faith by using his occultic arts.

• Paul, however, was filled with the Holy Spirit and boldly challenged him.

• Through a word of knowledge, the Spirit revealed to Paul what God was about to do. Acting in faith, Paul announced to Elymas that the hand of the Lord was against him, and that he would be blinded for a season.

• When Paul's prediction immediately came true, Sergius Paulus' heart was opened to the gospel, and he believed in Christ. The power of the God of Paul was superior to the dark powers of the sorcerer.

13:4 Sent on their way by the Holy Spirit

• Again the Holy Spirit is presented as the Superintendent of the Harvest.

• He is the primary missionary strategist, the equipper, the sender, the director, the encourager, and the sustainer of missions.

Cyprus

• The residents of Cyprus were notorious for their immoral worship of the Roman goddess of love, Venus, and the Assyrian goddess of fertility and war, Astarte.

• The island was the birthplace and home of Barnabas. There was already a Christian presence on the island when Barnabas and Saul arrived (11:19).

13:5 Proclaimed the word of God

• The apostles' message was the word of God, or the gospel. This phrase is often used in Acts to mean the preaching of the gospel.

• In missions, our message is the full counsel of God (20:27), and the heart of that message is the message of Jesus (4:2; 5:42; 8:5; 9:20; 17:3).

13:9 Filled with the Holy Spirit

• This phrase is not describing Paul's initial filling with the Holy Spirit, for that happened several years earlier when Ananias laid hands on him in Damascus (9:17-18).

• This experience of Paul's can more properly be termed a refilling or an anointing with the Holy Spirit.

• Like Peter in 4:8, Paul is being anointed by the Spirit to release a spiritual gift.

13:12 The proconsul... believed, for he was amazed at the teaching about the Lord

• Power ministry is not an end in itself. The ultimate goal of power ministry is to bring people to faith in Christ.

• Power encounter (a demonstration of God's power) must always be accompanied by truth encounter (the proclamation of the gospel).

• In this verse "the teaching of the Lord" includes both proclamation and demonstration.

The Story: Pisidian Antioch: The Gospel Is Proclaimed (Acts 13:13-52)

From Paphos, Paul, Barnabas, and John Mark sailed northward until they arrived at Perga in Pamphylia. There John left the group and returned to Jerusalem. Paul and Barnabas, however, continued northward through Pamphylia as far as Pisidian Antioch. The next Sabbath Paul was invited to speak in the Jewish synagogue there.

Paul began his message by reminding those present of how God had blessed Israel in many ways. He especially blessed Israel by sending to them the message of salvation through Jesus, the Savior and descendant of David. Though the people of Jerusalem and their rulers rejected Jesus and asked Pilate to execute Him, God vindicated Him by raising Him from the dead. This was all foretold by the prophets. Now, through this same Jesus, they could have forgiveness of sins, and through faith in Him, they could be justified before God. This was a thing that the Law of Moses could never do. They therefore must not reject Jesus. If they were to do so, God would judge them, as the prophets had solemnly warned.

After the meeting, some asked Paul and Barnabas to come and speak again on these topics. Many Jews and God-fearing proselytes followed Paul and Barnabas, and the apostles urged them to continue in God's grace.

The next Sabbath almost the entire city gathered to hear the word of the Lord. This caused some Jews to become jealous, so they began to contradict what Paul was saying. Paul and Barnabas then turned to the Gentiles. As they did, they applied the words of Isaiah the prophet to themselves: "I have made you a light for the Gentiles." When the Gentiles heard this, they rejoiced and glorified the Lord.

The word of the Lord then spread through the whole region. In response, the Jews

stirred up some high-ranking officials of the city, who in turn instigated persecution against Paul and Barnabas, expelling them from their region. Paul and Barnabas therefore shook the dust from their feet against them and went to Iconium. The disciples in Antioch, nevertheless, were filled with joy and with the Holy Spirit.

Commentary on Acts 13:13-52

• Paul's sermon in Antioch is another example of apostolic preaching, sometimes called the apostolic kerygma. (For a discussion on the apostolic kerygma, see comments on 2:22-36.)

• As in every other case in Acts, Jesus is the central theme, especially His death and resurrection. Paul appeals to Scripture to prove his case. Finally, he calls his hearers to repentance and faith in Christ. These elements should be a part of all gospel preaching.

• Some commentators have pointed out that verses 38 and 39 are a summary of Paul's letter to the Galatians that he would later write to these same people: through Jesus the forgiveness of sins is proclaimed, and through Him everyone who believes is justified from everything they could not be justified from by the law of Moses.

13:30 God raised him from the dead

• In this short sermon Paul mentions Christ's resurrection five times (vv. 30, 33, 34, 35, 37), demonstrating its importance to the message of the gospel.

13:38 Through Jesus the forgiveness of sins is proclaimed to you

• We do not preach the gospel simply to transfer information.

• The purpose of gospel preaching is to call people to make a decision to follow Jesus and receive forgiveness of sins and eternal life in Him.

13:47 A light for the Gentiles... to the ends of the earth

• Jesus is Savior of the world (John 4:42; 1 John 4:14). He is a light not only to the Jews but also to the Gentiles.

• The phrase "ends of the earth" (Greek eschatos tes ges) reminds us of Jesus' promise in 1:8: "You will be my witnesses... to the ends of the earth."

• Our mission is to preach the gospel in pentecostal power to all nations before Jesus returns (Matthew 24:14).

13:50 They stirred up persecution

• Although persecution came again and again, the apostles persisted in proclaiming the gospel.

13:52 The disciples were filled with joy and with the Holy Spirit

• This verse reveals that Paul led the new converts in Antioch into Spirit baptism, for they were "filled... with the Holy Spirit." This fact is borne out in Paul's own words (Galatians 3:2-5, 14).

• As a result of these people being filled with the Spirit, "the word of the Lord spread through the whole region" (Acts 13:49).

• Joy is one natural by-product of being filled with the Spirit (Luke 10:21; Romans 14:17; Galatians 5:22; 1 Thessalonians 1:6).

The Story: Iconium: Signs and Wonders (Acts 14:1-7)

Upon arriving in Iconium, Paul and Barnabas went into the Jewish synagogue, as was their usual practice. There they preached with such power and clarity that a great number of Jews and Gentiles believed. However, as in Antioch, several Jews rejected the message of Christ and began to poison the minds of the Gentiles against the apostles by saying evil things about them. Paul and Barnabas were undaunted and stayed a long time in Iconium, preaching boldly. The Lord confirmed their message by performing mighty signs and wonders among the people.

The people of the city were, nevertheless, divided in their opinion concerning the apostles. Some supported them; some opposed them. When Paul and Barnabas learned of a plot to incite a mixed mob of Gentiles and Jews to capture and stone them, they fled for their lives from the city. They then went to the Lycaonian cities of Lystra and Derbe and the surrounding area. Everywhere they went, they faithfully preached the gospel.

Commentary on Acts 14:1-7

• In Iconium, as in Antioch, Paul and Barnabas encountered the hostility of the Jews.

• Their preaching of the gospel resulted in division in the city. The cause of this division, however, was not their preaching; it was the reaction of those Jews who violently opposed the message.

14:1 They spoke so effectively that a great number of Jews and Gentiles believed

• It is important that we learn to proclaim the word of the Lord effectively.

• Effectiveness in preaching comes from the preacher's personal character, thorough knowledge of Scripture, and the anointing of the Holy Spirit.

14:3 Confirmed the message of his grace by enabling them to do miraculous signs and wonders

• Again God confirmed the word they preached with "miraculous signs and wonders." This is a favorite expression of Luke.

• In its various forms he uses it eleven times in Acts (2:19, 22, 43; 4:30; 5:12; 6:8; 7:36; 8:6, 13; 14:3; 15:12).

• Jesus promised that He would confirm the preaching of the gospel with "signs following" (Mark 16:15-18). That promise has never been taken away from us.

• As we faithfully go and preach the gospel to those who have never heard, we can expect God to confirm the message in the same way today. Signs and wonders are manifestations of the Spirit's power (Romans 15:19).

14:4 The apostles

• Here both Paul and Barnabas are called apostles. Apostolic ministry is broader than the original twelve. Apostles exist today.

• However, nowhere in Scripture is the word apostle used as a title (for example, the apostle Paul); it is always used to describe a function or ministry.

• We have no scriptural warrant for calling any person by the title "apostle." Those who use this title today may risk becoming guilty of pride or manipulation.

• We do, however, have abundant scriptural warrant for those who function in an apostolic ministry.

• Apostolic ministry involves pioneer church planting done in the power of the Spirit in formerly unpenetrated areas and among unreached peoples (Romans 15:17-21; 2 Corinthians 12:12).

14:6-7 They continued to preach the good news

• Even after being chased out of the city, Paul and Barnabas continued to preach the gospel.

• We cannot let opposition keep us from preaching Christ to the lost.

The Story: Lystra: Gifts in Operation (Acts 14:8-20)

One day, as Paul was preaching in Lystra, a crippled man was present who had been crippled from birth. During his message Paul looked directly at the man and saw that he had faith to be healed. Paul commanded the man, "Stand up on your feet!" The man immediately jumped up and began to walk.

The crowd went wild with excitement and began to shout that Paul and Barnabas were the Greek gods Zeus and Hermes come down to earth in human form. When the two apostles saw a pagan priest bringing two bulls to sacrifice to them, they ripped their clothes in dismay and cried out, telling the people to stop. "We are bringing you good news," they shouted to the people, "telling you to turn from these worthless things to the living God, who made heaven and earth and sea and everything in them." They told them that He was the same God who had revealed himself to them with rain and crops and had given them joy to fill their hearts. Even so, Paul and Barnabas had difficulty keeping the people from sacrificing to them.

About that time a delegation of Jews arrived from Antioch and Iconium, and as they had done before, they began to poison the people's minds against Paul and Barnabas. An angry crowd then seized Paul, stoned him, and dragged him outside the city, leaving him for dead. But when the disciples gathered around him, he was revived and emboldened and went back into the city.

Commentary on Acts 14:8-20

• As a result of a wonderful miracle, Paul and Barnabas gained great credibility among the people of Lystra. They then seized the opportunity to present the gospel

to a more receptive audience.

14:9 Paul... saw that he had faith to be healed

• Only God can see into a person's heart and determine if there is faith. Paul could have known this only by divine revelation.

14:10 Stand up on your feet

• Like Peter, Paul uses a command of faith to heal the sick man (compare comment on 9:40).

• Speaking (or commanding) was the method Jesus used most often in healing the sick (Mark 7:34; Luke 4:39; 6:10; 7:14; 8:48; 13:12; 17:14; 18:42; John 5:8; 9:7; 11:43).

• Paul could have been exercising the gift of faith on this occasion (1 Corinthians 12:9).

• If the man had not stood up, Paul would have been shamed, and his ministry in Lystra would have been greatly hindered. However, since the man did stand, a wonderful opportunity to preach the gospel resulted. Paul had to act with great faith to perform this miracle.

14:15 We are bringing you good news

• The primary purpose of all missionary ministry is to present the good news and call people to faith in Christ.

14:20 The disciples... gathered around him

• These disciples gathered around Paul to pray. They probably prayed for him to receive healing, which he did.

• They may have also prayed for him to receive a fresh infilling of the Holy Spirit.

• He must have received strength and boldness from the Lord, for after they prayed, he went back into the city.

Further Insight: Spiritual Gifts in Missionary Work

• We learn from the book of Acts that the operation of spiritual gifts is an important part of missionary work.

• In Paul's ministry in Lystra, spiritual gifts opened the way for effective

evangelism. This was true in many other instances in Acts.

• According to this author's count, there are sixty-six instances of spiritual gifts in operation in Acts. This includes gifts from all three categories: prophetic gifts, revelation gifts, and power gifts (compare 1 Corinthians 12:8-10).

• Unlike Paul's epistles, which focus on the operation of spiritual gifts in the church (1 Corinthians 12-14), Acts focuses on the operation of spiritual gifts in evangelism and missions.

• These gifts often worked together in groups to bring about the desired result of people coming to Christ.

• This happened in Lystra. As Paul was preaching a Spirit-anointed message (a prophetic gift), he was enabled by the Spirit to look into a man's heart and see that he had faith to be healed (a revelation gift). Then, acting in extraordinary faith, Paul commanded the crippled man to stand on his feet. The man obeyed, and a miracle occurred (a power gift).

• A similar thing took place when Peter and John healed the lame man at the Beautiful Gate (3:1-4:4). Gifts were manifested from all three categories. Through a word of knowledge (revelation), Peter knew that it was God's time to heal the lame man. Through a gift of healing (power), the man was miraculously healed. And through a manifestation of the gift of prophecy (prophetic), Peter stood and powerfully addressed the crowd. Because of the release of these three categories of spiritual gifts, many were added to the kingdom (4:4).

• Every missionary and minister of the gospel must ensure that spiritual gifts are in operation in his or her life and ministry. The missionary or minister should also ensure that the church he or she plants understands how to operate in the gifts of the Spirit.

The Story: Derbe: Soul Harvest (Acts 14:20-23)

The following day Paul and Barnabas went to Derbe. While there, they preached the gospel and won many new disciples to the Lord. They then returned to Lystra, Iconium, and Antioch, where they strengthened the new believers, encouraging them to remain true to the Lord in spite of persecution. They also appointed elders in each church and committed them to the Lord with a time of prayer and fasting.

Commentary on Acts 14:20-23

• Few details are given concerning Paul and Barnabas' missionary ministry in Derbe. What we are told, however, is exciting. As a result of their preaching the gospel there, the apostles experienced a great soul harvest!

14:21 They preached the good news... and won a large number of disciples

• True to their commission from Christ, the apostles preached the gospel in Derbe, as they had done in every other place (Mark 16:15; Luke 24:46-48; Acts 1:8). As a result, they won many people to the Lord.

14:22 Strengthening the disciples and encouraging them

• The missionary's role goes beyond simply preaching the gospel and bringing people to salvation. Jesus told us that we are to make disciples of them (Matthew 28:19).

• A disciple is more than a convert; a disciple is a follower and learner of Christ.

• The missionary's role thus includes encouraging Christ's followers to remain true to Him. This can be done through fellowship (Romans 1:12; Ephesians 6:21-22; Philemon 7; Hebrews 10:25), teaching (Acts 20:2; Romans 15:4; 1 Thessalonians 4:18; 2 Timothy 4:2), and prophetic words (Acts 9:31; 15:32; 27:33-36; 1 Corinthians 14:3).

The kingdom of God

• The kingdom of God is mentioned eight times in Acts (1:3, 6; 8:12; 14:22; 19:8; 20:25; 28:23, 31).

• It can be defined as God's sovereign reign over His creation. Christ has been declared king over the kingdom of God (Ephesians 5:5; 2 Peter 1:11; Revelation 11:15).

• Therefore, to preach the gospel of the kingdom is to preach Christ (Acts 8:12; 28:23, 31).

• We are to preach the gospel in all the world before Jesus comes again (Matthew 24:14).

The Story: Antioch: The First Missions Convention (Acts 14:24-28)

Leaving Lycaonia, Paul and Barnabas returned through Pisidia into Pamphylia. After they had preached in Perga, they went down to Attalia. From there they sailed back to Antioch, where the church had first committed them to the work they had now completed. When the church gathered, the apostles gave a report of all that God had done through them and how He had opened the door of faith to the Gentiles. They then remained in Antioch with the disciples for a long while.

Commentary on Acts 14:24-28

• This passage tells us of the world's first ever missions convention in Scripture.

• After Paul and Barnabas returned to Antioch from their missionary journey into southern Galatia, the church gathered to hear their report. It was a report of how God's grace had reached out to the Gentiles.

• The apostles shared how God had sustained them in the work and how the Spirit had moved in power among the Gentiles.

• The sending church in Antioch must have rejoiced when its members heard about the healing, deliverance, hope, and salvation that had come to those who had never before heard the gospel of Jesus Christ.

14:26 The work they had now completed

• The two apostles did not just begin their mission; they completed it.

• They were able to endure the hardships and complete their mission because they were truly called of God (13:2), because they remained focused on their mission (14:21, 25), and because they stayed full of the Holy Spirit (13:9).

• We too can complete the work that God has given us, even under trying circumstances, if we will do the same.

14:27 They gathered the church together

• The church was excited and anxious to hear what God had accomplished through their missionaries. They therefore called a special missionary meeting to hear the apostles' report.

Reported all that God had done through them

• The believers in Antioch must have rejoiced when they heard how God had worked through Paul and Barnabas to bring Christ to the Galatians, both Jews and Gentiles.

• The essence of missions is God working through Spirit-filled missionaries to bring the good news of Jesus Christ to the lost and to demonstrate the power and superiority of His kingdom through mighty signs and wonders.

God... opened the door of faith to the Gentiles

• When Paul was saved and filled with the Spirit, God had informed him that he would be His "chosen instrument to carry [His] name before the Gentiles" (Acts 9:15; 22:21; 26:17-18).

• Now Paul's apostleship and missionary calling to the Gentiles had been firmly established. God used Barnabas and him to open to them "the door of faith."

Further Insight: Planting Indigenous Churches

• Paul and Barnabas' first missionary journey gives us our first insight into Paul's missionary methods.

• Paul planted churches. Paul did not just "get people saved;" he planted indigenous churches.

• Indigenous churches are churches that are able to support themselves, govern themselves, and extend themselves.

The methods he used to plant such churches

• Proclaiming the gospel (Acts 13:5, 23-43; 14:3, 7, 14-18; 14:21).

• Demonstrating God's power through signs and wonders (13:9-12; 14:3, 8-10).

• Ensuring that those who were saved were also filled with the Holy Spirit (13:52).

• Teaching and encouraging new disciples to remain true to the faith (13:43).

• Mobilizing believers to reach out to others (13:49).

Paul appointed leaders over the churches

• According to Acts 14:23, "Paul and Barnabas appointed elders for them in each church." These men would lead the church in Paul's absence.

• Church leaders should be filled with the Holy Spirit and wisdom (Acts 6:3). They should also be people of mature character and respected in the community (1 Timothy 3:1-13).

Paul trusted the Holy Spirit

• The last part of Acts 14:23 says, "With prayer and fasting, [Paul and Barnabas] committed them to the Lord, in whom they had put their trust."

• Paul and Barnabas could commit these new disciples to the Lord because they knew that they had been truly converted and filled with the Spirit (13:52; 14:1).

• If we make sure that people have been truly born of the Spirit and that they have been filled with the Spirit, then we can trust the Holy Spirit to teach and guide them, just as He has taught and guided us (compare John 14:25-26; 16:13; 1 John 2:27).

Conclusion

• God had opened the door to the Gentiles; however, not all of the church was convinced.

