Lesson 1 – ACTS 11:19-26 – A Multicultural Assembly

Lesson 2 – ACTS 11/13/15 – A Teaching-Preaching Assembly

46 AD Acts 11:19 Now those who had been scattered by the persecution in connection with Stephen traveled as far as Phoenicia, Cyprus and Antioch, telling the message only to Jews. 20 Some of them, however, men from Cyprus and Cyrene, went to Antioch and began to speak to Greeks also, telling them the good news about the Lord Jesus.

46 AD Acts 11:25 Then Barnabas went to Tarsus to look for Saul, 26 and when he found him, he brought him to Antioch. So for a whole year Barnabas and Saul met with the church and taught great numbers of people. The disciples were called Christians first at Antioch.

47 AD Acts 13:1 In the church at Antioch there were prophets and teachers: Barnabas, Simeon called Niger, Lucius of Cyrene, Manaen (who had been brought up with Herod the tetrarch) and Saul.

48 AD Acts 15:1 Some men came down from Judea to Antioch and were teaching the brothers: "Unless you are circumcised, according to the custom taught by Moses, you cannot be saved." 2 This brought Paul and Barnabas into sharp dispute and debate with them. So Paul and Barnabas were appointed, along with some other believers, to go up to Jerusalem to see the apostles and elders about this question. —— 30 The men were sent off and went down to Antioch, where they gathered the church together and delivered the letter. 31 The people read it and were glad for its encouraging message. 32 Judas and Silas, who themselves were prophets, said much to encourage and strengthen the brothers. 33 After spending some time there, they were sent off by the brothers with the blessing of peace to return to those who had sent them. 35 But Paul and Barnabas remained in Antioch, where they and many others taught and preached the word of the Lord.

The Emphasis on Teaching Then

1. They were telling the gospel

Acts 11:20 Some of them, however, men from Cyprus and Cyrene, went to Antioch and began to speak to Greeks also, telling them the good news about the Lord Jesus.

- ► The good news of Jesus included his (1) **deity** – (2) **sinlessness** – (3) **atoning death** – (4) **resurrection** – (5) **ascension** – (6) **promised return** – (7) **universal call**.
- ► The great commission of Jesus was being fulfilled at Antioch, as preachers were declaring the gospel to all people groups, resulting in the building of a diverse body.

2. They were teaching for growth

Acts 11:26 For a whole year Barnabas and Saul met with the church and taught great numbers of people.

- ► There were "prophets and teachers" (Acts 13:1) who "taught and preached the word of the Lord" (Acts 15:35) — they educated and explained, exhorted and encouraged.
- ► This was early in the life of the Church — there was no written New Testament — Paul had not yet written his first Bible letter (Galatians) — their teaching included:
  (1) the **teachings of Jesus** as preserved by the Twelve Apostles who had been with Jesus from the beginning of his ministry (Acts 1:21-22; Acts 20:35);
  (2) the **explaining of the Old Testament Scriptures** in light of Jesus the Messiah (John 5:39; Luke 24:25-27; Acts 17:2; Acts 18:28); and
  (3) **revelation from God** given by the Holy Spirit (John 16:13; Galatians 1:12).
- ► The "word of the Lord" preached and taught to these new believers moved them toward maturity and produced:
  (1) **confidence** in the person and work of Jesus;
  (2) **compliance** with the instructions of Jesus;
  (3) **comfort** from the promises and assurances of Jesus;
  (4) **commitment** to the plans and priorities of Jesus; and
  (5) **conformity** to the character and likeness of Jesus to the extent that "The disciples were called Christians first at Antioch" (Acts 11:26).

3. They were teachers on guard

Acts 15:1 Some men came down from Judea to Antioch and were teaching the brothers: "Unless you are circumcised, according to the custom taught by Moses, you cannot be saved." 2 This brought Paul and Barnabas into sharp dispute and debate with them.

- ► False teachers in the New Testament church came with two primary emphases: (1) **adding requirements** for salvation; and (2) promoting **sinful living** as acceptable.
- ► Paul and Barnabas and their teaching partners were on guard – **recognizing** false teaching – **refuting** false teaching – and **rebuking** false teachers.

4. They were teaching for greater growth

Acts 15:35 Paul and Barnabas remained in Antioch, where they and many others taught and preached the word of the Lord.

The Emergency Essentiality of Teaching Today

1. There are great challenges

► There's a deceiving and devouring devil

1 Peter 5:8 Your enemy the devil prowls around like a roaring lion looking for someone to devour.

► There are distracted and disinterested and disobedient disciples

2 Timothy 4:3 The time will come when men will not put up with sound doctrine. Instead, to suit their own desires, they will gather around them a great number of teachers to say what their itching ears want to hear.

► There are dangerous and destructive doctrines

1 Timothy 4:1 The Spirit clearly says that in later times some will abandon the faith and follow deceiving spirits and things taught by demons.

(1) Believers are falling from their secure position because of error (2 Peter 3:17) and are being destroyed from lack of knowledge (Hosea 4:6).
(2) The critical and time-sensitive responsibility for reaching the lost is being neglected due to the forsaking of Bible truths about sin, salvation, and eternity (John 4:35).
(3) Christians are falling far short of their spiritual potential because of their ignorance of God's promises and provisions revealed in Scripture (2 Peter 1:3).

2. There are great charges from God

► The charge to preachers in the pulpit

Acts 6:3 "We will turn this responsibility over to them 4 and will give our attention to prayer and the ministry of the word."

2 Timothy 2:15 Do your best to present yourself to God as one approved, a workman who does not need to be ashamed and who correctly handles the word of truth.

2 Timothy 4:2 Preach the Word; be prepared in season and out of season; correct, rebuke and encourage--with great patience and careful instruction.

► The charge to people in the pews

2 Peter 3:17-18 be on your guard so that you may not be carried away by the error of lawless men and fall from your secure position. 18 But grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

Colossians 3:16 Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly as you teach and admonish one another…

(1) We must recognize the privilege of having a complete, written Bible—God's Word provided to us through the ministry of His Spirit-inspired apostles and prophets.
(2) We must consume the Word of God at every opportunity, availing ourselves, young and old alike, of self-study, preaching services, and teaching ministries.
(3) We must incorporate God's Word into every aspect of our lives and living, applying the Scripture accurately and actively, and humbling ourselves before its truth.
(4) We must diligently preach the gospel to unbelievers, testifying to its power, then giving ourselves to preaching and teaching God's Word to build up believers.

First-Century Antioch, Syria

▼ *Capital city of the Roman province of Syria*

▼ *World's third largest city, after Rome and Alexandria (there were 16 cities bearing the name* Antioch *in the first-century world, including Antioch in Pisidia where Paul planted a church in Acts 13:14)*

▼ *First-century population estimates from 500,000 to 750,000*

▼ *15 miles from the Mediterranean coast, but accessible via the Orontes River; a major trade center and cultural crossroads*

▼ *Greek paganism prevailed, but a large Jewish population also thrived*

▼ *300 miles north of Jerusalem*

▼ *Became the center of world missions for first-century Christianity*