

Equipping Hour

Antioch: The Sending Church

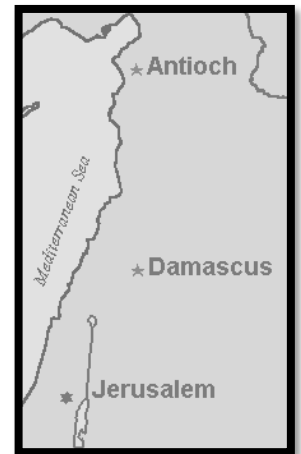
Key Verse: Acts 11:19

“So then those who were scattered because of the persecution that occurred in connection with Stephen made their way to Phoenicia and Cyprus and Antioch, speaking the word to no one except to Jews alone.”

Overview

We don't have great details about the church at Antioch, but what we do have is of great benefit to the church. This is an exemplary church that understands the importance of proclaiming the gospel.

Antioch was the name of 16 cities located around the Mediterranean basin, two of which are named in the New Testament—Antioch of Pisidia and Antioch of Syria. This church was located in Antioch of Syria, also called Antioch on the Orontes because of its location on the Orontes River. The city was located about 300 miles north of Jerusalem and 20 miles inland from the Mediterranean. It had its own Mediterranean seaport called Seleucia Pieria. Economically, the city was thriving as it was in a prominent location on the main route for east-west commercial traffic.



The city was founded around 300 BC by Seleucus Nicator and was the third largest city of the Roman Empire. It was the capital of Syria with a population of well over 500,000. The city was well known as a prominent centre of Hellenistic culture (Jewish religion combined with Greek culture) and many of Antioch's Gentiles were attracted to Judaism.

Religiously, Antioch's patron deity was the pagan goddess Tyche ("Fortune"). The people also worshipped at the temple of Daphne, which was located about five miles outside the city. There was much cultic prostitution in the city giving her the title 'The Heathen Queen.' However, it was also at Antioch that the believers were first called Christians (Acts 11:26).

The Church Had Boldness

1. Acts 11:26. What were the believers called in Antioch? _____
 - a. What does it mean? _____
2. Acts 26:28. What became of the title "Christian"? _____
3. Acts 11:19. What caused the spread of the gospel in Antioch? _____

The Church Had Growth

1. Acts 11:20–21. Why was the church growing? _____
2. Acts 11:23–24. Who preached to the growing church? _____
3. Acts 12:24 –13:1. What was God doing with His word? _____

The Church Had Spirit-Led Leaders

1. Acts 11:24. How is Barnabas described? _____
2. Acts 11:28. How did Agabus prophesy to the church? _____
3. Acts 13:2–8. How were Paul and Barnabas called and sent out? _____

The Church Had a Commitment to Biblical Preaching

1. Acts 11:19. What was the mission to the Jews in Antioch? _____
2. Acts 11:20. What was the mission to the Greeks in Antioch? _____
3. Acts 11:23. What did Barnabas first preach to the believers? _____
4. Acts 11:25–26. What did Paul and Barnabas do for one year? _____
5. Acts 13:2–5. Why did the church send Paul and Barnabas? _____
6. Acts 15:35. What did Paul and Barnabas do after returning to Antioch? _____

The Church Had Doctrinal Discernment

1. Acts 15:1–2. What were the men from Jerusalem teaching? _____

2. Acts 15:7–11. What were the results of the Jerusalem Council? _____
3. Acts 15:30–31. How did the Christians in Antioch respond? _____

The Church Had a Giving Heart

1. Acts 11:19. What did the church at Jerusalem give to the church at Antioch? _____
2. Acts 11:27–30. What did the church at Antioch do for the church at Jerusalem? _____

3. Acts 6:36–37. Who did the church learn this generosity from? _____

The Church Had an Evangelistic Zeal

1. Acts 13:1–4. Who did the church send out to preach the gospel? _____
2. What do we learn from this evangelistic process?
 - a. The sending process was initiated by _____
 - b. The church submitted to _____
 - c. The church, in obedience, gave up _____
 - d. The call to evangelize came in the midst of _____
 - e. The church continued to send out Paul and Barnabas because they were _____
 - f. The church always sent them out in teams, giving them _____

“This [Acts 11:19] is a crucial hinge in the Acts account. For the first time the church actively proselytized Gentiles. Here the church took the first steps to take the message to uncircumcised Greeks.” —John F. Walvoord

Application

1. What can we learn about doctrinal discernment from the church at Antioch?
2. What can we learn from the outreach ministry at Antioch?
3. What can you learn personally from the Christians at Antioch and apply to your life?