• Certain Jewish Christians in Jerusalem felt strongly that one must first become a good Jew before becoming a Christian.

• This meant that before the Gentiles could follow Christ, they must first accept and adopt a Jewish lifestyle, which involved keeping the Jewish laws, including circumcision.

• This was a nearly impossible requirement for most Gentiles. It would keep most of them out of the church.

• The question needed to be settled once and for all. In the next chapter we will see how the church addressed this critical question.

Figure 8.1: Paul's First Missionary Journey

Figure 8.1. Paul's first missionary journey, reconstructed from the chapter narrative. The original is a map in the printed book.

• Antioch: The sending church. During worship and fasting, the Holy Spirit set apart Barnabas and Saul. After more fasting and prayer, the leaders laid hands on

them and sent them on their way (Acts 13:1-4).

• Cyprus: Via Seleucia they sailed to Salamis, preached across the island, and at Paphos the proconsul Sergius Paulus believed after a power encounter with Elymas (Acts 13:4-12).

• Pisidian Antioch: Via Perga in Pamphylia. Paul preached in the synagogue, then turned to the Gentiles. The disciples were filled with joy and with the Holy Spirit (Acts 13:13-52).

• Iconium: They preached boldly a long time. The Lord confirmed the message with signs and wonders. A plot to stone them drove them on (Acts 14:1-7).

• Lystra: Paul healed a man crippled from birth. The crowd tried to sacrifice to them as Zeus and Hermes. Jews from Antioch and Iconium had Paul stoned; the disciples gathered around him, and he went back into the city (Acts 14:8-20).

• Derbe: They preached the gospel and won a large number of disciples (Acts 14:20-21).

• Return: They returned through Lystra, Iconium, and Pisidian Antioch, strengthening the disciples, appointing elders in each church, and committing them to the Lord with prayer and fasting. Then through Pisidia and Pamphylia they preached in Perga and went down to Attalia (Acts 14:21-25).

• Report: They sailed back to Antioch of Syria, gathered the church, and reported all that God had done and how He had opened the door of faith to the Gentiles: the first missions convention in Scripture (Acts 14:26-28).

Table 8.1: Holy Spirit Interventions

Table 8.1: Holy Spirit Interventions. Luke locates a pneuma event, an event marked by a direct intervention of the Holy Spirit, near the beginning of each of Paul's three missionary journeys, at the launching of new missionary initiatives. These pneuma events let us know that all of Paul's missionary ministry was empowered and directed by the Holy Spirit.

Journey · Pneuma event · Scripture

• Journey: First missionary journey. Pneuma event: The Antiochian "outpouring". Scripture: Acts 13:1-4

• Journey: Second missionary journey. Pneuma event: The Spirit redirects the team to Macedonia. Scripture: Acts 16:6-10

• Journey: Third missionary journey. Pneuma event: The Ephesian outpouring. Scripture: Acts 19:1-7

Important Terms

Antiochian "outpouring". The powerful move of the Spirit in Antioch that set apart Barnabas and Saul and launched the Gentile mission.

Pneuma event. A moment marked by a direct intervention of the Holy Spirit.

Empowerment-witness motif. Luke's repeated pattern: the Spirit comes, and witness follows.

Power encounter and truth encounter. Power encounter: God's power meeting Satan's power. Truth encounter: preaching the gospel. Both belong together.

Superintendent of the Harvest. Luke's picture of the Holy Spirit as the one who directs and oversees the work of missions.

Apostolic kerygma. The apostles' gospel preaching: Jesus at the center, especially His death and resurrection, proved from Scripture, calling people to repent and believe.

Indigenous churches. Churches that can support themselves, govern themselves, and extend themselves.

Apostolic ministry. Pioneer church planting in the Spirit's power among peoples who have not yet been reached. It is a function, not a title.

Key People

• Barnabas: Prophet and teacher in Antioch; sent with Saul by the church and the Holy Spirit. Cyprus was his birthplace and home. In Iconium both he and Paul are called apostles.

• Saul (Paul): Prophet and teacher in Antioch; set apart with Barnabas for missionary ministry. On Cyprus he was again filled with the Spirit and released a spiritual gift. This was a refilling, not his initial filling, which happened when Ananias laid hands on him in Damascus (9:17-18).

• Simeon, Lucius, and Manaen: Prophets and teachers in the church at Antioch, along with Barnabas and Saul. Simeon was also called Niger, or the Black Man.

Lucius was from Cyrene. Manaen was the foster-brother of King Herod the tetrarch.

• John Mark: Barnabas' nephew. He traveled with them from Antioch to Cyprus and as far as Perga in Pamphylia, where he left the group and returned to Jerusalem.

• Sergius Paulus: Proconsul of Cyprus. He sent for Barnabas and Saul to hear the word of God. After the power encounter with Elymas, he was astonished and believed the apostles' teaching about the Lord.

• Elymas (Bar-Jesus): A Jewish sorcerer and false prophet at Paphos who opposed the missionaries and tried to turn Sergius Paulus from the faith, likely by occultic arts. Paul announced that he would go blind for a season, and it happened immediately.

Key Places

• Antioch of Syria: Called the "Queen of the East," the third greatest city in the Roman Empire after Rome and Alexandria. A cosmopolitan trading center of Syrians, Greeks, Jews, and Romans. Base of Paul's three missionary journeys, and the sending church of this journey.

• Seleucia: The nearby coastal town southwest of Antioch, from which the missionaries sailed to Cyprus.

• Cyprus: Island in the eastern Mediterranean, birthplace and home of Barnabas. They preached from Salamis in the east to Paphos in the west. There was already a Christian presence there (11:19).

• Perga in Pamphylia: Where John Mark left the group and returned to Jerusalem. They later preached there again on the return journey.

• Pisidian Antioch: Where Paul preached in the synagogue, then turned to the Gentiles. The disciples were filled with joy and with the Holy Spirit.

• Iconium, Lystra, and Derbe: Cities of the first journey in Asia Minor. In Iconium, signs and wonders confirmed the message. In Lystra, a crippled man was healed and Paul was stoned. In Derbe, they won a large number of disciples.

• Attalia: The port from which they sailed back to Antioch after preaching in Perga.

Key Event

The Antiochian "outpouring": while the church was worshiping and fasting, the Holy Spirit set apart Barnabas and Saul for the work to which He had called them, and the church and the Spirit sent them on their way (Acts 13:1-4).

This is the sixth of seven key outpourings in Acts and the first of the Gentile mission. The author places "outpouring" in quotation marks because it is technically an action or move of the Spirit rather than an outpouring like the other six. It launched the church's first ever intentional missionary effort.

Key Verse

"Sent on their way by the Holy Spirit."

Acts 13:4

Remember This

• The Gentile mission was launched by a powerful move of the Spirit.

• Barnabas and Saul were sent out by the church and by the Holy Spirit.

• Paul did not just "get people saved;" he planted indigenous churches.

Life Application: Become a Spirit-Empowered Missional Church

• If we are to have powerful missionary churches, we must be ever open to the moving of the Holy Spirit in our midst.

• We must ensure that our members have been baptized in the Holy Spirit and that they thoroughly understand their responsibility of remaining full of the Spirit and focused on the mission of God.

• A truly missional church like the church in Antioch will reach out aggressively in evangelism and church planting. At the same time, it will remain focused on the nations that need to hear the gospel.

• Such a church will be strong in pastoral care and discipleship training. The gifts of the Spirit will be in operation, and the people will be taught to give generously and sacrificially to the work of missions.

• The truly missional church will gather often for Spirit-anointed worship and times of intensive prayer and fasting.

• It is God's will for every local congregation to be a Spirit-empowered missional church.

Life Application: Trust the Spirit in Opposition

• When involved in gospel ministry, we must trust the Lord to anoint us to proclaim the gospel with power.

• We must also trust Him to manifest His power through us in the release of spiritual gifts.

• When we face opposition from Satan, we can be confident that the Spirit of God is more powerful than the power of the enemy (1 John 4:4).

• If we are full of the Spirit, we can boldly challenge demonic forces in the name of Jesus and in the power of the Holy Spirit.

• In all that we do, our goal must be to point people to Christ as their Lord and Savior.

Life Application: Preach Christ to All Peoples

• We must be faithful to preach the gospel wherever we go. As we preach, the cross of Christ must remain our central message.

• We must clearly teach people of His saving work on the cross and His glorious resurrection from the dead.

• We must tell them that through faith in Him, they can have forgiveness of their sins and eternal life.

• Further, we must let them know that Christ has ascended to the right hand of God where He has poured out the Holy Spirit to fill us with His joy and to empower us to reach others with the message of the cross.

• And, in all that we do, we must never forget that the gospel is not for our people only; it is for all people everywhere on earth.

Life Application: Keep Preaching When Some Oppose

• When we go out to preach the gospel, we must not expect everyone to receive

our message gladly. Some, however, will.

• Apostolic ministry in formerly unreached areas will be difficult work. There may be powerful spiritual forces present that will blind people to the gospel.

• Whatever the case, we must continue to preach the good news as long as God wants us to remain in an area.

• If we will live holy lives, remain full of the Holy Spirit, and faithfully proclaim the gospel, we can expect God to confirm His Word by performing signs and wonders.

Life Application: Gospel Ministry Is More Than Talking

• To be truly effective missionaries and ministers of the gospel, we must know how to respond to the promptings of the Holy Spirit and to be used by Him to minister spiritual gifts.

• Gospel ministry is more than simply talking (1 Corinthians 4:20).

• It also involves hearing and obeying the voice of the Spirit and preaching and teaching the gospel under His anointing (1 Corinthians 2:1-5).

• It further involves acting in faith and allowing the Spirit to minister through us by prophetic words and miracles of healing and deliverance.

• If this is to happen in our lives and ministries, we must learn to walk in the Spirit daily. In addition, we must live lives of prayer and holiness before the Lord.

Life Application: Have Confidence in the Gospel

• In Derbe the preaching of the gospel resulted in a great harvest of souls.

• Because Paul had great confidence in the gospel he preached, he did not hesitate to preach it wherever he went. He knew that it contained the power of God to bring people to salvation (Romans 1:16).

• We, too, should have great confidence in the gospel, and we should be faithful to preach it often, calling people to faith and repentance.

• We must never forget that the message of Jesus is the only message that will get people to heaven (John 14:6; Acts 4:12; 1 Timothy 2:5).

Life Application: Hold Missions Meetings

• Like the church in Antioch, churches today should also have missionary meetings.

• In these meetings, missionaries can share with the church their calling and burden for the lost. They can also share news about what God is doing among the people to whom they have been sent.

• Such meetings will encourage the people to participate in missions through prayer, giving, and maybe even going themselves.

• They will also encourage the missionaries, knowing that the church stands behind them in their work.

• Every church must be involved in missions in this way.

Textbook Review and Application

• 1. What was the result of the powerful move of the Spirit in the church in Antioch? How does this "outpouring" of the Spirit help to confirm Luke's empowerment-witness motif?

• 2. According to Acts 13:1-4, who cooperated in sending the missionaries to the field?

• 3. What part did the demonstration of spiritual gifts play in the conversion of Sergius Paulus to Christ?

• 4. Discuss the role of spiritual gifts in missionary work in the contemporary world. Are they primary or secondary in demonstrating the superiority of the gospel?

• 5. What three important indigenous church-planting principles can we learn from Paul's first missionary journey?

• 6. What does it mean that "the gospel ministry is more than just talking?"

• 7. Has your church held any missions services or conventions? Discuss this question.

Quick Review

1. Why does the author put "outpouring" in quotation marks when he writes of the

Antiochian "outpouring"?

Answer: Because what happened in Antioch cannot technically be termed an outpouring of the Spirit, as are the other six key outpourings. It could more accurately be termed an action or move of the Spirit.

2. According to Acts 13:1-4, who sent Barnabas and Saul?

Answer: They were sent out by the church and by the Holy Spirit. True apostles and missionaries are not self-appointed and not self-sent.

3. How did spiritual gifts play a part in Sergius Paulus' conversion?

Answer: Paul was filled with the Holy Spirit. Through a word of knowledge he announced that Elymas would go blind for a season. When it happened immediately, the proconsul was astonished and believed. Power encounter was accompanied by truth encounter.

4. What three indigenous church-planting principles come from this journey?

Answer: Paul planted indigenous churches (churches able to support, govern, and extend themselves). He appointed Spirit-filled, wise leaders (elders) in each church. He trusted the Holy Spirit, committing the new disciples to the Lord with prayer and fasting.

5. What does it mean that gospel ministry is more than just talking?

Answer: It involves hearing and obeying the Spirit, preaching under His anointing, and acting in faith so the Spirit can minister through prophetic words and miracles of healing and deliverance (1 Corinthians 4:20; 2:1-5).

Chapter Summary

The Gentile mission was launched by a powerful move of the Spirit in the church in Antioch, the Antiochian "outpouring."

• Barnabas and Saul were sent out by the church and by the Holy Spirit. This is the sixth of seven key outpourings and the first of the Gentile mission.

• On Cyprus a power encounter opened Sergius Paulus to the gospel. In Asia Minor they preached, God confirmed the word with signs and wonders, and they planted churches.

• Paul planted indigenous churches: he proclaimed the gospel, demonstrated God's power, saw new believers filled with the Spirit, appointed elders, and committed them to the Lord.

Remain full of the Spirit and focused on Christ's mission, preach more than words,

and plant churches that can support themselves, govern themselves, and extend themselves.

ONE-SENTENCE MEMORY

A powerful move of the Spirit in Antioch launched the Gentile mission; Barnabas and Saul preached on Cyprus and in Asia Minor, planted indigenous churches, and reported back to the sending church.

CHAPTER 9 · UNIT 4 · DAY 3

Missionary Council in Jerusalem

The Jerusalem council decides that Gentiles need not become Jewish proselytes to be saved

Taught by Lec SK. KIERU

Source: Acts: The Spirit of God in Mission - Denzil R. Miller (Based on Chapter 9)

Chapter purpose. This chapter discusses the missionary council in Jerusalem, where the church officially determined that Gentiles did not have to submit to the Law of Moses, which required circumcision for one to be saved.

After the first missionary journey, a dispute in Antioch about circumcision of Gentiles is settled in Jerusalem by the Spirit-guided council.

Bible reading: Acts 15:1-21

Before beginning this chapter, read Acts 15:1-21. Each part of the lesson also has its own short reading from within that passage, and the last part of the lesson covers Acts 15:22-35.

Learning Objectives

• Explain the nature of the dispute that arose in the church in Antioch (Acts 15:1-5).

• State the evidences Peter, Paul, and Barnabas give that God had accepted the Gentiles without their first becoming Jewish proselytes.

• Show from this chapter whether certain Jewish believers were mistaking Jewish cultural requirements for gospel requirements.

• State the result of the Spirit-guided decision that followed the council.

• Explain how important it is to God that His children preserve the bonds of peace and unity among culturally diverse groups of believers, and how a leader can help keep this kind of unity between the churches.

Before This Lesson, Read Your Bible

Acts 15:1-21

The book also sets a short reading before each part of the lesson: review Acts 15:1-5; read Acts 15:6-12; Acts 15:13-21; Acts 15:22-35.

The Big Idea

The Jerusalem council decides that Gentiles need not become Jewish proselytes to be saved. Salvation for both Jews and Gentiles is by faith in Christ alone. This decision freed the church to be the global missionary force that Christ intended it to be, rather than a mere sub-sect of Judaism.

The Gentile Question

• After the Caesarean and Antiochian outpourings, the church continued to grow and extend itself. By now, it had ranged as far north as Galatia in eastern Asia Minor.

• There, Paul and Barnabas had been sent as the church's first intentional missionaries to the Gentiles. They had experienced great success, and several indigenous churches had been planted, resulting in many new believers being added to the Lord.

• These new believers came from four classes of people: Jews, Jewish proselytes, God-fearers, and Gentiles. It was the last two classes that created controversy in the church.

• Certain Jewish believers contended that before these two groups could be saved, they must first submit to the Jewish rite of circumcision. This debate has been called the "Gentile Question." Acts 15 records the story of how the controversy was resolved.

• In this chapter we will discuss the church council in Jerusalem where the issue was addressed directly. It occurred soon after Paul and Barnabas' first missionary journey, and we refer to it as the missionary council in Jerusalem.

• It was a highly significant event in the church's missionary development. It was for this reason that Luke included it in his narrative.

• At this council the church officially determined that Gentiles did not have to submit to the Law of Moses, which required circumcision for one to be saved.

• As Scripture makes clear, salvation for both Jews and Gentiles is by faith in Christ alone.

• This decision freed the church to be the global missionary force that Christ intended it to be, rather than a mere sub-sect of Judaism.

The Story: Dissension in Antioch (Acts 15:1-5)

Some Jewish brothers arrived in Antioch from Judea and began to teach the Christians there that believers must be circumcised before they could be saved. Paul and Barnabas strongly opposed this teaching and entered into a sharp dispute with them. The leaders in the church in Antioch, therefore, appointed Paul and Barnabas, along with some other believers from the church, to go to Jerusalem and discuss the matter with the apostles and elders there.

On their journey to Jerusalem, the delegation traveled through Phoenicia and Samaria, where they gave reports about how the Gentiles had come to Christ. This news made the believers in those places glad. When Paul and Barnabas arrived in Jerusalem, they were received warmly by the leadership of the church. They then gave a report of all that God had done through them among the Gentiles. However, some of the Pharisees who had become believers objected, saying that the Gentile Christians must be circumcised and obey the law of Moses to be saved.

Commentary on Acts 15:1-5

• Must a Gentile first become a good Jew before he or she can become a Christian?

• As simple as that question may seem to us today, it was not so simple for the early church. Christianity had been born into the cradle of Judaism.

• However, in order for it to grow into a worldwide movement, it had to break free from the binding legalism of the Jewish religion.

• Some Jewish Christians resisted the call for liberation. Others, like Paul and Barnabas, knew that it must take place if Christianity was to prosper among the nations.

• That is why they decided to travel all the way to Jerusalem to settle the matter once and for all.

15:2 Sharp dispute

• That some would teach that a person must keep the Law of Moses before becoming a Christian was no small issue. It struck at the very heart of the gospel of grace.

• Paul and Barnabas had no choice but to oppose this teaching, even if it meant sharp dispute.

• Some issues are so important that they cannot be ignored; they must be addressed and resolved.

This question

• The "question" referred to is the Gentile question.

• After God had poured out His Spirit on the Gentile believers in Caesarea, the apostles and brothers in Jerusalem praised God and said that "God has granted even the Gentiles repentance unto life" (11:18). It was a historic occasion. It did not, however, finally settle the Gentile question.

• The question was this: How could those who were ritually unclean according to the Law of Moses be accepted by God?

