

A Church-Centered View of Missions

Outposts Sunday School Class, CMC, Summer '25

I. Obedience to the Great Commission

*Did the disciples OBEY Christ's Great Commission (Matt. 28:19-20)? The **book of Acts** answers that question with a resounding YES!*

Theme Verse of the Book of Acts – Acts 1:8: *"you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be My witnesses both in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and even to the remotest part of the earth."*

- A. The geographic locations serve as an outline of Acts:¹
 - Chapters 1-7: *the witness in Jerusalem*
 - Chapter 8: *the witness in Judea and Samaria*
 - Chapters 9-28: *the witness to the remotest part of the earth*
- B. An alternative outline of the book of Acts:
 - Acts 1-12: the ministry of **Peter**
 - Acts 13-28: the ministry of **Paul**

II. Peter

- A. The entrusted leader of the Great Commission (Acts 1:15, Acts 2)
- B. The Great Re-Commission (John 21)
 - Called from a life and career of fishing (Luke 5:8-11)
 - Chosen as Christ's servant to build His church: *"I will build my church!"* (Matt. 16:18)
 - Commissioned to pastoral ministry: *"Feed My sheep"* (John 21:12-19).
- C. The establishment of the church (Acts 2:41-42)
- D. The expansion of the church (Acts 4:4; 5:14; 6:7)

III. Paul

- A. Dramatically converted on the road to Damascus (Acts 9:1-6)
- B. Chosen as God's instrument to *"bear My name before the Gentiles and kings and the sons of Israel"* (Acts 9:15)
- C. Immediately begins to proclaim Christ (Acts 9:19-20)

¹Greg John's sermon and handout *"Acts and the Apostolic Age"*, September 17, 2023.

D. Begins to shepherd in the church in Antioch with Barnabas (Acts 11)

E. The Holy Spirit uses the church in Antioch to launch Paul's 1st missionary journey (Acts 13-14)

A snapshot of Paul and Barnabas' ministry model in Acts 14:21-28 give a basic template of healthy, biblical missionary work:

- V. 21. They preached the Gospel in the city and made disciples (*evangelism*).
- V. 22. They strengthened the souls of the disciples and encouraged them to continue in the faith (*equipping, pastoral care, accountability in the local church*).
- V. 23. They appointed elders at every church (*churches are planted with qualified men trained to shepherd, churches are set on the path of maturity*).
- V. 26. They returned to their sending church in Antioch, gave a report and spent time in fellowship with the disciples (*missionaries are sent by and accountable to a local church*).

This reiterates the conclusion that the goal of the Great Commission is local churches establishing and equipping local churches for the maturation of believers, for God's glory (Gal. 4:19; Phil. 1:9-11).

IV. The book of Acts presses on with progress reports that all yield the same affirmation: ***God's missions program is the Church*** (cf. 13:49; 16:5; 19:20; 28:30-31).

→ "So **the churches** were being strengthened in the faith, and were increasing in number daily." (16:5)

The book of Acts displays that obedience to the Great Commission is a single-minded devotion to planting and strengthening churches.²

- **In Jerusalem:** The birth of the church; 3,000 souls saved, baptized and added; foundational commitments and activities of church life (2:41-42; 5:11; 8:1).
- **In Antioch:** Believers scattered by persecution went to Antioch and preached the Gospel; many were saved; the Jerusalem church sent Paul and Barnabas to strengthen the church (11:20-26).
- **In Lystra and Iconium:** Paul and Barnabas taught and strengthened the souls of the disciples and appointed elders in every church (14:21-28).
- **In Corinth:** Many believed the message and were baptized (18:8).
- **In Ephesus:** Paul baptized a small group, taught them for 3 years, and elders were appointed in the church (19:1-7; 20:17-32).

→ The NT pattern of missions: Wherever the Gospel goes, churches are planted!

→ **Conclusion:** *A biblical view of missions IS a church-centered view of missions. In this world, the church of the living God is THE pillar and support of THE truth! (1 Tim. 3:15).*

² Mark Dever, *Understanding the Great Commission*, (Nashville, TN: B&H Publishing Group), 18-19.