

Acts 13

Up to this point in time the church in Jerusalem has been the central hub of Christianity, since the crucifixion of Christ. We talked about the next (and still current) set of instructions that Jesus provided in Matthew 28.

¹⁸ Then Jesus came to them and said, “All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. ¹⁹ Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, ²⁰ and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age.” (Matthew 28)

God uses our intentions and our errors equally. The church still remained pretty centralized in Jerusalem until the religious persecutions set in. The actions of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost and the extreme persecutions from the religious legalistic Jews caused the church to spread out all over the world. The persecutions were bad enough to spread the saints around to different countries and provinces to impact the outside world. Christianity is not a smorgasbord. When we pass on a mandate as if it was optional things begin to downgrade. Any church that remains inwardly focused stagnates and gradually dies.

One of the first churches to be set up outside of Jerusalem was Antioch. Antioch really became more of the hub of the church than Jerusalem at that time.



To remain a healthy Christian, you have to change with the new actions of the Holy Spirit. The church is changing. Jerusalem is still important; but now 95% of the New Testament will be based on what the *Field Command* in Antioch does. The church is becoming decentralized. In addition, the key leaders are making personal changes. We act as part of an *organism* by our attachment and communication with God individually, and yet it produces a perfect collective result. We have to be willing to let the old self die, and re-define ourselves.

Saul is changing his name to a less Jewish name, to Paul. Paul is a Roman name, and will be better for the work that lies ahead.

To the Jews I became as a Jew, so that I might win Jews; to those who are under the Law, as under the Law though not being myself under the Law, so that I might win those who are under the Law; ²¹ to those who are without law, as without law, though not being without the law of God but under the law of Christ, so that I might win those who are without law. ²² To the weak I became weak, that I might win the weak; I have become all things to all men, so that I may by all means save some. ²³ I do all things for the sake of the gospel, so that I may become a fellow partaker of it. (1 Corinthians 9)

This is a universal concept. Form should follow function; not visa versa. Even the US Military changes their arsenal according to the field conditions to be more effective. The F-15 fighter jet is a perfect example.

The **F-15 Eagle** has undergone numerous updates and changes since its inception in the early 1970s. Here's a detailed list of the significant variants and modifications:

VARIANT/UPDATE	KEY FEATURES AND CHANGES
F-15A/B	- Original single-seat (A) and two-seat (B) models.- Early air superiority fighter introduced in 1974.- Equipped with the Hughes APG-63 radar.
F-15C/D	- Introduced in 1979 to replace A/B variants.- Enhanced range and payload with added internal fuel.- Improved avionics and countermeasures systems.
F-15E Strike Eagle	- Variant for all-weather, air-to-ground capabilities.- Dual-role fighter for both air-to-air and strike missions.- APG-70 radar for enhanced targeting.
Multi-Stage Improvement Program (MSIP)	- Upgraded radar, avionics, and weapons systems to enhance combat effectiveness.- Maintained a focus on air superiority roles.
F-15C/D upgrades	- Introduction of AESA radar (AN/APG-63(V)3) in 2010, improving target detection and tracking capabilities.- Enhanced mission computer and digital systems.
Talon Hate Pod	- An IRST sensor and low probability of intercept datalink developed for increased stealth and target acquisition in 2016.
F-15EX Eagle II	- Latest variant designed for integration with unmanned systems.- Modern sensors, improved avionics for future combat roles.- Expanded payload capacity.
Stealth Upgrades	- Proposed stealth designs like the F-15 Silent Eagle with stealthy conformal fuel tanks (CFTs) and internal weapons bays.- Engineering improvements for reduced radar cross-section.

VARIANT/UPDATE	KEY FEATURES AND CHANGES
Tactical Electronic Warfare	- Enhanced electronic warfare systems to improve survivability and combat effectiveness against advanced threats.
Legion Pod	- Introduced for passive detection capabilities, enabling long-range engagements without revealing positions.
Operational Upgrades	- Continuous refinements to ensure performance meets modern combat demands, including structural improvements and systems integration updates.

The point is that Paul learning how to become all things to all men. He will become much happier to lose himself to God's new identity. It is not so much about being holy as much as it is about building up others. Whatever personal transformation is needed to accomplish this is what must be done. The church is changing radically; and so are the saints.

Paul and Barnabas travel from city to city, stopping in at the local synagogues to preach the gospel. They are greeted with interest to hear about events around the world. There are no newspapers, so any traveler can obtain a crowd. They can carry a letter from Jerusalem or Antioch with them to start things off from the pulpit. They begin their messages by summarizing the Old Testament history in a *Jesus-centric* way. They would probably begin with the story of Abraham, and emphasize how he would have *a spiritual seed* who would obtain salvation, yet be for of all nations. As they moved forward in time they described what Moses experienced. They point out that Moses told them that *a prophet like him would come one day, and that they should listen to him*. Similarly, they rehearsed the history of King David, and emphasized that *a future King of the Jews would establish an everlasting Kingdom*. These agreed-upon truths would create a great transition for the one who fulfilled all of these prophecies.