• On one hand, how could uncircumcised Gentiles, who ate nonkosher foods and defiled themselves by participating in pagan practices, be true followers of Jehovah God without first becoming good Jews?

• On the other hand, had not Jesus himself commanded the church to take the gospel to these very people? Had He not commissioned His church to be His witnesses to the "remotest parts of the earth?"

• How, then, were they to reconcile these two seemingly contradictory issues? This was the question that needed to be resolved.

15:5 The party of the Pharisees

• These legalistic Jewish Christians are sometimes called Judaizers.

• They were true believers in Christ. In fact, they were probably the most biblically conservative members of the church.

• They were, however, wrong in their belief that the Gentiles had to be circumcised and keep the Law of Moses before they could be saved.

The Story: Peter, Barnabas, and Paul Testify (Acts 15:6-12)

Soon after Paul and Barnabas arrived in Jerusalem, the apostles and elders met to consider the Gentile question. After much discussion, Peter stood up and reminded the delegates of how God had used him to bring the message of the gospel to the Gentiles in Caesarea. He told them how God had seen into the Gentiles' hearts and had accepted their faith in Him. God proved this by giving them the Holy Spirit, just as He had given to the Jewish believers at Pentecost. He made no distinction between them and the Jews, cleansing their hearts by faith.

Peter concluded his address with a challenge: "Why do you try to test God by putting on the necks of the disciples a yoke that neither we nor our fathers have been able to bear? No! We believe it is through the grace of our Lord Jesus that we are saved, just as they are." After Peter had concluded, the whole assembly sat in silence and listened to Paul and Barnabas tell how, through them, God had worked many signs and wonders among the Gentiles.

Commentary on Acts 15:6-12

• At the Jerusalem Council Peter, Paul, and Barnabas stood as witnesses to the fact that God had chosen to include the Gentiles in His plan of salvation.

• They testified how God, by pouring out His Spirit, had extended His hand toward uncircumcised Gentiles. God himself had chosen to include them in His plan of salvation.

• This salvation does not come through keeping the law but through faith in Christ.

15:7 God made a choice

• It is not our choice who should and who should not hear the gospel and be saved.

• The choice to include all people in His plan of salvation was God's alone.

• It was also in God's sovereign plan that Peter would first preach the gospel to the Gentile believers in Caesarea.

15:8 By giving the Holy Spirit to them

• God proved that He had accepted the Gentiles into His family by giving them the Holy Spirit.

• The baptism in the Holy Spirit is an experience for believers only.

• Jesus taught that the gift of the Holy Spirit is given to God's children (Luke 11:13). He further taught that the world (unbelievers) cannot receive the Spirit (John 14:17).

Just as he did to us

• God gave the Spirit to the Gentiles at Cornelius' house just as He did to the Jews at Pentecost.

• He gave them the same Spirit, in the same way, with the same evidence (2:4; 10:46), and for the same purpose: empowerment for witness (Acts 1:8).

15:9 He purified their hearts by faith

• It is through faith that all people are saved, whether Jews or Gentiles.

• Salvation does not come by the works of the Law but "through the grace of our Lord Jesus" (v. 11).

• Paul would later write, "For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith, and this not from yourselves, it is the gift of God, not by works, so that no one can boast" (Ephesians 2:8-9).

15:12 Miraculous signs and wonders

• The fact that God had done miraculous signs and wonders among (and on behalf of) the Gentiles is another strong indication that He wants to bless them and include them in His family.

The Story: A Word From the Lord (Acts 15:13-21)

After Peter, Paul, and Barnabas had finished their speeches, James spoke up and reinforced what Peter had said. He noted that in Caesarea, God had visited the Gentiles and received them to be part of his people. This was in agreement with the words of the Hebrew prophets: "'After this I will return and rebuild David's fallen tent. Its ruins I will rebuild, and I will restore it, that the remnant of men may seek the Lord, and all the Gentiles who bear my name, says the Lord, who does these things' that have been known for ages" (Amos 9:11-12; Isaiah 45:21-22).

James then delivered his judgment on the matter, stating that the leaders of the

church should not make it difficult for the Gentiles who were turning to God. Only four out of thousands of Jewish religious prohibitions were to be followed by Gentile converts. He said the council should write a letter and tell the Gentile believers that they should not eat food sacrificed to idols and that they must abstain from all sexual immorality, from the meat of strangled animals, and from blood.

He noted that these were some of the very things that Moses taught and had been preached against in Jewish synagogues for many generations. Sexual immorality is clearly forbidden in Scripture, and the other items were important to ensure that Jewish and Gentile Christians would be comfortable eating and fellowshipping together. In this way, James was making a way for the bond of unity and peace to be preserved between culturally diverse Jewish and Gentile Christians.

Commentary on Acts 15:13-21

• Paul and Barnabas, who had opposed the Judaizers in Antioch, were now joined by Peter.

• All three spoke in favor of including the Gentiles into the church without requiring them to first submit to the Law of Moses.

• James also joined them in saying that the church should not make it difficult for the Gentiles to turn to God.

15:13 James spoke up

• This James was the half-brother of Jesus. He was pastor of the church in Jerusalem and wrote the New Testament epistle of James.

• James the apostle and brother of John was martyred by Herod in 12:2.

15:15 The words of the prophets are in agreement

• God's intention to include the Gentiles in His redemptive plan was nothing new.

• It had always been His intention to take out "from the Gentiles a people for himself" (v. 14).

• God told Abraham that through his seed (Jesus), all the nations of earth would be blessed (Genesis 22:18; compare Galatians 3:16).

• The Hebrew prophets consistently testified to the same thing (Isaiah 45:6, 22;

49:6; 51:4-5; 52:10; 56:7; Amos 9:11-12; Zephaniah 2:11; Zechariah 2:10-13).

• As a result, the Gentiles could also bear the Lord's name (v. 17).

15:16 I will return and rebuild David's fallen tent

• This prophecy of Amos said that God would rebuild the fallen tabernacle of David so that Gentiles might seek the Lord.

• Jesus is now the Head of the church as the new place of worship that replaced the temple.

• It is thus God's appointed time for full Gentile inclusion into the kingdom of God.

• Note how James appealed to Scripture to settle the Gentile question.

The Story: An Encouraging Letter (Acts 15:22-35)

After James' speech, the apostles and elders, with the consent of the whole assembly, chose two men from among them, Judas (Barsabbas) and Silas, to send to Antioch with Paul and Barnabas. With them they sent a letter addressed to "the Gentile believers in Antioch, Syria, and Cilicia." The letter assured the Gentile believers that the men from Judea who had been troubling them did not have the authorization of the leadership of the church in Jerusalem. They were, therefore, sending Judas and Silas to accompany Paul and Barnabas to confirm that the letter had come from them.

The letter called Paul and Barnabas "dear friends" and "men who have risked their lives for the name of our Lord Jesus Christ." The apostles further informed its recipients that the decision they had reached "seemed good to the Holy Spirit and to us," indicating that the Holy Spirit had inspired the decision. They assured the Gentile believers that they did not want to place any unnecessary burden upon them; however, they would be required to abstain from food sacrificed to idols, from blood, from the meat of strangled animals, and from sexual immorality.

As soon as the four men arrived in Antioch, they called a meeting of the church and read the letter aloud. When the Gentile believers heard it, they rejoiced. Afterward, Judas and Silas, who were prophets, encouraged and strengthened the believers there. After a while, Judas returned to Jerusalem with the blessing of the church. Paul, Barnabas, and Silas, however, remained in Antioch, where they and

others taught and preached the word of the Lord.

Commentary on Acts 15:22-35

• The decision reached by the Jerusalem Council was momentous.

• Because the delegates were open to the Spirit and the teachings of Scripture, the correct decision was reached.

• It resulted in great joy among the new Gentile believers in the church.

• More importantly, the door was opened for the church to continue to expand among the Gentiles unabated.

15:22 Apostles and elders, with the whole church

• Not only were the top leaders of the church brought into the decision-making process, but the whole church was involved.

• This seems to indicate that some primitive form of democracy may have been used in the early church.

15:23 Believers in Antioch, Syria and Cilicia

• The church, as it was led by the Spirit, continued to expand into new regions.

• What accounted for these believers in Syria and Antioch? The believers in Syria possibly resulted from church-planting efforts of the church in Antioch. The believers in Cilicia possibly resulted from Paul's ministry there. He had spent time in Tarsus, Cilicia, and was probably involved in planting churches in that city and in the surrounding region, as was his custom (11:25).

• Luke did not record all of the church planting efforts of the early church, only those that helped to further his intent in writing.

• Hundreds of other churches were no doubt being planted by the apostles and other Spirit-filled disciples in the Middle East, North Africa, and Asia Minor.

• Because these early disciples were empowered by the Spirit and totally committed to fulfilling the mandate of Christ, there was a spontaneous multiplication of churches.

15:28 It seemed good to the Holy Spirit and to us

• The Holy Spirit was active in the Council's deliberations. The issue was too

important to trust to human reason.

• Again, we observe the Holy Spirit acting as the Superintendent of the Harvest.

• Exactly how the Holy Spirit helped these leaders and delegates to reach their decision we are not told.

• Possibly a word of prophecy was given, as in Antioch on two earlier occasions (11:28; 13:2); possibly a word of knowledge was given to James or another delegate; or possibly there was a strong inner witness of the Spirit in their hearts.

• However the leading came, the Holy Spirit played an active and significant role in their decision-making process.

15:31 The people read it and were glad

• The Spirit-directed decision of the Jerusalem Council brought great joy to the Gentile believers.

• They could now focus their energy on truly serving Christ and advancing His kingdom rather than on keeping nonessential legalistic rules.

Conclusion

• Having settled the Gentile question, the church was now prepared to continue its Gentile mission unhindered by doctrinal disputes.

• After an extended time of teaching and preaching in the church in Antioch, Paul and Barnabas prepared for their second missionary journey.

• This journey, however, was to begin with a dispute of another sort. In the next chapter we will look at that dispute and Paul's missionary journey that followed it.

Important Terms

Gentile Question. The debate over whether Gentiles and God-fearers had to be circumcised and keep the Law of Moses before they could be saved.

Judaizers. Legalistic Jewish Christians who taught that Gentiles had to be circumcised and keep the Law of Moses to be saved.

Missionary council in Jerusalem. The meeting of apostles and elders in Jerusalem, soon after the first missionary journey, that settled the Gentile Question.

Gospel of grace. The good news that people are saved by faith in Christ, not by keeping the Law.

Jewish proselyte. A Gentile who had fully converted to Judaism, including circumcision.

God-fearer. A Gentile who worshiped the God of Israel but had not been circumcised.

Yoke. Peter's word for the heavy load of the Law, which neither the Jews nor their fathers had been able to bear.

Superintendent of the Harvest. Luke's picture of the Holy Spirit as the one who directs the work of missions, including the Council's decision.

Key People

• Paul and Barnabas: Opposed the teaching that Gentiles must be circumcised to be saved. The church in Antioch sent them to Jerusalem. At the council they told how God had worked many signs and wonders among the Gentiles.

• Peter: Reminded the council that God had used him to bring the gospel to the Gentiles in Caesarea, had given them the Holy Spirit just as at Pentecost, and had made no distinction between them and the Jews.

• James: The half-brother of Jesus, pastor of the church in Jerusalem, and writer of the New Testament epistle of James. He appealed to Scripture and judged that the church should not make it difficult for Gentiles turning to God. (James the apostle and brother of John was martyred by Herod in 12:2.)

• The party of the Pharisees (Judaizers): True believers in Christ, probably the most biblically conservative members of the church, who objected that Gentile Christians must be circumcised and obey the law of Moses to be saved.

• Judas (Barsabbas) and Silas: Chosen by the apostles, elders, and the whole assembly to go to Antioch with Paul and Barnabas and confirm the letter. They were prophets. Judas later returned to Jerusalem. Silas remained in Antioch.

• The apostles and elders: Met in Jerusalem to consider the Gentile question. With the whole church they reached a Spirit-guided decision and sent the letter.

Key Places

• Antioch: Where the dispute began when Jewish brothers from Judea taught that believers must be circumcised to be saved, and where the church later received the letter with joy.

• Jerusalem: Where the missionary council met with the apostles and elders to settle the Gentile Question.

• Phoenicia and Samaria: On the way to Jerusalem the delegation reported how the Gentiles had come to Christ, and the believers there were glad.

• Caesarea: Where God had used Peter to bring the gospel to the Gentiles and had poured out the Spirit on them, the evidence Peter cited at the council.

• Syria and Cilicia: Named with Antioch in the letter to Gentile believers. The believers in Syria possibly came from the church in Antioch; those in Cilicia possibly from Paul's ministry in Tarsus and the surrounding region.

• Galatia in eastern Asia Minor: As far north as the church had ranged by this time, where Paul and Barnabas had planted indigenous churches among Jews, Jewish proselytes, God-fearers, and Gentiles.

Key Event

The missionary council in Jerusalem decides that Gentiles do not have to be circumcised or keep the Law of Moses to be saved. The decision "seemed good to the Holy Spirit and to us."

This decision was momentous. Salvation for both Jews and Gentiles is by faith in Christ alone. The door was opened for the church to continue to expand among the Gentiles unabated, and the Gentile believers in Antioch rejoiced.

Key Verse

"We believe it is through the grace of our Lord Jesus that we are saved, just as they are."

Acts 15:11

Remember This

• Must a Gentile first become a good Jew before he or she can become a Christian?

• God proved that He had accepted the Gentiles by giving them the Holy Spirit.

• God's intention to include the Gentiles was nothing new.

• Salvation for both Jews and Gentiles is by faith in Christ alone.

• The decision "seemed good to the Holy Spirit and to us."

Life Application: Stand Firm on the Gospel of Grace

• We must stand firm in our conviction that people can be saved by faith in Christ alone.

• While we must never be arrogant or contentious in our dealings with others, neither can we allow anyone to change the gospel.

• Paul was so firm on this position that he wrote, "Even if we or an angel from heaven should preach a gospel other than the one we preached to you, let him be eternally condemned!" (Galatians 1:8).

Life Application: Do Not Add Extra Requirements

• We should not put unnecessary requirements on people that the gospel does not specifically command.

• Our job is to lead people to Christ, and then to help them grow into Christian maturity.

• This cannot be done by just giving them a set of rules to live by. They must be brought into a living relationship with Christ and then taught to follow Him fully.

• In the words of Paul to the believers in Galatia, "A man is not justified by observing the law, but by faith in Jesus Christ. So we, too, have put our faith in Christ Jesus that we may be justified by faith in Christ and not by observing the law, because by observing the law no one will be justified" (Galatians 2:16).

Life Application: Base Decisions on Scripture

• At the Jerusalem Council the delegates listened to the testimonies of Peter, Paul, and Barnabas; however, their final decision was based on Scripture.

• We must ensure that all of our decisions concerning the work of God are based solidly on the word of God.

Life Application: Seek the Spirit's Guidance in Decisions

• Throughout life we are required to make many decisions concerning our ministries and our personal lives.

• We should never forget that God has a plan for each of our lives. That plan includes our participation in advancing the gospel to the ends of the earth.

• Therefore, every important decision that we make should be made in consultation with other committed believers and with God.

• We should seek the guidance of the Spirit so that when we make our decisions, we can also say, "It seemed good to the Holy Spirit and to us."

• When we make such decisions, great blessing comes to our lives and to the work of God.

Textbook Review and Application

• 1. What was the nature of the dispute that arose in the church in Antioch (Acts 15:1-5)?

• 2. What evidences do Peter, Paul, and Barnabas give that God had accepted the Gentiles without their first becoming Jewish proselytes?

• 3. Based on the evidence in this chapter, is it fair to say that certain Jewish believers were mistaking Jewish cultural requirements for gospel requirements? Can you think of circumstances in history and your own experience when church leaders and/or Christians made the same mistakes?

• 4. What was the result of the Spirit-guided decision of the church in Antioch?

• 5. How important is it to God that His children preserve the bonds of peace and unity among culturally diverse groups of believers? How can a leader help to keep this kind of unity between the churches?

Quick Review

1. What was the Gentile Question?

Answer: Whether God-fearers and Gentiles had to be circumcised and keep the Law of Moses

before they could be saved.

2. How did God prove that He had accepted the Gentiles without their first becoming Jewish proselytes?

Answer: By giving them the Holy Spirit, just as He had given to the Jewish believers at Pentecost, with the same evidence and for the same purpose: empowerment for witness. Paul and Barnabas also told how God had worked many signs and wonders among the Gentiles.

3. What four things did James say Gentile converts should abstain from?

Answer: Food sacrificed to idols, sexual immorality, the meat of strangled animals, and blood.

4. What phrase in the letter showed that the Holy Spirit had inspired the decision?

Answer: "It seemed good to the Holy Spirit and to us."

5. What was the result when the letter was read in Antioch?

Answer: The Gentile believers rejoiced. They could now focus on serving Christ and advancing His kingdom rather than on keeping nonessential legalistic rules.

Chapter Summary

The Jerusalem council decides that Gentiles need not become Jewish proselytes to be saved. Salvation for both Jews and Gentiles is by faith in Christ alone.

• A dispute in Antioch over circumcision of Gentiles was taken to the apostles and elders in Jerusalem.

• Peter, Paul, and Barnabas testified that God had accepted uncircumcised Gentiles by giving them the Holy Spirit and by working signs and wonders among them.

• James appealed to Scripture and judged that the church should not make it difficult for Gentiles turning to God. The Spirit-guided letter brought joy in Antioch and opened the door for unhindered Gentile mission.

Stand firm that people are saved by faith in Christ alone, do not add extra requirements the gospel does not command, and seek the Spirit's guidance so that decisions can be said to seem good to the Holy Spirit and to us.

ONE-SENTENCE MEMORY

The Spirit-guided council in Jerusalem settled the Gentile Question: people are saved by faith in Christ alone, so Gentiles need not first become Jewish proselytes.

CHAPTER 10 · UNIT 4 · DAY 3

Paul's Second Missionary Journey (Part 1)

Background of Paul's second missionary journey, pastoral visits, Paul's missionary strategy, to the regions beyond, opposition and deliverance

Taught by Lec SK. KIERU

Source: Acts: The Spirit of God in Mission - Denzil R. Miller (Based on Chapter 10)

Chapter purpose. This chapter examines the first half of Paul's second missionary journey, the most extensive of his three journeys: the dispute over John Mark, the pastoral visits in Galatia, the Spirit's guidance into Europe, and the planting of the church in Philippi.

Chapter 9 ended with the Gentile question settled. Gentiles did not have to first become converts to Judaism before they could become Christians, so the door was now opened for uncontested outreach to the nations. This chapter examines how that outreach continued with Paul's second missionary journey.

Bible reading: Acts 15:36-16:40

Before beginning this chapter, read Acts 15:36-16:40. Each part of the lesson also has its own short reading from within that passage.

Learning Objectives

• Explain the disagreement over John Mark, why Paul and Barnabas parted company, and the two ministries God kept going as a result.

• Describe how the Holy Spirit, as the Superintendent of the Harvest, kept the missionaries from Asia and Bithynia and guided them to Macedonia.

• Identify the first Christian convert in Europe and explain why Luke tells her story.

• Explain how Paul and Silas' praying and singing in the Philippian prison served as a witness, and what followed it.

• State the instructions Paul gave the Philippian jailer on how to be saved, and the evidence of the Spirit's work in him.

Before This Lesson, Read Your Bible

Acts 15:36-16:40

The book also sets a short reading before each part of the lesson: review Acts 15:36-39; read Acts 15:39-16:5; Acts 16:6-10; Acts 16:11-15; Acts 16:16-18; Acts 16:19-28; Acts 16:29-34; Acts 16:35-40.

The Big Idea

Like his first missionary journey, Paul's second journey began with a move of the Holy Spirit.

Introduction to the Second Journey

• The Gentile question had at last been settled. Gentiles did not have to first become converts to Judaism before they could become Christians.

• The door was now opened for uncontested outreach to the nations.

• Paul's second missionary journey is the most extensive of his three journeys.

• During this journey, after revisiting the churches in Galatia, Paul and his missionary team were directed by the Spirit to venture westward into Europe.

• There they planted churches in the provinces of Macedonia and Achaia (Greece).

• After a brief stopover in Ephesus, they returned to Antioch where their journey began.

The Story: Paul's Second Journey Begins (Acts 15:36-39)

After a long stay in Antioch, Paul proposed to Barnabas that they visit all of the places where they had preached the gospel during their first missionary journey to see how the believers were faring. Barnabas wanted to take John Mark with them again.

Paul, however, was strongly opposed to the idea, noting that during their first journey Mark had deserted the work and returned home. Their disagreement became so heated that Paul and Barnabas parted company and went their separate ways.

Commentary on Acts 15:36-39

• Paul's second journey began with controversy. This time the controversy was not between Paul and the Judaizers but between Paul and his close missionary associate and friend, Barnabas.

• Paul felt that because of John Mark's unreliability, he should not accompany them on their upcoming journey. Barnabas, however, thought that the younger man deserved a second chance.

• The controversy became so intense that the missionaries separated, with Barnabas revisiting the work on Cyprus and Paul journeying northward through Syria and Cilicia into Galatia and eventually into western Europe.

• This controversy candidly reveals the humanity of these early Christian missionaries.

• It also shows how God provided for two different and important ministries to continue: (1) the ministry of strengthening newly established churches and (2) the apostolic ministry of planting new churches where none yet existed.

15:36 Let us go back and visit the brothers

• This statement shows Paul and Barnabas' pastoral concern for the churches they had planted in Cyprus and southern Galatia.

• Their purpose in returning was to find out how the churches were getting along, encourage the believers, and strengthen the churches.

• It was Paul's desire to see every church he planted emerge as a Spirit-empowered missional church, one that could extend itself into the surrounding region.

15:39 They parted company

• After a heated debate over John Mark, Paul and Barnabas went their separate ways.

• It is significant that neither man left the work, but both continued as active missionaries.

• It seems that even after their disagreement, Paul and Barnabas came to a strategic agreement about who would go where.

The Story: Galatia, Pastoral Visits (Acts 15:39-16:5)

Barnabas sailed with Mark to Cyprus. Paul chose Silas as his missionary partner and, commended by the brothers, traveled northward by land into Syria and Cilicia. As Paul and Silas traveled, they took time to strengthen the churches in these regions.

Passing through Cilicia, they went to Derbe in southern Galatia and then on to Lystra. There they met a well-respected young man named Timothy, whose mother was a Jewish believer and whose father was Greek.

Since Paul wanted Timothy to join their missionary team, he circumcised him, so that Timothy's presence would not bring offense to the Jews living in the area. This was an example of an action taken not because the Bible required it but simply to help create unity between the culturally different Jewish and Gentile Christians.

As the missionaries moved from place to place, they read the letter from the Jerusalem Council containing the apostles' decisions and orders concerning the Gentile believers (15:23-29). Because of their visits, the churches were strengthened in the faith and grew in numbers daily.

Commentary on Acts 15:40-16:5

• Paul's first order of business during his second missionary journey was to return to the churches he and Barnabas had planted in southern Galatia during their first journey.

• His purpose was pastoral, to encourage the believers and strengthen the emerging churches. He took Silas with him.

15:40 Paul chose Silas

• Silas, along with Judas Barsabbas, had come to Antioch from Jerusalem with Paul and Barnabas to deliver the decree from the Jerusalem Council concerning Gentile believers.

• Judging from his name, Silas was probably a Hellenized Jew, a Jew who lived in the Greek culture.

• He was also a prophet and former leader of the church in Jerusalem (15:22, 32).

• After delivering the decree, he remained in Antioch and ministered in the church through his prophetic and teaching ministry (15:30-32).

• Paul referred to him in his epistles (2 Corinthians 1:19; 1 Thessalonians 1:1; 2 Thessalonians 1:1). Peter called him a "faithful brother" (1 Peter 5:12).

15:40 Commended by the brothers to the grace of the Lord

• As at the beginning of the first journey, the Antiochian church is again actively involved in sending the missionaries to the field (compare 13:3).

• Even though Paul had a divine call to the Gentiles (Acts 26:17-18; Galatians 2:2), and the clear direction of the Spirit (Acts 13:2-4), he did not proceed to the field on his own initiative.

• He went with the blessing and commendation of the church.

16:1 A disciple named Timothy

• Timothy had probably been converted during Paul's first missionary journey or at some later time through the evangelistic efforts of the church in Lystra.

• He became a faithful coworker with Paul. Paul called him his "true son in the faith" (1 Timothy 1:2).

16:3 He circumcised him because of the Jews

• Paul's requiring Timothy to be circumcised was not a compromise of his principles nor a violation of the Jerusalem Decree (Acts 15:23-29).

• It was rather an application of Paul's missionary strategy of becoming "all things to all men" in order to win as many as possible to Christ (1 Corinthians 9:19-23).

• The reality of cultural diversity required Paul to adapt to the many cultures he faced so that people of each cultural group could understand his message.

• Jesus did this when He came in the flesh (incarnate) so that we could understand God. Paul's actions, then, serve as an example of incarnational missionary ministry.

• Since Titus was a Gentile, Paul did not require him to be circumcised (compare Acts 15:1-2).

16:5 The churches were strengthened in the faith

• One important role of missionary ministry is to strengthen churches and believers in the faith.

• Jesus' command was not to make converts but disciples (Matthew 28:19).

• Paul would later write that the ministry of apostles (namely, himself) and prophets (for example, Silas), as well as evangelists, pastors, and teachers, was "to prepare God's people for works of service, so that the body of Christ may be built up" (Ephesians 4:12).

16:5 Grew daily in numbers

• Because Paul and Barnabas had intentionally planted Spirit-empowered missional churches, the churches continued to grow in strength and number.

• In his letter to the Ephesians, Paul wrote that a healthy, well-trained church "grows and builds itself up in love, as each part does its work" (4:16).

The Story: The Spirit Guides the Missionaries (Acts 16:6-10)

Leaving Lystra, Paul and his missionary colleagues traveled to the northwest through Galatia into Phrygia. They intended to go west into Asia Minor (and possibly Ephesus) but were kept from going there by the Holy Spirit.

Arriving at the border of Mysia, they decided to venture further north into Bithynia on the Black Sea, but the Spirit of Jesus would not allow them to go that way either. As a result, they decided to travel westward through Mysia until they arrived in Troas on the Aegean coast. There they were joined by Luke.

In Troas Paul had a vision in the night in which he saw a Macedonian man standing and entreating him, "Come over to Macedonia and help us." The missionaries concluded that God wanted them to preach the gospel in Macedonia. At once, they prepared to leave for that region.

Commentary on Acts 16:6-10

• As with his first missionary journey, Paul's second journey began with a move of the Holy Spirit.

• Luke strategically places such a move of the Spirit near the beginning of each of Paul's missionary journeys. He does this so that the reader will know that

everything done during these journeys was done in the power of the Spirit (Acts 13:1-4; 16:6-10; 19:1-7; see Table 8.1).

• Although this is the only mention of the Spirit's active role during Paul's second journey, we know by statements he made in his epistles that he ministered in the Spirit's power in Macedonia and Achaia (1 Corinthians 2:4; 2 Corinthians 12:12; 1 Thessalonians 1:5).

16:6-7 Kept by the Holy Spirit... The Spirit of Jesus would not allow them

• The Holy Spirit again acts as the Superintendent of the Harvest.

• By keeping the missionaries from entering Asia and Bithynia, He was directing them to the specific fields He had prepared for them.

• The title "Spirit of Jesus" is another name for the Holy Spirit. He is the One whom Christ sent in His place (John 15:26; 16:7; Acts 2:33) and who reveals the things of Christ to us (John 16:15).

• Peter calls the Holy Spirit the Spirit of Christ (1 Peter 1:11-12), and Paul calls Him the Spirit of Jesus Christ (Philippians 1:19).

16:9 A vision of a man of Macedonia

• The Spirit directed Paul's missionary team into Europe through a vision.

• According to Luke's teaching in Acts, visions are one way that God actively guides Christ's messengers (Acts 9:10-12; 10:9-16; 16:9-10; 18:9-10; 23:11; 26:19).

• Other ways include speaking directly to their hearts by His Spirit (10:19-20; 11:12; 15:28; 20:22), providential circumstances (8:1-4), angelic appearances (5:19-20; 8:26; 10:3-7; 12:7-15; 27:23-24), and prophetic speech (2:17-18; 11:28-30; 13:1-2; 15:32; 20:23; 21:10-11).

16:10 We got ready at once to leave

• When the Spirit directed, the missionaries responded quickly and decisively.

• By this and other "we" references, we know that Luke joined Paul's missionary team in Macedonia and accompanied Paul as far as Philippi, where he remained behind.

The Story: Philippi, The Gospel Goes to Europe (Acts 16:11-15)

Paul and his band of missionaries (Silas, Timothy, and Luke) sailed from Troas to Macedonia. They arrived at the Roman colony of Philippi, the leading city of the district.

One Sabbath day, the missionaries went down to the river and found a group of Jewish women who had gathered for prayer. They sat down and began to speak to the women.

While they spoke, the Lord opened the heart of a woman named Lydia, a seller of purple cloth who came from Thyatira and who was a God-fearer. She accepted the gospel, and she and the members of her household were baptized. After this, she persuaded the missionaries to lodge at her home, saying, "If you consider me a believer in the Lord, come and stay at my house."

Commentary on Acts 16:11-15

• Because there seems to have been no synagogue in Philippi, Paul and Silas went down to the river to seek out Jews.

• When there was no synagogue in a place, the Jews would often meet by the riverside, since it provided a convenient place to find water for their rituals.

16:13 Began to speak to the women

• Lydia, a woman, was the first Christian convert in Europe.

• By telling her story, Luke again demonstrates his concern for women.

• Because women can be empowered by the Holy Spirit, they can be full participants in the mission of God (compare Acts 1:8, 14; 2:17-18).

16:14 The Lord opened her heart

• The Holy Spirit works to open people's hearts to the gospel.

• A combination of the power of the gospel (Romans 1:16) and the power of the Spirit (Acts 1:8) is needed to effectively lead people to Christ.

• God opens people's hearts; however, they must individually respond to the gospel in faith and repentance.

The Story: A Slave Girl Is Delivered (Acts 16:16-18)

One day in Philippi, as the missionaries were on their way to a prayer meeting, they met a slave girl who was possessed by a spirit of divination. Her owners used her fortune-telling abilities to earn a lot of money for themselves.

Day after day the girl followed the missionaries, shouting, "These men are servants of the Most High God, who are telling you the way to be saved."

Finally, Paul became so troubled that he turned to her and commanded the spirit to come out of her in the name of Jesus. Immediately the spirit left her, and she was set free.

Commentary on Acts 16:16-18

• The story of the deliverance of the Philippian slave girl is yet another example of how Paul and the other ministers in Acts ministered in the power of the Holy Spirit.

• Through the manifestation of spiritual gifts, Paul brought deliverance to a demon-possessed slave girl.

16:18 Paul became so troubled

• Though the slave girl was speaking the truth, the source and motivation of her message was demonic.

• Her activity may have been a demonically-inspired tactic, aimed at undermining the ministry of Paul and Silas in Philippi.

• Through the gift of discerning of spirits, Paul identified the source of her inspiration, and through the gift of miraculous powers and with the name of Jesus, he drove out the demon (see 1 Corinthians 12:10).

16:18 In the name of Jesus Christ I command you to come out of her!

• Jesus drove out demons by the finger (or Spirit) of God (Luke 11:20; compare Matthew 12:28).

• Today, believers are given this same power when they are baptized in the Holy Spirit.

• Those who faithfully follow Jesus and obey His commands have also been given

the right to use His name in combating evil and advancing His kingdom in the earth (Mark 16:17; John 14:12-14; 16:23-24; Acts 3:6, 16; 4:10, 30; 1 Corinthians 5:4).

• To use the name of Jesus is to act under His authority.

The Story: Opposition and Deliverance (Acts 16:19-28)

The owners of the slave girl became angry at Paul because they could no longer use the girl to make money. They seized Paul and Silas and dragged them before the authorities in the city's marketplace. There, they accused the missionaries of causing confusion among the people by advocating practices contrary to Roman law.

The gathered crowd joined in the attack against Paul and Silas. The magistrates then ordered Paul and Silas to be stripped, flogged, and cast into prison, where they were placed in the inner cell with their feet fastened in stocks.

That night around the midnight hour as the other prisoners listened, Paul and Silas began singing hymns to God. Suddenly a great earthquake shook the foundations of the prison, the prison doors flew open, and the chains fell from all the prisoners.

Waking up, the jailer saw what had happened and started to kill himself, believing that all of the prisoners had escaped. Seeing this, Paul shouted, "Don't harm yourself! We are all here!"

Commentary on Acts 16:19-28

• Even in the severest trials, the apostles stayed close to God and focused on their work.

• As a result, their hearts were filled with joy, and they became powerful witnesses to those around them.

16:25 About midnight Paul and Silas were praying and singing hymns to God

• The church experienced constant opposition and persecution.

• In spite of this, as the gospel advanced, the missionaries remained full of the Holy Spirit and joy (Acts 13:52; Romans 14:17; Galatians 5:22; Colossians 1:11;

1 Thessalonians 1:6; Hebrews 1:9).

• In their joy they prayed and sang hymns to God.

16:25 The other prisoners were listening

• The apostles' Spirit-inspired praying and singing resulted in witness.

• This is a major theme in Acts: the infilling of the Spirit empowers Christians to be effective witnesses to the lost (compare Acts 1:8).

• The other prisoners must have been very impressed when they heard Paul and Silas, who had been falsely accused, beaten, and thrown into prison, joyfully praising God.

16:26 Suddenly... a violent earthquake

• The violent earthquake is yet another powerful theophany in Acts.

• The word "suddenly" reminds us of the outpouring of the Spirit at Pentecost (2:1), and the earthquake reminds us of the shaking at the second Jerusalem outpouring (4:31). Both speak of the power and work of the Spirit.

• Characteristically, this move of the Spirit followed a time of prayer and praise (compare Luke 24:53; Acts 1:14; 4:31).

The Story: The Jailer's Household Is Saved (Acts 16:29-34)

The jailer fell trembling before Paul and Silas. He implored them, "Sirs, what must I do to be saved?" They answered, "Believe in the Lord Jesus, and you will be saved, you and your household."

The apostles then shared the gospel with him and his family. Afterward, the jailer took them and washed their wounds, and he and his family were baptized in water. He then took the apostles to his house and prepared a meal for them. He and his family were filled with joy.

Commentary on Acts 16:29-34

• At the heart of Paul's ministry was the message of salvation.

• When the Philippian jailer inquired about how to be saved, Paul and Silas were ready with an answer. They told him that salvation comes through faith in Christ.

16:30 What must I do to be saved?

• This is the most important question in the Bible.

• All are lost; therefore, all must be saved (Romans 3:23-24). This salvation was provided through Christ's atoning work on the cross.

• The primary mission of the church is to proclaim the message of salvation to all nations (Mark 16:15-16; Luke 24:46-47).

16:31 Believe in the Lord Jesus, and you will be saved

• People are saved through faith in Christ.

• Two essential elements of true saving faith are repentance toward God and faith toward the Lord Jesus (Matthew 21:32; Mark 1:15; Acts 19:4; 20:21; Hebrews 6:1).

• Repentance toward God involves acknowledging one's sins, asking forgiveness, and turning from sin to walk in newness of life.

• Faith toward the Lord Jesus involves believing in His death and resurrection, inviting Him into one's life as Lord and Savior, and trusting Him alone for salvation (compare Romans 10:9-10).

16:32 They spoke the word of the Lord

• The phrase "word of the Lord" occurs nine times in Acts. In each instance it indicates the preaching of the gospel (8:25; 13:48-49; 15:35-36; 16:32; 19:10, 20).

• The only other place in the New Testament where the phrase is used is in 1 Peter 1:25, where the context indicates the same.

16:33 Immediately he and all his family were baptized

• Although water baptism is not a requirement for salvation, Luke presents it as the new believer's first step of obedience.

• According to Peter, it is "the pledge of a good conscience toward God" (1 Peter 3:21).

• In Acts water baptism occurs immediately after one has been born again (Acts 2:41; 8:12, 36-39; 9:18; 10:47-48; 16:15, 33; 18:8).

16:34 Filled with joy

• The joy the apostles demonstrated by singing to God at midnight now filled the heart of the jailer.

• This newfound joy was an evidence that he had been born of the Spirit, and possibly even filled with the Spirit, on this occasion.

The Story: Apologies and Departure (Acts 16:35-40)

The next morning the city officials sent orders to the jailer to release Paul and Silas, telling them that they could go in peace. Paul, however, refused, saying, "They beat us publicly without a trial, even though we are Roman citizens, and threw us into prison. And now do they want to get rid of us quietly? No! Let them come themselves and escort us out."

The magistrates were distressed, realizing that they had mistreated Roman citizens. They therefore came in person to apologize to Paul and Silas and ask them to leave the city. After this, the missionaries went to the house of Lydia and encouraged the brothers there. They then left for Thessalonica.

Commentary on Acts 16:35-40

• In demanding an apology from the magistrates, Paul's concern was not to preserve his own dignity or status.

• His concern was for the safety and blessing of the new church in Philippi. So he used his Roman citizenship as a means of ensuring fair treatment of Christians in the city.

16:37 Let them come themselves and escort us out

• Paul wanted to leave Philippi with a good name.

• He did this so that the work of the church would not be hindered, and so that it could carry out its work without unnecessary interference.

• For this reason, he demanded that the city officials come and apologize before he left Philippi.

16:40 They met with the brothers and encouraged them

• Paul and Silas were not only concerned with getting people saved, as important as that work is.

• Their concern went further: to the establishment of a strong indigenous church.

• So they gathered the brothers together to encourage them in the work of the Lord before departing for Thessalonica.

Figure 10.1: Paul's Second Missionary Journey

Figure 10.1. The route of Paul's second missionary journey, as named in this chapter. It is the most extensive of his three journeys.

• Antioch: Paul chose Silas and, commended by the brothers to the grace of the Lord, set out by land.

• Syria and Cilicia: Paul and Silas traveled northward by land and took time to strengthen the churches in these regions.

• Derbe: In southern Galatia, one of the churches planted on the first journey.

• Lystra: Here they met Timothy, whose mother was a Jewish believer and whose father was Greek.

• Phrygia: They traveled northwest through Galatia into Phrygia, intending to go west into Asia Minor.

• Mysia: Kept by the Holy Spirit from Asia, and the Spirit of Jesus would not allow them to go north into Bithynia.

• Troas: On the Aegean coast. Luke joined them, and Paul saw the vision of the man of Macedonia.

• Philippi: The Roman colony and leading city of the district of Macedonia, where the gospel came to Europe.

• Thessalonica: After the apologies of the magistrates, the missionaries left Philippi for Thessalonica.

• Achaia (Greece): The second European province in which the team planted churches on this journey.

• Ephesus: A brief stopover on the way home.

• Antioch: They returned to Antioch where their journey began.

Conclusion

• During Paul's second missionary journey, he and his companions were led by the

Spirit to enter Europe and preach the gospel for the first time there.

• His ministry in Europe began in Philippi in eastern Macedonia.

• There, Paul and Silas established a strong indigenous missional church.

• He would later write a letter to this church and tell its members how he thanked God for them and how he carried them in his heart.

• They became partners with him in the gospel by helping to support his missionary work (Philippians 1:3-7).

Important Terms

Spirit-empowered missional church. A church that is filled with the Spirit and reaches out beyond itself into the region around it.

Hellenized Jew. A Jew who lived in the Greek culture.

Jerusalem Decree. The letter from the Jerusalem Council containing the apostles' decisions and orders concerning the Gentile believers.

Incarnational missionary ministry. Ministry that identifies very closely with the people being reached, as Jesus did when He came in the flesh.

Superintendent of the Harvest. The Holy Spirit as the one who directs the missionaries to the fields He has prepared for them.

Spirit of Jesus. Another name for the Holy Spirit.

God-fearer. A Gentile who has accepted God and the teachings of Judaism but who has not been circumcised.

Indigenous church. A church that is able to support itself, govern itself, and extend itself.

Key People

• Paul: Leads the second missionary journey, the most extensive of his three journeys.

• Barnabas: Paul's close missionary associate and friend. After the disagreement over John Mark he revisited the work on Cyprus.

• John Mark: Deserted the work on the first journey. Barnabas thought the younger

man deserved a second chance. In later years Paul requested that Mark join him in the work (2 Timothy 4:11).

• Silas: Paul's missionary partner, probably a Hellenized Jew, a prophet and former leader of the church in Jerusalem. Peter called him a "faithful brother" (1 Peter 5:12).

• Timothy: A well-respected young man of Lystra, his mother a Jewish believer and his father Greek. Paul called him his "true son in the faith" (1 Timothy 1:2).

• Luke: Joined the team at Troas and accompanied Paul as far as Philippi, where he remained behind.

• Lydia: A seller of purple cloth from Thyatira and a God-fearer. The first Christian convert in Europe.

• The slave girl: Possessed by a spirit of divination and used by her owners for profit. Paul commanded the spirit to come out of her in the name of Jesus.

• The Philippian jailer: Asked, "Sirs, what must I do to be saved?" He and his family believed, were baptized, and were filled with joy.

Key Places

• Antioch: The sending church, where the journey began and ended.

• Syria and Cilicia: Regions Paul and Silas passed through, strengthening the churches.

• Derbe and Lystra: Churches in southern Galatia revisited on this journey. Timothy joined the team at Lystra.

• Phrygia: Reached by traveling northwest through Galatia.

• Asia: The team intended to go west into Asia Minor (and possibly Ephesus) but were kept from going there by the Holy Spirit.

• Bithynia: On the Black Sea. The Spirit of Jesus would not allow them to go that way.

• Troas: On the Aegean coast. Luke joined the team here and Paul received the Macedonian vision.

• Macedonia: The region the Spirit directed them to through the vision of the Macedonian man.

• Philippi: A Roman colony and the leading city of the district. Where the gospel first entered Europe.

Key Event

In Troas Paul has a vision in the night of a Macedonian man entreating him, "Come over to Macedonia and help us," and the missionaries at once prepare to leave for that region.

The Holy Spirit had kept them from Asia, and the Spirit of Jesus would not allow them into Bithynia. By closing those doors He was directing them to the specific fields He had prepared for them. The Spirit directed Paul's missionary team into Europe through a vision.

Key Verse

"Come over to Macedonia and help us."

Acts 16:9

Remember This

• Like his first missionary journey, Paul's second journey began with a move of the Holy Spirit.

• Paul desired to plant Spirit-empowered missional churches.

• Paul went with the blessing and commendation of the church.

• The apostles' joy now filled the heart of the jailer.

Life Application: When Colleagues Disagree

• Missionaries and other gospel workers are human, and sometimes disagreements arise between colleagues. Unfortunately, on occasion, these disagreements can be sharp.

• At such times we should not be tempted to abandon the work that God has given us.

• We must be mature enough to come to strategic agreements about how each will continue in the work, even if we may at times have to work separately.

• God is able to use people who honestly disagree with one another if they keep their attitudes pure and kind.

• If we remain kindhearted and mature in our attitudes, then in time even greater unity and agreement can come. Such was the case with Paul and Barnabas.

• In later years Paul requested that Mark join him in the work (2 Timothy 4:11; compare Colossians 4:10; Philemon 24). Mark even went on to write one of the four Gospels in the New Testament.

Life Application: Pastoral Oversight After Planting

• Our work is not completed when the church planting campaign ends. We have the ongoing responsibility of giving pastoral oversight to the new work.

• Our goals must be to ensure that the new church is filled with the Spirit, strong in the Word, and focused on the mission of God.

• Our methods should include fellowship, prayer, teaching, and godly counsel.

Life Application: Expect the Spirit to Guide

• We should seek and expect the Holy Spirit to guide us when we are actively engaged in the Lord's work.

• This guidance may come in various ways, including dreams, visions, angelic appearances, and providential circumstances.

• The most common way God leads us is by speaking directly to our hearts by His Spirit.

• To experience such guidance, it is essential that we be prayerful and remain full of the Holy Spirit.

• What the Lord speaks to us by His Spirit will always be in harmony with His written Word, the Bible.

Life Application: Release Women in Gospel Work

• Throughout the history of the church, women have played a prominent role.

• Women were the first to proclaim the resurrection of Jesus (Matthew 28:5-8; Luke 24:9-10; John 20:16-18).

• They were present at Pentecost when the Spirit was poured out (Acts 1:14), and the first convert in Europe was a woman (16:14).

• We should never treat women as second-class citizens in the kingdom of God.

• We should release them and encourage them to be full participants in gospel work.

Life Application: Learn to Operate in the Gifts

• We as Christ's ministers should be filled with the Spirit, and we should learn to operate in the gifts of the Holy Spirit.

• Had Paul not been able to do this, his and Silas' ministry in Philippi would have been much less effective, and the slave girl would have remained in bondage.

• The Bible commands us to be filled with the Spirit (Acts 1:4-5; Ephesians 5:18). It also commands us to earnestly seek after spiritual gifts (1 Corinthians 12:31; 14:1).

• Those who ignore these commands can never be the effective ministers of the gospel that God intends for them to be.

Life Application: Joy in Trying Circumstances

• Joy during trying circumstances is an evidence of one's being full of the Spirit.

• Our being filled with the Spirit should be evidenced by more than speaking in tongues.

• As we abide in Christ, walk in the Spirit, and obey the Lord's commands, our lives will be filled with the joy of the Lord.

• Such joyful lives will be a witness to those who observe us, and, as a result, they will be encouraged to turn to Christ.

Life Application: Always Be Ready With the Answer

• Every Christian should at all times be prepared to answer the question, "What must I do to be saved?"

• It is the responsibility of pastors and other church leaders to train everyone in the church how to lead others to Christ.

Life Application: Leave Well

• It is important how a missionary or Christian worker begins a work. It is also important how he or she departs the same work.

• Our departure must never result in weakening the church.

• Every pastor or church planter should ensure that the church is strong enough to carry on the work or that the church is left in able hands.

• He or she should also leave with a good name so that the work will not be hindered.

Textbook Review and Application

• 1. How did the Holy Spirit again work as the Superintendent of the Harvest in guiding Paul's missionary band to Macedonia and then into Europe? How might this apply to ministry today?

• 2. Who was the first Christian convert in Europe? Is it significant that she was a woman?

• 3. How did Paul and Silas' singing in the prison at night serve as a witness to the other prisoners? What other kinds of witness are present in this story? What was the result?

• 4. What instructions did Paul give to the Philippian jailer on how to be saved? What indication do we have of the Spirit's working in the jailer's heart?

• 5. What is the significance of Paul's comments to the officials of Philippi regarding their treatment of Barnabas and Paul? What purpose was served by Paul's statement that he and Barnabas were Roman citizens? See Acts 22:24-26 also for more information on this issue.

Quick Review

1. Why did Paul and Barnabas part company?

Answer: Because of a heated disagreement over taking John Mark, who had deserted the work during the first journey.

2. Whom did Paul choose as his missionary partner, and who joined the team at Lystra?

Answer: Paul chose Silas. Timothy joined the team at Lystra.

3. Which two regions did the Spirit keep the missionaries from entering?

Answer: Asia and Bithynia.

4. How did the Spirit direct the team into Europe?

Answer: Through a vision at Troas of a man of Macedonia saying, "Come over to Macedonia and help us."

5. Who was the first Christian convert in Europe?

Answer: Lydia, a seller of purple cloth from Thyatira and a God-fearer.

Chapter Summary

Like his first missionary journey, Paul's second journey began with a move of the Holy Spirit.

• Paul and Barnabas parted company over John Mark, and God used the separation to keep two ministries going: strengthening established churches and planting new ones.

• The Holy Spirit kept the team out of Asia and Bithynia, then directed them into Europe through the vision of the man of Macedonia.

• In Philippi Lydia became the first Christian convert in Europe, a slave girl was delivered, and the jailer and his household were saved and baptized.

Seek and expect the Holy Spirit to guide you in the Lord's work, and plant churches that are strong, indigenous, and missional before you leave them.

ONE-SENTENCE MEMORY

The Holy Spirit kept Paul's team out of Asia and Bithynia so He could send them to Macedonia, and the gospel entered Europe at Philippi.

CHAPTER 11 · UNIT 4 · DAY 4

Paul's Second Missionary Journey (Part 2)

Ministry in Macedonia and Greece, extended ministry in Corinth, Paul's return to Syria via Ephesus

Taught by Lec SK. KIERU

Source: Acts: The Spirit of God in Mission - Denzil R. Miller (Based on Chapter 11)

Chapter purpose. This chapter covers the remainder of Paul's second missionary journey: his continuing missionary work in Macedonia, his missionary ministry in Greece, and his brief stop in Ephesus.

The last chapter discussed Paul's missionary ministry in Philippi, where the gospel first entered Europe. This chapter looks at the remainder of the same journey, in Thessalonica, Berea, Athens, Corinth, and Ephesus.

Bible reading: Acts 17:1-18:22

Before beginning this chapter, read Acts 17:1-18:22. Each part of the lesson also has its own short reading from within that passage.

Learning Objectives

• Describe Paul and Silas' reception in Thessalonica and the kind of church that was planted there.

• Explain why Luke describes the Bereans as being of more noble character than the Thessalonians.

• Show how Paul's ministry in Athens is a good example of cross-cultural adaptation that never compromised the gospel message.

• Explain how Paul supported himself when he first arrived in Corinth and what changed when Silas and Timothy came.

• Describe how the Holy Spirit encouraged Paul in Corinth, and why Paul made only a brief stopover in Ephesus.

Before This Lesson, Read Your Bible

Acts 17:1-18:22

The book also sets a short reading before each part of the lesson: review Acts 17:1-9; read Acts 17:10-15; Acts 17:16-34; Acts 18:1-17; Acts 18:18-21.

The Big Idea

Paul resolved to know nothing except Jesus Christ and him crucified, and preached not with wise and persuasive words but with a demonstration of the Spirit's power.

Introduction to the Rest of the Journey

• During Paul's second missionary journey, he and his missionary companions were led by the Spirit to preach the gospel in Europe.

• They began their European ministry in Macedonia on the northern shores of the Aegean Sea.

• This chapter covers his continuing missionary work in Macedonia, his missionary ministry in Greece, and his brief stop in Ephesus.

• As was his ministry in Philippi, Paul's ministry in Thessalonica, Berea, Athens, Corinth, and Ephesus is filled with exciting stories of commitment and courage.

The Story: Thessalonica, Planting amid Persecution (Acts 17:1-9)

Leaving Luke at Philippi, Paul, Silas, and Timothy traveled westward to Thessalonica. For the next three Sabbaths Paul went into the synagogue and reasoned with the local Jews and God-fearers. Using the Scriptures, he showed how Christ had to suffer and rise from the dead. He boldly declared, "This Jesus I am proclaiming to you is the Christ."

Many believed and joined the two missionaries, including some Jews, many God-fearing Greeks, and a few prominent women.

Some Jews became jealous, so they rounded up several troublemakers from the marketplace and incited a riot. They then led the mob to Jason's house, looking for the two missionaries. When they did not find them there, they accused Jason and dragged him and some other brothers before the council.

They shouted, "These men who have caused trouble all over the world have now come here." They accused the missionaries of ignoring Caesar's decrees by claiming that Jesus was king. After hearing this, the council members were greatly troubled, so they made the missionaries post bond and released them.

Commentary on Acts 17:1-9

• Paul and Silas' reception in the city of Thessalonica was less than hospitable. Nevertheless, they were able to plant a strong Spirit-empowered missional church there.

• We discover this from reading Paul's first letter to the Thessalonians. There he reminds the believers how he had preached the gospel to them "with power, with the Holy Spirit and with deep conviction", and how they had "welcomed the message with the joy given by the Holy Spirit".

• As a result, the church in Thessalonica became "a model to all the believers in Macedonia and Achaia", and from there "the Lord's message rang out... not only in Macedonia and Achaia", but their "faith in God [became] known everywhere" (1:5-8).

17:3 Explaining and proving that the Christ had to suffer and rise from the dead

• As he did in every place, in Thessalonica Paul faithfully proclaimed the message of Jesus' death and resurrection.

• The gospel alone contains the power to transform people's lives and bring them into a saving knowledge of Christ (compare Romans 1:16).

• Paul further informed the Jews in Thessalonica that "this Jesus I am proclaiming to you is the Christ", their long-awaited Messiah.

17:7 Saying that there is another king, one called Jesus

• Jesus is, in truth, a king.

• He is the seed of David (Luke 1:32; Revelation 22:16), the King of kings and Lord of lords (1 Timothy 6:15; Revelation 19:16).

The Story: Berea, The Message Is Received (Acts 17:10-15)

That night the brethren spirited Paul and Silas away to Berea. When they arrived in Berea, they went to the Jewish synagogue and began teaching and preaching about Christ.

Being of more noble character than the Thessalonians, the Bereans gladly received the word and eagerly examined the Scriptures to determine if Paul was teaching the truth. Many came to Christ, including some Jews, prominent women, and Greek men.

When certain Jews from Thessalonica heard that Paul was preaching the word of God in Berea, they came there and poisoned the people against Paul. Paul was again whisked away by the brothers and taken down to the coast. From there he was escorted to Athens, about one hundred sixty kilometers south in Achaia.

Silas and Timothy, however, remained in Berea. When Paul arrived in Athens, he sent word for Silas and Timothy to join him there as soon as possible.

Commentary on Acts 17:10-15

• In Berea Paul and Silas found Jews of more noble character than those in Thessalonica. They were more open to the things of the Lord and eager to know the truth.

• Many received the message and came to Christ.

• However, because of the agitation of Jewish troublemakers from Thessalonica, Paul had to leave for Athens.

17:12 Many of the Jews believed, as did also a number of prominent Greek women and many Greek men

• The gospel is inclusive.

• Anyone can be saved and follow Christ, as is demonstrated by the response in Berea where Jews, Gentiles, men, and women believed and followed Christ.

17:13 Preaching the word of God

• Again, we see Paul and his colleagues remaining true to the mission of Christ: they preached the gospel.

• The phrase "word of God" is used eleven times in Acts (Acts 4:31; 6:2, 7; 8:14;

11:1; 12:24; 13:5, 7, 46; 17:13; 18:11), and it is often used synonymously with the gospel, for example in 11:1.

The Story: Athens, A Few Believe (Acts 17:16-34)

In Athens Paul was deeply troubled by the city's obvious idolatry. Day by day he taught in the synagogue and in the marketplace, teaching the people about the gospel and the resurrection of Jesus. One day he entered into a debate with some Greek philosophers. These philosophers were always wanting to hear about some new idea, so they took him to the Areopagus (Mars Hill) and asked him to explain his new teaching more fully.

Taking this opportunity, Paul stood and declared the gospel to them. He began by noting how religious the Athenians were and how he had seen their many objects of worship throughout the city. "I even found an altar with this inscription: 'TO AN UNKNOWN GOD,'" he said. "I am going to tell you who this God is." He then launched into his message.

He told them that the one true God, who created everything in heaven and on earth, does not live in manmade temples. Neither does He need people to take care of Him, since He is the One who gives life and breath, and everything else, to all people. This God has created from one blood all nations of people, and He has determined their times and the places where they should live. He did this so that they could seek Him, and perhaps find Him, although He is not far from anyone, for, Paul explained, "In Him we live and move and have our being." It is as some of their own poets had stated, "We are God's offspring."

And if we are His offspring, then how could God be an image made of gold or silver or stone, no matter how beautiful it is? In times past, God overlooked such conduct, but no more. He now commands everyone everywhere to repent. Those who do not repent will one day be judged by the Man He has appointed, that is, Christ. This is the very Man He raised from the dead.

When the people heard Paul talk about the resurrection of the dead, they began to mock. Some, however, said, "We want to hear about this again." A few people believed Paul and became his followers, including Dionysius, a member of the Areopagus, and a woman named Damaris. A few others also believed and

followed Paul.

Commentary on Acts 17:16-34

• Paul's ministry in Athens has been cited as a good example of cross-cultural adaptation in preaching the gospel.

• In his message on Mars Hill, Paul called attention to the worship of the Athenians, noting that they were very religious people. He also referred to their monument to an unknown god and quoted their pagan poets.

• He did these things to identify more closely with the culture of Athens.

• At the same time, however, he remained true to his mission and never compromised the gospel message.

17:16 Athens

• Athens was the capital of Greece (Achaia) and the center of Greek culture, art, philosophy, and architecture.

• About 250 thousand people lived in Athens in the first century A.D.

17:16 He was greatly distressed

• Rather than being impressed by the Athenian architectural wonders and the city's classical works of art, Paul was distressed in his spirit, realizing that they were symbols of the people's idolatry and lostness (compare 1 Corinthians 10:18-21).

• While we rejoice in the cultural achievements of mankind, we are not blinded to man's desperate need of Christ.

17:17 He reasoned in the synagogue... as well as in the marketplace

• Paul did not limit his preaching and teaching to the church. He rather took the gospel into the marketplace where the lost people were.

• We should never limit our preaching to the church building; we must take the message of Christ to the streets.

• We must proclaim Christ both "publicly and from house to house" (20:20).

17:18 Preaching the good news about Jesus and the resurrection

• As always, Paul centers his preaching on the gospel of Christ, including His death and resurrection.

17:26 From one man he made every nation of men

• Although there are cultural differences between nations and peoples, there is only one race of people on the earth, the human race.

• All are descendents of Adam and Eve and are equally precious before God who created them.

• All fell through Adam's transgression, all were redeemed by Christ on the cross, and all must hear and believe the message of the gospel.

17:27 God did this so that men would... find him

• God has providentially placed all peoples, tribes, and nations in their appointed locations on earth. He has also determined the times of their visitation.

• He has done all of this so that they might seek and find Him.

• It is our responsibility to follow the leading of His Spirit and take the gospel to them wherever they may be.

17:30 Now he commands all people everywhere to repent

• To be saved, all people must turn to God, repent of their sins, and put their faith in Christ.

• There is no other means of salvation (compare 4:12).

The Story: Corinth, An Extended Stay (Acts 18:1-17)

Paul traveled from Athens to Corinth, where he met Aquila and his wife Priscilla. They had recently fled from Italy to Corinth because the emperor Claudius had expelled all the Jews from Rome. Since they were tentmakers like Paul, he stayed and worked with them. Every Sabbath, however, Paul went to the synagogue and tried to persuade the Jews and Greeks there to turn to Christ.

When Silas and Timothy arrived from Macedonia, Paul was able to devote himself exclusively to preaching the gospel. In time, however, when the Jews became hardened in their opposition against the gospel, Paul turned from them saying, "Your blood be on your own heads! I am clear of my responsibility. From now on I will go to the Gentiles."

Paul then left the synagogue and began to teach in the house of Titius Justus, a

Jewish proselyte. Soon after that, Crispus, the ruler of the synagogue, turned to the Lord, along with his entire family. Hearing about this, many Corinthians believed the gospel and were baptized.

One night the Lord came to Paul in a vision and told him not to be afraid but to "keep on speaking, [to] not be silent." The Lord told Paul that He was with him, and no one would harm him. The Lord further assured him, "I have many people in this city." As a result, Paul was greatly encouraged and remained in Corinth for a year and a half teaching the word of God.

In time, when Gallio became the governor of Achaia, the Jews united against Paul and brought charges against him, accusing him of persuading people to worship God in ways contrary to Roman law. Gallio, however, dismissed their charges since he was not interested in matters of Jewish law and customs. In retaliation the mob seized Sosthenes, the new leader of the synagogue, and beat him outside the courtroom. Here, too, Gallio showed no interest in the matter.

Commentary on Acts 18:1-17

• When Paul arrived in Corinth, he came with a new plan. In Athens he had tried to convince the people to turn to Christ by using superior wisdom and philosophy, yet with few results.

• In Corinth, however, he had a new strategy. He resolved to know nothing while he was with them "except Jesus Christ and him crucified" (1 Corinthians 2:2).

• When Paul later wrote to the Corinthian church, he recounted his ministry among them: "My message and my preaching were not with wise and persuasive words, but with a demonstration of the Spirit's power, so that your faith might not rest on men's wisdom, but on God's power" (vv. 4-5).

18:1 Corinth

• Corinth was the capital and commercial center of Greece and the seat of the Roman proconsul (Acts 18:12).

• The city was notorious for its immorality.

• It had about half a million residents when Paul visited the city.

18:4 Trying to persuade Jews and Greeks

• When Paul preached, he did not simply tell the story of Jesus. He tried to persuade people to follow Jesus as Lord and Savior. He called for a decisive response from his hearers.

• Our job is not simply to tell people about Jesus; we must seek to persuade them to turn to Him in faith and repentance.

• This can be done best by being full of the Spirit and by faithfully and clearly proclaiming the gospel.

18:5 Paul devoted himself exclusively to preaching

• When Silas and Timothy arrived in Corinth, Paul could quit his tent-making and devote himself entirely to preaching the gospel.

• As missionaries and pastors, it should always be our goal to devote ourselves exclusively to the proclamation and teaching of the gospel.

18:8 Many of the Corinthians who heard him believed and were baptized

• As a result of Paul's missionary work in Corinth, many came to know the Lord.

• A large Spirit-empowered church was founded.

18:9 The Lord spoke to Paul in a vision

• Paul is again guided by a vision. In the vision the Lord spoke to him telling him not to be afraid.

• The Spirit not only directs us in our work for God, He also comes to us to comfort and encourage us in our times of discouragement.

• On this occasion the Spirit gave Paul a vision of Christ. What an encouragement that must have been to the burdened apostle.

The Story: Ephesus, A Brief Stopover (Acts 18:18-21)

After remaining in Corinth for some time, Paul left with Priscilla and Aquila and sailed for Syria. He had his hair cut off to fulfill a vow he had made.

On his journey to Antioch, he and his companions passed through Ephesus. While there, Paul went into the synagogue and reasoned with the Jews. They asked him to spend more time with them; however, he declined, promising to return to them

if God willed.

Leaving Priscilla and Aquila in Ephesus, he set sail to Caesarea, where he greeted the church. He then went northward to Antioch in Syria.

Commentary on Acts 18:18-21

• While in Corinth, Paul decided to return to Antioch, where he had begun his journey.

• On the way there he made a brief stopover in Ephesus, where he evidently planted a small body of believers.

• He left Priscilla and Aquila there to care for them, while he journeyed on to Antioch.

18:19 Went into the synagogue and reasoned with the Jews

• Some of these Jews evidently believed in Christ, since verse 27 speaks of "the brethren" in Ephesus who wrote to the disciples in Corinth concerning Apollos.

18:21 I will come back if it is God's will

• Paul intended to return to Ephesus and make it his base of missionary operation to reach all of Asia Minor.

• This he will do during his third missionary journey.

Conclusion

• Paul returned to his home base in Antioch, thus completing his second missionary journey.

• During this journey, he and Silas had planted churches in the European provinces of Macedonia and Achaia.

• They had also begun a small work in Ephesus.

• In his third missionary journey Paul will return to Ephesus to conduct his most successful campaign of all, the Ephesian campaign.

Important Terms

Spirit-empowered missional church. A church filled with the Spirit whose witness

reaches out beyond itself into the region around it.

God-fearer. A Gentile who has accepted God and the teachings of Judaism but who has not been circumcised.

Cross-cultural adaptation. Adjusting the way you present the gospel so that it makes sense inside another people's culture, without changing the message.

Areopagus (Mars Hill). The place in Athens where the philosophers took Paul and asked him to explain his new teaching more fully.

Word of God. A phrase Luke often uses in Acts to mean the gospel itself.

Proselyte. A Gentile convert who had committed himself to the teachings of the Jewish faith, underwent circumcision, and worshiped in the Jewish temple or synagogue.

Tentmaker. Paul's trade, which he worked at with Aquila and Priscilla to support himself in Corinth.

Key People

• Paul: Preaches Christ in Thessalonica, Berea, Athens, Corinth, and Ephesus, then returns to Antioch.

• Silas and Timothy: Traveled with Paul from Philippi, remained in Berea, and later joined him in Corinth from Macedonia.

• Jason: The Thessalonian whose house the mob attacked. He and some other brothers were dragged before the council.

• Dionysius: A member of the Areopagus who believed Paul and became his follower.

• Damaris: A woman in Athens who believed Paul and became his follower.

• Aquila and Priscilla: Tentmakers who had recently fled from Italy because Claudius had expelled all the Jews from Rome. Paul stayed and worked with them, and later left them in Ephesus.

• Titius Justus: A Jewish proselyte in whose house Paul taught after leaving the Corinthian synagogue.

• Crispus: The ruler of the synagogue in Corinth, who turned to the Lord along

with his entire family.

• Gallio: The governor of Achaia, who dismissed the charges the Jews brought against Paul.

• Sosthenes: The new leader of the synagogue, seized and beaten by the mob outside the courtroom.

Key Places

• Thessalonica: Where Paul reasoned in the synagogue for three Sabbaths and planted a strong Spirit-empowered missional church amid persecution.

• Berea: Where the people were of more noble character and eagerly examined the Scriptures.

• Athens: The capital of Greece (Achaia) and the center of Greek culture, art, philosophy, and architecture, with about 250 thousand people in the first century A.D.

• Corinth: The capital and commercial center of Greece and the seat of the Roman proconsul, notorious for its immorality, with about half a million residents.

• Ephesus: A brief stopover on the way home, where Paul evidently planted a small body of believers and left Priscilla and Aquila.

• Caesarea and Antioch in Syria: Paul sailed to Caesarea, greeted the church, then went northward to Antioch, completing the journey.

Key Event

One night the Lord comes to Paul in a vision at Corinth, tells him not to be afraid but to keep on speaking, and assures him, "I have many people in this city."

Paul is again guided by a vision. The Spirit not only directs us in our work for God, He also comes to us to comfort and encourage us in our times of discouragement. Paul was greatly encouraged and remained in Corinth for a year and a half teaching the word of God.

Key Verse

"This Jesus I am proclaiming to you is the Christ."

Acts 17:3

Remember This

• Sometimes we are called upon to witness for Christ in the midst of opposition, and even hostility.

• Paul did not limit his preaching and teaching to the church. He took the gospel into the marketplace.

• Our job is not simply to tell people about Jesus; we must seek to persuade them to turn to Him.

• We must "make the most of every opportunity" to preach Christ.

Life Application: Witnessing Amid Opposition

• Sometimes we are called upon to witness for Christ in the midst of opposition, and even hostility.

• In such cases we should ensure that we remain full of the Spirit and faithful in proclaiming the message of the gospel. We can do this by staying in close communion with Christ through prayer.

• If we will remain faithful to God's mission, He will use us to advance His kingdom and establish a strong work for Him.

• We should strive to plant churches like the one Paul planted in Thessalonica, churches full of joy and the Holy Spirit. These churches can become models for other churches in the area, and from them the message of Christ can ring out to other places.

• Such churches can only come into being if the missionaries and church planters take intentional steps to ensure that they do. These steps include the establishing of clear goals and focused teaching on the mission of the church.

• The new disciples in these churches must be instructed about how they too can be filled with the Spirit and become active participants in Christ's mission.

Life Application: Preach to All Classes of People

• We should be faithful to preach the message of Christ wherever we go.

• And we should preach it to all classes of people, expecting a harvest of souls.

• Some will oppose the gospel; however, we must not be discouraged, for some will be "more noble" and will gladly accept Christ as Savior.

Life Application: Know Your Message, Know Their Culture

• We must know our message. It is the message of Christ (1 Corinthians 2:1-5). The center of this message is His death, burial, and resurrection (15:1-6).

• We must consistently call men to faith in Him. They must repent of their sins, believe in Christ, and follow Him.

• While doing this, we must be sensitive to the people's customs and culture, and, when possible, use our knowledge of their culture to more effectively present the gospel to them.

• All along, we must understand that God is at work through His providence and His Spirit to prepare people to receive Christ. He empowers His church to proclaim the message of Christ to them.

• We must, therefore, be faithful to take the message to all peoples, whether in the next village or in distant lands.

Life Application: Comfort and Encouragement in Hard Times

• When we go out to preach the gospel, we should go in the power of the Spirit, and we should focus our preaching and teaching on "Christ and him crucified" (1 Corinthians 2:2).

• When difficult times come, if we will follow the Spirit's leading, we can expect the Lord to come to us with words of comfort and encouragement.

• Sometimes He may appear in a vision. Most of the time, however, He will speak to us directly by His Spirit to our spirits.

• Such times of encouragement most often come when we are seeking the Lord's face in prayer.

Life Application: Use Every Opportunity

• We should use every opportunity to preach Christ, even when we are en route from one place of ministry to another.

• If we will remain focused on the mission of God and sensitive to the voice of the

Spirit, He will direct us as to what we must do.

• As Paul wrote, we must "make the most of every opportunity" to preach Christ (Ephesians 5:16).

Textbook Review and Application

• 1. Describe Paul and Silas' reception in the city of Thessalonica. What was the result of their work there?

• 2. How did Paul support himself when he first arrived in Corinth? With whom did he work? What changed when Silas and Timothy arrived?

• 3. How did the Holy Spirit encourage Paul in Corinth (18:9-10)?

• 4. Was Paul's goal of giving full time in ministry realistic in his pioneering efforts? Are gospel ministers ever justified in working full time while they pastor a church? Justify your answer.

Quick Review

1. How many Sabbaths did Paul reason in the synagogue at Thessalonica?

Answer: Three.

2. Why does Luke say the Bereans were of more noble character?

Answer: They gladly received the word and eagerly examined the Scriptures to determine if Paul was teaching the truth.

3. Who believed in Athens?

Answer: A few people, including Dionysius, a member of the Areopagus, and a woman named Damaris.

4. How long did Paul remain in Corinth after the Lord appeared to him in a vision?

Answer: A year and a half, teaching the word of God.

5. Whom did Paul leave behind in Ephesus?

Answer: Priscilla and Aquila.

Chapter Summary

Paul planted Spirit-empowered missional churches in Macedonia and Achaia by

preaching Christ crucified and risen with a demonstration of the Spirit's power.

• In Thessalonica Paul met opposition but planted a church that became "a model to all the believers in Macedonia and Achaia".

• In Athens Paul adapted to the culture on Mars Hill, quoting their poets, yet never compromised the gospel message.

• In Corinth Paul worked as a tentmaker with Aquila and Priscilla, then preached full time, and after the Lord's vision stayed a year and a half.

Preach Christ and him crucified in the power of the Spirit, persuade people to turn to Him, and make the most of every opportunity, even while passing through.

ONE-SENTENCE MEMORY

From Thessalonica to Ephesus, Paul kept preaching Christ and him crucified, adapting to each culture without compromising the gospel, and the Lord encouraged him with a vision when the work was hard.

CHAPTER 12 · UNIT 4 · DAY 4

Paul's Third Missionary Journey

The Ephesian outpouring, Paul's missionary strategy, and the Spirit-directed journey toward Jerusalem

Taught by Lec SK. KIERU

Source: Acts: The Spirit of God in Mission - Denzil R. Miller (Based on Chapter 12)

Chapter purpose. This chapter looks at Paul's third missionary journey, the Ephesian outpouring (the seventh of seven key outpourings), and the three pillars of Paul's missionary strategy.

After the second journey Paul returns, then begins the third from Antioch, with the Ephesian outpouring (the seventh of seven key outpourings) as the pneuma event launching this journey.

Bible reading: Acts 18:23-20:6

Before beginning this chapter, read Acts 18:23-20:6. Each part of the lesson also has its own short reading from within that passage. The last part of the lesson asks you to read Acts 20:1-38.

Learning Objectives

• State from where Paul began his third missionary journey, who went with him, and whether this affected his outlook or ministerial effectiveness.

• Explain what Luke's terminology in verse 6, "the Holy Spirit came on them," reminds us of in Acts 1:8.

• State Paul's first question to the twelve men when he arrived in Ephesus, and his purpose in asking it.

• List and describe the three pillars of Paul's missionary strategy.

• Identify the type of cross-cultural challenges that might face international missionary teams today, and why it is so important to meet these challenges successfully.

Before This Lesson, Read Your Bible

Acts 18:23-20:6

The book also sets a short reading before each part of the lesson: review Acts 18:23; read Acts 18:24-28; Acts 19:1-10; Acts 19:11-41; Acts 20:1-38.

The Big Idea

The Ephesian outpouring is the seventh and last key outpouring of the Holy Spirit in Acts. In the Ephesian campaign, Luke sums up Paul's missionary strategy in three pillars: empowering, proclamation of the gospel with signs following, and mobilization.

Introduction to the Third Journey

• After an extended stay in Antioch, Paul launched his third missionary journey, which was his final journey in Acts.

• The journey began with a second pastoral visit to the regions of southern Galatia and Phrygia.

• Paul also returned to Ephesus, where he conducted the most successful evangelism and church planting campaign of his career.

• In this chapter we will look at these and other activities of Paul during his third missionary journey. In doing this, we will learn some valuable lessons about missions strategy.

The Story: Pastoral Visits to Galatia and Phrygia (Acts 18:23)

After spending time in Antioch, Paul set out again, returning to the regions of Phrygia and Galatia. In each place he traveled, he strengthened the disciples.

Commentary on Acts 18:23

18:23 After spending some time in Antioch, Paul set out

• Unlike his first two journeys, we are not told if Paul took anyone with him.

Strengthening all the disciples

• Paul's concern for people did not end when he led them to the Lord, or even

when he started a new church. He returned to strengthen those who had chosen to follow Christ.

• Although evangelism and church planting are major issues in missions, the role of the missionary is more than evangelistic; it is also pastoral.

• Not only must churches be planted, believers must also be encouraged and strengthened in their faith.

• They must be taught the Word of God and led into the Spirit-filled life. In this way they can grow into mature believers and effective witnesses for Christ.

The Story: Apollos, Priscilla, and Aquila (Acts 18:24-28)

While Paul was ministering in Phrygia and Galatia, a brother by the name of Apollos from Alexandria, Egypt, arrived in Ephesus. Apollos was an educated man with a thorough knowledge of the Old Testament Scriptures. He had been taught the way of the Lord and preached with great fervor. Even though he had only received the baptism of John, he spoke accurately about Jesus. When Priscilla and Aquila heard him preaching boldly about Jesus in the synagogue, they took him aside and taught him about the ways of God more thoroughly.

Later, Apollos decided to go to Achaia. The brothers in Ephesus encouraged him and wrote a letter of recommendation for him addressed to the disciples in Achaia. When he arrived there, he was greatly used by God to strengthen the church. He powerfully refuted the Jews in public debates, proving from the Scriptures that Jesus was indeed the Christ.

Commentary on Acts 18:24-28

• The story of Apollos illustrates the fact that men and women other than the twelve apostles were faithfully proclaiming the message of Christ in many parts of the ancient world.

• There seems to have been an active church in Apollos' hometown, Alexandria, of which the book of Acts tells us nothing.

• Churches were being planted in many other places not mentioned in Acts or Paul's epistles. Luke only writes about those places that help to further his purpose in writing Acts.

18:24-25 Apollos

• Apollos is described as a learned man with "a thorough knowledge of the Scriptures."

• This understanding obviously included what the Scriptures taught about the Christ, for Apollos had been "instructed in the way of the Lord" and he "taught about Jesus accurately."

• In 1 Corinthians Paul described Apollos as the one who watered the gospel seed that he had planted, causing the church to grow (3:5-6; compare 1:12; 3:22; 4:6; 16:12).

18:25 He spoke with great fervor

• These words of the NIV are an interpretation of the Greek text, rather than a translation.

• An accurate translation of the Greek is "fervent in spirit (or Spirit)" (compare NASB, NKJV, RSV).

• The same expression is used in Romans 12:11, where the RSV translates it "aglow with the Spirit."

• This phrase seems to indicate that Apollos has been filled with the Spirit.

• That Apollos had been filled with the Spirit is also indicated by both his ministry in Ephesus (where he "spoke with great fervor" [v. 25]) and in Corinth (where he "vigorously refuted the Jews in public debate" [v. 28]) (compare 1:8).

18:27 The brothers wrote to the disciples there

• The fact that there were disciples in Ephesus indicates that there was a church there.

• It was possibly started when Paul first visited Ephesus near the end of his second journey (18:18-21).

• The church had been nurtured through the ministries of Priscilla, Aquila, and Apollos (vv. 19, 24-26).

• The church, or part of it, possibly met in the household of Priscilla and Aquila (v. 26).

18:28 Proving from the Scriptures that Jesus was the Christ

• Like Peter (4:12), Philip (8:5), and Paul (9:22), Apollos' ministry centered on Jesus and the proclamation of the gospel.

The Story: The Ephesian Outpouring and Campaign (Acts 19:1-10)

While Apollos was ministering in Corinth, Paul set out from Phrygia and traveled westward through the interior of Asia, finally arriving at Ephesus. There he encountered twelve disciples. Without hesitation he asked them, "Did you receive the Holy Spirit when you believed?" They answered that they had not even heard about the Holy Spirit. Puzzled, Paul inquired further, "Then what baptism did you receive?" They answered, "John's baptism."

Paul then explained to them that John's baptism was a baptism of repentance, which people received in anticipation of Jesus' coming. When the twelve disciples heard this, they were rebaptized, this time in the name of the Lord Jesus. Paul then laid his hands on them, and the Holy Spirit came upon them. Then they began to speak in tongues and prophesy.

Paul then took these men and went into the Jewish synagogue, where for three months he preached boldly and argued persuasively about the kingdom of God. After a while, however, some members of the synagogue became obstinate and refused to believe what Paul was preaching. Some even slandered the Christian way.

Paul then left the synagogue and began teaching daily in the lecture hall of Tyrannus. These lectures continued for two years. Amazingly, by the end of this time, everyone who lived in the entire province of Asia, both Jews and Greeks, had heard the word of the Lord!

The Ephesian Outpouring (Acts 19:1-7)

• Paul's Ephesian campaign has been described as the chief achievement of his missionary career and the climax of his missionary work.

• Interestingly, Paul's ministry in Ephesus is the only recorded instance of his evangelistic and church planting efforts during his third missionary journey. It is as if Luke wanted to highlight this extraordinary work.

• In the Ephesian campaign, Luke sums up Paul's missionary strategy, a strategy he successfully employed throughout the Roman Empire (compare Romans 15:17-21). This strategy can serve as a model for missionary strategy today.

• Paul arrived in Ephesus with a well-thought-out goal and strategy. Paul's goal was to evangelize and establish churches throughout the Roman province of Asia (compare v. 10).

• His strategy involved three main elements, which we call pillars. The first pillar of Paul's strategy was to ensure that the Ephesian church was empowered by the Holy Spirit. This happened in the Ephesian outpouring (19:1-7).

• The Ephesian outpouring is the seventh and last key outpouring of the Holy Spirit in Acts. As with the previous six, it resulted in powerful missional witness.

• Also, as with the previous six outpourings, it demonstrates Luke's empowerment-witness motif, first presented in Acts 1:8.

• Luke's primary intent in writing Acts was to call the church of his day (and ultimately the church of our day) back to its pentecostal and missionary roots.

• The Ephesian outpouring and campaign clearly demonstrate that any church, if it will be empowered by the Spirit and remain focused on the mission of God, can become a powerful witnessing community. And it can do this even in the midst of opposition and persecution.

19:1 Ephesus

• Ephesus, the provincial capital of Asia, was a great city of about 750 thousand inhabitants.

• It was the site of the famed Temple of Artemis (Diana), one of the seven wonders of the ancient world.

• For years Paul had wanted to go to Ephesus (compare 16:6; 18:19-21).

• He knew that establishing a strong, Spirit-empowered missional church in Ephesus was the key to evangelizing all of western Asia.

There he found some disciples

• These men were true Christians. Without exception, when Luke uses the word "disciple" without any qualifying adjective, he is talking about disciples of Christ.

• Although these twelve men had been born again, they had not yet been baptized

in the Holy Spirit, as the disciples had been on the Day of Pentecost.

• They were probably members of the emerging church in Ephesus.

19:2 Did you receive the Holy Spirit when you believed?

• In asking this question, Paul was not inquiring as to the twelve disciples' salvation.

• He was rather inquiring as to their readiness to participate in the mission of reaching Ephesus and Asia with the gospel.

• A Spirit-empowered church was the first pillar of Paul's missionary strategy.

• When Paul asked this question, he could have had in mind the words of Jesus: "Stay in the city until you have been clothed with power from on high" (Luke 24:49; compare Acts 1:4-5).

19:6 Paul placed his hands on them

• Paul laid hands on the twelve disciples to help them be filled with the Spirit. He could also have been commissioning them for missional ministry.

• In Acts, the laying on of hands is often used in commissioning to ministry, as with the seven "deacons" (6:6) and Saul (9:17).

The Holy Spirit came on them

• Here, Luke intentionally uses the same wording he used in Acts 1:8 ("when the Holy Spirit comes upon you") so that his readers might understand that the Holy Spirit came upon these men just as he came on the disciples at Pentecost, not to bring about their new birth, but to empower them for witness.

• The Ephesian outpouring occurred twenty-five years after the Day of Pentecost.

• It is an appropriate example of those whom Peter described as being "far off" (2:38-39). They, too, could receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. And so can we today!

They spoke in tongues and prophesied

• These twelve men spoke in tongues and prophesied, just as the Jews had done at Pentecost and the Gentiles at Caesarea (2:4; 10:46).

• According to Luke's teaching in Acts, there are two results that one can expect when he or she is baptized in the Holy Spirit.

• The first is speaking in tongues as the Spirit enables. This is the "initial physical evidence" of one's being baptized in the Holy Spirit.

• The second is prophetic, that is, Spirit-empowered witness.

• Empowering is the first pillar in Paul's missionary strategy. This is the functional result of one's baptism in the Holy Spirit. Both results should be considered normative.

• The disciples prophesying in this instance should be understood as Spirit-empowered witness. It is a direct fulfillment of Jesus' statement in 1:8: "You will receive power... and you will be my witnesses."

The Ephesian Campaign (Acts 19:8-10)

• The Ephesian campaign directly followed the Ephesian outpouring.

• It took place over a period of about two years and resulted in every person in the Roman province of Asia hearing the gospel and in probably hundreds of churches being planted.

• In executing the Ephesian campaign, Paul was following a predetermined missionary strategy.

• Now that the church had been empowered by the Spirit, it needed to give itself to the proclamation of the gospel and the mobilization of workers to reach out to Ephesus and all of the province of Asia.

19:8 Paul spoke boldly

• Boldness is a characteristic of Spirit-empowered witness (compare Acts 4:29-31; 9:28; 13:46; 14:3; 18:26; 28:31).

• The fact that Paul preached with great boldness, even in the midst of great opposition (compare 1 Corinthians 15:32; 16:9-10), is an indication that many years after his initial infilling with the Spirit (9:17-18), he was still full of the Holy Spirit.

• Paul's ministering in the power of the Spirit is also indicated by the fact that he laid hands on others to receive the Spirit (19:6) and was used by God to work extraordinary miracles (v. 11).

• The proclamation of the gospel with signs following is the second pillar of Paul's

missionary strategy (see Figure 12.2).

About the kingdom of God

• The kingdom of God is a key theme in Luke-Acts. It is mentioned 39 times in Luke and 8 times in Acts.

19:9 He took the disciples with him

• This is likely a reference to the same twelve disciples mentioned in verse 1.

• Once these twelve men had been filled with the Holy Spirit, Paul immediately took them into the synagogue with him to preach the gospel. This is mentoring at its very best.

Discussions daily in the lecture hall of Tyrannus

• Once Paul had ensured that the church in Ephesus was empowered by the Spirit, and while he was yet proclaiming the gospel with signs following, he set up a training school for missionaries and church planters.

• This represents the third pillar of Paul's missionary strategy, mobilization (see Figure 12.2).

19:10 Two years, so that all the Jews and Greeks in the province of Asia heard the word of the Lord

• What an amazing accomplishment! In just two years everyone in Asia, even those of various cultures and ethnic backgrounds, heard the gospel.

• Many churches were planted, including the seven churches of Asia mentioned in Revelation 2-3.

• Church history reveals that Asia became a center of Christian witness for many years. All these accomplishments testify to the effectiveness of Paul's strategy.

Further Insight: Paul's Missionary Strategy

• Luke includes the story of Paul's ministry in Ephesus as his most comprehensive example of Paul's missionary strategy.

• It in effect sums up his missionary strategy demonstrated in his first and second missionary journeys.

• Paul employed this strategy in reaching all of Asia with the gospel of Christ in

just two years.

• We will do well to understand and employ this strategy in our own missionary and church planting efforts today.

• In the Ephesian campaign, Paul's strategy included three key "pillars."

Pillar One: Empowering

• The first pillar of Paul's missionary strategy was empowering (see Figure 12.2).

• This empowering was twofold. It first involved the empowering of the missionary himself. Every missionary and church planter must go to ministry full of the Holy Spirit. Empowering also involved the empowering of the churches to be planted.

• Paul entered Ephesus full of the Holy Spirit. He thus ministered as a Spirit-empowered witness in accordance with Jesus' prescription in 1:8.

• Paul understood, however, that it was not enough for him alone to be full of the Spirit. He knew that if the work was to prosper, any church he planted must also be Spirit-empowered.

• Therefore, upon arriving in Ephesus, his first order of business was to ensure that the believers in that city had been baptized in the Holy Spirit.

• That is why he asked the twelve disciples, "Did you receive the Holy Spirit when you believed?" And that is why he immediately prayed with them to receive the Spirit.

• This concern of Paul's surely remained throughout his entire time in Ephesus. Also, Paul must have persisted in his insistence that all of those who were being added to the church were also baptized in the Holy Spirit and thus empowered for witness.

• Paul must have also worked to form in his disciples this same passion to see their converts empowered by the Holy Spirit.

• Thus, the two essential aspects of the first pillar are the empowering of the missionary and, equally important, the empowering of disciples in the church being planted.

• This twofold empowering laid the spiritual groundwork for the emerging missionary work of the Ephesian church. Having been empowered, the church in

Ephesus was to become a powerful center of missionary activity, reaching out to every corner of the province.

Pillar Two: Witness (proclamation of the gospel with signs following)

• The second pillar of Paul's missionary strategy was witness. This is to be expected since witness is the spontaneous result of one's being empowered by the Spirit (1:8).

• The commentary on 19:8 names this same pillar "the proclamation of the gospel with signs following."

• As with empowering, witness also has two aspects: proclamation and demonstration.

• First, Paul bore witness to the gospel through powerful proclamation. This proclamation began in the synagogue in Ephesus, where Paul "spoke boldly there for three months, arguing persuasively about the kingdom of God" (19:8).

• He also taught "publicly and from house to house, solemnly testifying to both Jews and Greeks of repentance toward God and faith in our Lord Jesus Christ" (20:20-21, NASB).

• The second aspect of witness is demonstration. Paul's oral witness was accompanied by powerful demonstrations of kingdom power through mighty signs following (vv. 11-20; compare Romans 15:17-19).

• No doubt, the witness of Paul's newly Spirit-filled colleagues included the same two aspects.

Pillar Three: Mobilization

• The third pillar of Paul's missionary strategy was mobilization.

• Once the church had been empowered by the Spirit, and while the gospel was yet being preached and its power demonstrated, Paul began mobilizing the church for regional missions.

• This mobilization is indicated in verse 10: "This went on for two years, so that all the Jews and Greeks who lived in the province of Asia heard the word of the Lord."

• Without ever leaving Ephesus, Paul was able to reach the entire province of Asia with the gospel in just two years. This could only have been done by effectively

mobilizing the believers in Ephesus.

• As with the other two pillars, this pillar also has two aspects: training and sending.

• Paul trained workers and church planters in the school of Tyrannus. There seems to be a direct link between Paul's training and the fact that in the space of only two years, everyone living in Asia heard the word of the Lord.

• The school's curriculum must have included a strong emphasis on church planting and evangelism, and the atmosphere of the school must have been saturated with the presence of the Spirit.

• While the disciples were being trained, Paul sent them into every corner of the province to preach the gospel and plant Spirit-filled churches.

• No doubt, Paul's disciples employed the same missionary strategy as Paul.

• The application of this strategy resulted in a spontaneous multiplication of churches throughout the entire region "so that all the Jews and Greeks who lived in the province of Asia heard the word of the Lord" (19:10).

A New Testament Strategy of the Spirit

• Paul's strategy for Ephesus and Asia Minor did not originate with him. It was part of a larger New Testament strategy of the Spirit.

• Paul was simply following the example of Jesus when He sent His church into the world. And Jesus himself was following the plan that the Heavenly Father used in sending Him into the world.

• When the Father sent Jesus into the world, He sent Him with a clear mission: to redeem mankind. First, however, Jesus had to be empowered by the Spirit (compare Matthew 3:16-4:17; Mark 1:9-15; Luke 3:21-22; 4:1-14; and John 1:29-2:11).

• He then ministered in the Spirit's power, preaching the gospel and demonstrating the power of God's kingdom through signs and wonders.

• Jesus then used the same strategy in sending His church into the world. He mobilized His followers by training them and sending them out. As they went, they were to preach the gospel and to demonstrate its power with signs following.

• Before they did any of this, however, they were to wait in Jerusalem to be

empowered by the Spirit. This occurred on the Day of Pentecost and on many other occasions in Acts.

• Paul in his Ephesian campaign was simply "working the plan." He was following the example of the Father in sending Jesus into the world and of Jesus in sending His church into the world.

The Story: Further Ministry in Ephesus (Acts 19:11-41)

During Paul's time in Ephesus, God did extraordinary miracles through him. People would take cloths that had touched his body and place them on the sick, and they were cured and evil spirits left them.

One day some Jews, the seven sons of Sceva, tried to cast demons out of a man. They commanded the evil spirits to come out "in the name of Jesus, whom Paul preaches." To their surprise one of the evil spirits spoke back to them saying, "Jesus I know, and Paul I know, but who are you?" At that, the demon possessed man jumped on them and gave them a beating. When word got out about what had happened, the people of Ephesus feared and held the name of the Lord Jesus in honor. Believers then began to come forward and publicly confess their misdeeds. A number of sorcerers brought their scrolls and burned them publicly. In this way the gospel message grew in power and spread throughout the region.

Paul then decided to return to Jerusalem, passing through Achaia and Macedonia on his way. After that he planned to visit Rome. He sent Timothy and Erastus into Macedonia to prepare the way; however, he remained in Ephesus for a while.

About that time, an idol-maker named Demetrius incited a great disturbance in Ephesus. He did this because the growth of the church was beginning to hurt his business. He stirred up a large crowd by claiming that Paul was defaming the Ephesian goddess, Artemis. Soon the entire city was in an uproar, with a wild mob shouting over and over, "Great is Artemis of the Ephesians!"

The crowd then seized two of Paul's companions and dragged them into the theater. Paul himself would have followed them there, but the disciples and city officials restrained him. After about two more hours of confusion and shouting, the city clerk was able to quiet the crowd. He explained to the people how Paul and his companions had neither robbed the temple nor blasphemed the Ephesian

goddess. If Demetrius and his colleagues had a complaint against these men, he said, they could file it in the courts. He then dismissed the assembly.

Commentary on Acts 19:11-41

• Success in ministry does not always bring applause; sometimes it results in bitter opposition.

• In Ephesus so many people were coming to the Lord that the local idol-making industry was severely impaired. Because of this, the leaders of this industry stirred up a riot against the church.

Spirit-Empowered Ministry (vv. 11-20)

• Paul's ministry in Ephesus was marked by power encounters. Luke cites two examples.

• The first was the overcoming of demons through "extraordinary" means (vv. 11-12).

• The second was the almost comical result of the seven sons of Sceva's misuse of the name of Jesus (vv. 13-19).

• As a result of seeing the power of God displayed, many people turned to the Lord (v. 20).

19:11 God did extraordinary miracles

• Paul's preaching in Ephesus was accompanied by powerful manifestations of divine power.

• Note that the subject of this sentence is "God." Paul was the channel; the miracles, however, were wrought by the power of the Spirit.

• Though God can, and at times will, work such extraordinary miracles, they are not to be considered normative.

19:17 The name of the Lord Jesus was held in high honor

• The Spirit-empowered activities of Paul and others in Ephesus resulted in powerful witness. This is the predominant theme of the book of Acts.

• Because of this witness, "the word of the Lord spread widely and grew in power."

• Power encounter should be a part of our evangelistic ministries.

Riot and Vindication (vv. 12-41)

• As in every other case in Acts where the apostles were brought before the governing authorities, they were found innocent of any charges of treason or sedition.

19:23 A great disturbance about the Way

• In Ephesus the proclamation of Christ took place in the midst of great opposition.

• While there, Paul wrote his first letter to the Corinthians, where he said, "I fought wild beasts in Ephesus" (15:32), and "there are many who oppose me" (16:9).

19:26 Large numbers of people in Ephesus and in practically the whole province of Asia

• In spite of strong opposition, Paul and those he discipled continued to preach the gospel throughout the entire city and region.

• Thousands came to the Lord, and many churches were planted. Among these churches were probably the seven churches mentioned in Revelation 2-3.

The Story: Final Ministry in Europe and Asia (Acts 20:1-38)

After the riot, Paul took time to encourage the Ephesian believers. He had hoped to set off immediately for Syria; however, because of a Jewish plot against his life, he decided to go first to Macedonia. Everywhere he went along the way, he encouraged the brethren. From Macedonia he went to Greece, where he remained for three months. With Paul and Luke was an international team of missionaries, including Sopater and Secundus from Macedonia, Gaius and Timothy from Galatia, and Tychicus and Trophimus from the province of Asia. These men took a different route than Paul; however, they eventually rejoined him and Luke in Troas.

On Sunday the believers in Troas met to receive the Lord's Supper and to hear Paul speak. Because he was going to leave the next day, Paul talked until midnight. As he spoke, a young man named Eutychus became so sleepy that he

fell from the window of the third story room where they were meeting. Rushing down, they found Eutychus dead. Paul, however, threw himself on the young man and put his arms around him. "Don't be alarmed," he said to the people. "He's alive!" Greatly encouraged, the disciples went back upstairs and continued their meeting until the next morning.

From Troas Paul went by foot to Assos, where he met the missionary party that had gone ahead of him by ship. The group then proceeded to Miletus, where Paul sent for the elders of the Ephesian church to come and meet with him. Knowing that this was the last time he would see them, he spoke with great affection. He reminded them of his conduct and his trials when he was with them and how he had gone about preaching the kingdom of God and had not hesitated to teach them everything they needed to know about following Christ. He further told them that the Spirit was compelling him to go to Jerusalem. Though he had been warned through prophetic words that he would be captured and put in prison there, he knew that he had to obey the Spirit's voice. His chief desire in life was to complete the mission that the Lord Jesus had given to him and to testify concerning the gospel of God's grace. He further told the elders that he was innocent before man and God because he had not hesitated to proclaim to them the whole will of God.

Paul then instructed the Ephesian elders to remain true to God and to the calling the Spirit of God had given them. They were to be faithful shepherds of the church, which Christ had purchased with His own blood. He further warned them that "savage wolves" would soon come in and ravage the church. Some would even arise from among them. They should therefore be vigilant and guard the flock of God.

Finally, Paul committed them to God and His grace. He exhorted them to follow his example of generosity, honesty, and hard work. They were to take care of not only themselves but also the weak among them, remembering the words of Jesus, "It is more blessed to give than to receive."

After Paul had finished speaking, everyone knelt down and prayed. They began to weep and embrace and kiss Paul. What caused them the most grief was Paul's statement that they would never see his face again. They then escorted him to the ship, where they bade him farewell.

Commentary on Acts 20:1-38

• Paul, during his stay in Ephesus of over two years, had established a strong church in the city and throughout the province of Asia. He had done this by applying his missionary strategy of the Spirit.

• In the process he had mentored and trained many leaders with whom he had formed strong bonds of affection. These bonds are seen in this story.

• Also seen is a glimpse of some important elements of Paul's teaching ministry. His pastoral concern for the Ephesian elders, and for those to whom they were called to minister, is evident.

• At the heart of all that he said and did was his unswerving commitment to the calling he received from Christ. Paul must have transferred that same commitment to these elders.

• Jesus said, "Everyone who is fully trained will be like his teacher" (Luke 6:40).

• Paul continued to move under the Spirit's direction. It was the Spirit of God who was directing him to go to Jerusalem and eventually to Rome (v. 22; compare 19:21).

International Missionary Team (vv. 1-6)

• Paul often moved with others in missionary teams. Many times those teams were international in makeup.

• We see a similar thing happening today. Missions has come full circle. It is now from all nations to all nations.

• Twenty-first century missionaries are often called upon to work in international teams. This requires that today's missionaries know how to relate cross-culturally not only with their host cultures but also with others on their missionary team.

20:2 Speaking many words of encouragement

• Again, we see Paul's pastoral heart. Everywhere Paul went, he encouraged the saints in those places.

20:4 He was accompanied

• In Paul's missionary team were men of at least four different nationalities.

• These men were traveling with Paul to help deliver the relief funds to the church in Jerusalem.

• They also, no doubt, assisted Paul in his missionary ministry along the way.

Eutychus Raised from the Dead (vv. 7-12)

• During Paul's short stay in Troas (where he had many years earlier received his Macedonian vision), the church met to receive the Lord's Supper and to hear the apostle's words of exhortation.

20:10-12 He's alive!

• The raising of Eutychus was indeed an outstanding miracle. As a result of this miracle "the people... were greatly comforted."

• Divine healing not only alerts sinners to the power of the gospel but also brings blessing and comfort to believers.

Farewell to the Ephesian Elders (20:13-38)

• Paul's farewell address to the Ephesian elders is one of the most moving speeches in Scripture.

• His words are full of emotion and concern for these fellow workers. They reveal Paul's great heart, a heart filled with love for Christ and His church, and his great commitment to the cause of Christ.

20:17 The elders of the church

• These are men whom Paul had trained and mentored during his two-year stay in Ephesus.

• They were now leaders in the church and were training and shepherding others.

• One of the greatest ways a missionary or pastor can extend his ministry is through the training and mentoring of others.

20:20 Publicly and from house to house

• Paul did not limit his teaching and preaching to public settings only.

• His passion to communicate Christ also took him from house to house preaching and teaching the message of Christ.

20:22 Compelled by the Spirit

• As had been the case so often in his ministry, Paul was directed by the Holy Spirit to do as he did (compare 11:28-30; 13:1-4; 16:6-10).

• Paul did not proceed to Jerusalem with no knowledge of what was to come. The Holy Spirit had given him ample warning of how prison and hardships awaited there (v. 23; compare 21:4, 11).

• Again, the Holy Spirit acted as the Superintendent of the Harvest.

20:24 If only I may finish the race

• Paul was not moved by threat of hardship or even death.

• He was moved by an intense desire to complete the task that the Lord Jesus had given him: to preach the gospel to those who had never heard (compare Romans 15:20).

20:27 The whole will of God

• While we are to preach the gospel to the lost, we are required to teach "the whole counsel of God" (NKJV, that is, the complete teachings of the Bible) to the church.

20:28 The Holy Spirit has made you overseers

• Pastors and elders are to realize that it is the Holy Spirit who made them overseers and shepherds of the church, which Christ purchased with His own blood.

• They must, therefore, look to Christ and then to the Word of God for direction about how they should conduct their ministries.

• They must never forget that church leaders will be held accountable to God for how they do their work (Romans 14:12; Hebrews 13:17; James 1:3).

20:33 I have not coveted anyone's silver or gold or clothing

• Those ministers of the gospel who love money have disqualified themselves from effective Christian service.

• Paul was not motivated by the love of money or fine clothes. He was motivated by the Spirit of God and by love for Christ and the ones for whom He died.

• Paul wrote to Timothy, his son in the faith: "Some people, eager for money, have wandered from the faith and pierced themselves with many griefs. But you, man

of God, flee from all this, and pursue righteousness, godliness, faith, love, endurance and gentleness" (1 Timothy 6:10-11).

• This is the way for true ministers of Christ.

Conclusion

• So ends the story of Paul's three missionary journeys. It does not, however, end the apostle's passion to take the gospel "where Christ was not known" (Romans 15:20).

• Paul still hoped to visit Jerusalem, and from there travel to Rome (Acts 19:21; Romans 1:15). From Rome he hoped to take the gospel even farther westward into Spain (Romans 15:24, 28).

• Paul would, indeed, visit Rome, but not as he had originally planned. He would visit as a prisoner.

• In the next two chapters we will look at Paul's visits and ministry in Jerusalem and Rome.

Figure 12.1: Paul's Third Missionary Journey

Figure 12.1. The route of Paul's third missionary journey, as named in this chapter. The journey began in Antioch and moved through pastoral visits, the Ephesian campaign, and final ministry in Europe and Asia toward Jerusalem.

• Antioch: After spending some time in Antioch, Paul set out. Unlike his first two journeys, we are not told if he took anyone with him.

• Phrygia and Galatia: A second pastoral visit. In each place he traveled, he strengthened the disciples.

• Interior of Asia: Paul set out from Phrygia and traveled westward through the interior of Asia.

• Ephesus: The twelve disciples receive the Spirit. Paul teaches two years in the lecture hall of Tyrannus. All in the province of Asia hear the word of the Lord.

• Macedonia: After the riot, because of a Jewish plot, Paul goes first to Macedonia, encouraging the brethren along the way.

• Greece: He remains three months. An international team travels with Paul and

Luke.

• Troas: The church meets for the Lord's Supper. Eutychus falls and is raised. The disciples are greatly comforted.

• Assos and Miletus: Paul meets the party at Assos, then sends for the Ephesian elders at Miletus. The Spirit is compelling him to go to Jerusalem.

Figure 12.2: Missionary Strategy

Figure 12.2. The three pillars of Paul's missionary strategy, as Luke sums them up in the Ephesian campaign.

• Empowering: Twofold: the empowering of the missionary himself, and the empowering of the churches to be planted. A Spirit-empowered church was the first pillar.

• Proclamation of the gospel with signs following: The second pillar. In the Further Insight section this pillar is also called witness, with two aspects: proclamation and demonstration.

• Mobilization: The third pillar, with two aspects: training and sending. Paul trained workers in the school of Tyrannus and sent them into every corner of the province.

Important Terms

Ephesian outpouring. The seventh and last key outpouring of the Holy Spirit in Acts, when the Spirit came on the twelve disciples in Ephesus.

Empowering. The first pillar of Paul's missionary strategy: the missionary and the church being planted must both be full of the Holy Spirit.

Proclamation of the gospel with signs following. The second pillar: preach the gospel, and God confirms the word with demonstrations of kingdom power.

Mobilization. The third pillar: train workers and send them out so the whole region can hear the gospel.

Initial physical evidence. Speaking in tongues as the Spirit enables, the first result Luke teaches we can expect when a person is baptized in the Holy Spirit.

Empowerment-witness motif. Luke's repeated pattern from Acts 1:8: the Spirit

comes, and witness follows.

Lecture hall of Tyrannus. The place in Ephesus where Paul taught daily for two years, training missionaries and church planters.

Spirit-empowered missional church. A church filled with the Spirit that can carry the gospel out into the region around it.

Key People

• Paul: Begins the third journey from Antioch, often at first alone. In Ephesus he prays with the twelve to receive the Spirit, teaches two years in the hall of Tyrannus, and is later compelled by the Spirit toward Jerusalem.

• Apollos: A learned man from Alexandria, Egypt, with a thorough knowledge of the Scriptures. He had received only the baptism of John, yet taught about Jesus accurately. Priscilla and Aquila taught him more thoroughly. He later strengthened the church in Achaia.

• Priscilla and Aquila: Heard Apollos in the Ephesian synagogue, took him aside, and taught him the ways of God more thoroughly. The church, or part of it, possibly met in their household.

• The twelve disciples: True Christians in Ephesus who had been born again but had not yet been baptized in the Holy Spirit. Paul laid hands on them, the Spirit came on them, and they spoke in tongues and prophesied.

• The seven sons of Sceva: Jews who tried to cast out demons "in the name of Jesus, whom Paul preaches." The evil spirit answered, "Jesus I know, and Paul I know, but who are you?" and the possessed man beat them.

• Demetrius: An idol-maker who incited a great disturbance because the growth of the church was hurting his business. He claimed Paul was defaming the Ephesian goddess, Artemis.

• Eutychus: A young man in Troas who fell from a third-story window while Paul spoke until midnight. They found him dead. Paul threw himself on him, and he was alive. The people were greatly comforted.

• The Ephesian elders: Men Paul had trained and mentored during his two-year stay. He sent for them at Miletus, warned them of savage wolves, and committed them to God and His grace.

• The international missionary team: With Paul and Luke: Sopater and Secundus from Macedonia, Gaius and Timothy from Galatia, and Tychicus and Trophimus from the province of Asia. Men of at least four different nationalities, traveling to help deliver relief funds to Jerusalem.

Key Places

• Antioch: Where Paul began his third missionary journey after an extended stay, his final journey in Acts.

• Phrygia and Galatia: The journey began with a second pastoral visit here. In each place Paul strengthened the disciples.

• Ephesus: Provincial capital of Asia, about 750 thousand inhabitants, site of the Temple of Artemis (Diana). Scene of the Ephesian outpouring and a two-year campaign.

• Lecture hall of Tyrannus: Where Paul taught daily for two years, training missionaries and church planters.

• The province of Asia: Paul's goal was to evangelize and establish churches throughout this Roman province. In two years all the Jews and Greeks there heard the word of the Lord.

• Macedonia and Greece: After the riot Paul went first to Macedonia, then to Greece for three months, encouraging the brethren along the way.

• Troas: Where the church met for the Lord's Supper, Eutychus was raised, and years earlier Paul had received the Macedonian vision.

• Miletus: Where Paul sent for the Ephesian elders, spoke his farewell, and was compelled by the Spirit to go to Jerusalem.

Key Event

The Ephesian outpouring: Paul lays his hands on the twelve disciples, the Holy Spirit comes on them, and they speak in tongues and prophesy (Acts 19:6).

This is the seventh and last key outpouring of the Holy Spirit in Acts. Luke uses the same wording as Acts 1:8 so readers will understand that the Spirit came on these men as at Pentecost, not to bring about their new birth, but to empower them for witness. It launches the Ephesian campaign.

Key Verse

"When Paul placed his hands on them, the Holy Spirit came on them, and they spoke in tongues and prophesied."

Acts 19:6

Remember This

• Paul's concern for people did not end when he led them to the Lord.

• The Ephesian outpouring is the seventh key outpouring in Acts.

• Boldness is a characteristic of Spirit-empowered witness.

• Power encounter should be a part of our evangelistic ministries.

• Missions is now from all nations to all nations.

Life Application: Go Forward Even If You Begin Alone

• Sometimes in gospel ministry we must "go it alone" as did Paul at the beginning of his third missionary journey.

• At such times, we must not be tempted to withdraw or shirk our responsibilities to God. We must press forward to the work.

• If we will be faithful to do the work that the Lord assigns us, even when we have to do it alone, in His time He will bring companions to our side to help us.

• Although Paul began this journey alone, before it was completed he had a large team of workers with him (compare 20:4).

Life Application: Mentor Individuals in the Faith

• When public or classroom teaching is not sufficient, sometimes we must do as Priscilla and Aquila did with Apollos.

• We must personally instruct certain individuals and mentor them in the faith and in ministry.

• We must do this so that they might more clearly understand the gospel and their responsibility in spreading it.

Life Application: Use a Biblically Based Strategy

• We as missionaries and church planters must approach our work with a well-thought-out, biblically-based strategy. Everything we do must be focused and intentional.

• Our labors must be aimed at planting Spirit-empowered missional churches.

• To do this, we must make sure that we enter ministry full of the Holy Spirit, and we must further ensure that the people we lead to Christ and the churches we plant have also been empowered by the Spirit.

• Only then will these believers and churches have the spiritual dynamic necessary to spread the gospel to the surrounding areas.

• Further, we must preach the gospel in the power of the Spirit, expecting Christ to confirm His word with signs following.

• Finally, we must carefully mobilize the churches we plant for further missional ministry. We can do this through focused intentional training and the effective sending and placement of those who have been trained.

Life Application: Expect Opposition

• When we enter new areas to preach Christ, we can expect opposition, especially if we are successful.

• Local religious and business leaders will often rise to oppose our efforts to establish the church in their area.

• In such cases we should not be deterred. We must stay full of the Spirit and remain focused on the task that God has given us.

• As we do, we can expect God to confirm the preaching of the gospel with miraculous signs.

Life Application: Stay Faithful to the Calling

• As ministers of the gospel, our chief desire in life must be to be faithful to the calling we have received from Christ.

• We can do this only if we will keep our motives pure, live holy lives, remain full of the Spirit, and stay true to the Word of God.

• Every minister of the gospel must be steadfast in prayer and always open to the voice of the Spirit.

Textbook Review and Application

• 1. From where did Paul begin his third missionary journey? Who went with him? Did this affect his outlook or ministerial effectiveness?

• 2. Luke's terminology in verse 6, "the Holy Spirit came on them," reminds us of what promise in Acts 1:8?

• 3. What was Paul's first question to these men when he arrived in Ephesus? What was his purpose in asking the question?

• 4. List and describe the three pillars of Paul's missionary strategy.

• 5. What type of cross-cultural challenges might face international missionary teams today? Why is it so important to meet these challenges successfully?

Quick Review

1. From where did Paul begin his third missionary journey, and who went with him?

Answer: He began from Antioch. Unlike his first two journeys, we are not told if he took anyone with him. Beginning alone did not stop the work: before the journey was completed he had a large team with him (compare 20:4).

2. Which of the seven key outpourings is the Ephesian outpouring?

Answer: The seventh and last key outpouring of the Holy Spirit in Acts. It occurred twenty-five years after the Day of Pentecost.

3. What was Paul's first question to the twelve men in Ephesus, and why did he ask it?

Answer: "Did you receive the Holy Spirit when you believed?" He was not inquiring as to their salvation. He was inquiring as to their readiness to participate in the mission of reaching Ephesus and Asia with the gospel.

4. What are the three pillars of Paul's missionary strategy?

Answer: Empowering; proclamation of the gospel with signs following (also called witness); and mobilization.

5. How long did Paul teach in the lecture hall of Tyrannus, and what was the

result?

Answer: Two years, so that all the Jews and Greeks in the province of Asia heard the word of the Lord.

Chapter Summary

The Ephesian outpouring is the seventh and last key outpouring of the Holy Spirit in Acts. In the Ephesian campaign, Luke sums up Paul's missionary strategy in three pillars: empowering, proclamation of the gospel with signs following, and mobilization.

• Paul began the third journey from Antioch. Unlike his first two journeys, we are not told if he took anyone with him. He first strengthened the disciples in Phrygia and Galatia.

• In Ephesus the Spirit came on twelve disciples (Acts 19:6). Paul then taught two years in the lecture hall of Tyrannus, and all in the province of Asia heard the word of the Lord.

• The Spirit later compelled Paul toward Jerusalem. At Miletus he charged the Ephesian elders to shepherd the church Christ purchased with His own blood.

Enter ministry full of the Spirit, plant Spirit-empowered missional churches, preach the gospel expecting signs following, and mobilize trained workers to reach the whole region.

ONE-SENTENCE MEMORY

Paul begins the third journey from Antioch, the Spirit is poured out on the twelve in Ephesus, and a two-year campaign using three strategy pillars reaches all of Asia.