Read Acts 13:1-4: We hear very little about the Jerusalem church going forward. This is the first detailed account of significant church activity outside of Israel. The church culture was entirely different in Antioch than it was in Jerusalem. The Jerusalem church was *majoring in the minors*. They were becoming too focused on the rituals and the Law. This was getting in the way of putting the Gentile converts above themselves. Even today, in Israel, the Messianic movement is growing the most with the Jews who have lived in foreign cultures. Form can unknowingly replace function in the church.

Churches who are outreach-oriented are too busy to fuss over particulars. Members are more free to worship the LORD and not worry about protocols.

¹¹ When Cephas came to Antioch, I opposed him to his face, because he stood condemned. ¹² For before certain men came from James, he used to eat with the Gentiles. But when they arrived, he began to draw back and separate himself from the Gentiles because he was afraid of those who

belonged to the circumcision group. ¹³ The other Jews joined him in his hypocrisy, so that by their hypocrisy even Barnabas was led astray. ¹⁴ When I saw that they were not acting in line with the truth of the gospel, I said to Cephas in front of them all, “You are a Jew, yet you live like a Gentile and not like a Jew. How is it, then, that you force Gentiles to follow Jewish customs? (Galatians 2:11-14)

All of the action now has moved to the missionary field abroad. Antioch was loaded with assets for church planting expeditions. Here are a few notable features of Antioch:

- Had notable members
 - Simeon/Niger
 - Lucius of Cyrene
 - Manaen (Herod's childhood friend)
 - Saul/Paul
 - Barnabas
- Barnabas and the Apostle Paul were sent out as missionaries from Antioch
- Antioch served as the worldwide headquarters for all of the missionary expeditions
- Believers were called Christians for the first time here
- This is currently known as Antakya, Turkey, formerly Antioch, Syria
- Primary focus was on Gentile inclusion to the faith
- Financial hub for church support. Funds were collected from outlying areas and brought back to help the struggling Jerusalem church
- Antioch became a very influential church going forward. It became one of the main churches in Eastern Orthodoxy and held councils over doctrinal issues.
 - The Council of Antioch convened from 264-268 AD to nail down beliefs over Jesus and Paul
 - Antioch, Rome, Alexandria, Constantinople and Jerusalem became the main churches for centuries.

Read Acts 13:4-12: We are now at the point that most of the New Testament is written. The book of Acts really is the narrative for all of the epistles. The epistles (letters of instruction and encouragement) comprise the majority of the New Testament books. These epistles can parenthetically be dropped into place in the various chapters of Acts (see below).

This chapter describes Paul's first missionary journey; but more follow on. Initially these trips were to get churches going. Then they had to straighten out and manage problems and encourage the members.

DATE (AD)	BOOK	CONTEXT/COMMENTS
Mid/Late 40s	James	Written by James, likely shortly after the Jerusalem Council (Acts 15).
Late 40s	Galatians	Written by Paul after his first missionary journey.
Early 50s	1 Thessalonians	Written by Paul, possibly from Corinth during his second missionary journey.
Early 50s	2 Thessalonians	Also by Paul, likely while in Corinth after 1 Thess.
Mid 50s	1 Corinthians	Written during Paul's stay in Ephesus (Acts 19).
Mid 50s	2 Corinthians	Written from Macedonia after his third visit to Corinth.
Mid 50s	Romans	Written from Corinth before returning to Jerusalem.
60-61	Ephesians	Written during Paul's imprisonment in Rome.
60-61	Philippians	Also written from prison, reflecting on his experience.
60-61	Colossians	Written from Rome, addressing the church in Colossae.
60-61	Philemon	A personal letter to Philemon regarding Onesimus.
62	Hebrews	Authorship debated; traditionally attributed to Paul.
64	Mark	Likely the first Gospel written, documenting Peter's teachings.
65	1 Peter	Written by Peter, addressing persecution among believers.
70-80	Matthew	Written by Matthew, integrating elements of Mark and Q source.
70-80	Luke	Companion of Paul; presents a detailed account of Jesus and early church (Acts provides background).
80-90	Acts	Written by Luke to document the spread of the Gospel and the early church.
90-100	John	Written to emphasize the divine nature of Jesus.
100-110	1 John, 2 John, 3 John	Letters attributed to John addressing community issues & love.
100-110	Jude	Warning against false teachers, attributed to Jude, brother of Jesus.
90-100	Revelation	Written by John, containing visions of the end times.

There are three main missionary journeys launched in the Book of Acts. This chapter describes Missionary trip #1:

MISSIONARY TRIP	DATE	ACTS CHAPTERS	MAIN PURPOSE
First Missionary Trip	AD 46-48	Acts 13-14	To spread the Gospel message in Cyprus and parts of Asia Minor, establishing churches and strengthening early Christians.
Second Missionary Trip	AD 49-52	Acts 15:36-18:22	To revisit and strengthen the churches established during the first trip, as well as to reach new areas including Europe, particularly Macedonia and Achaia.
Third Missionary Trip	AD 53-57	Acts 18:23-21:17	To continue the teaching and strengthening of existing churches in Asia Minor and Greece, particularly in Ephesus, and to prepare for his journey to Jerusalem.



Read Acts 13:13-41: John Mark is the writer of the Gospel of Mark. He was a young disciple of Peter. He accompanied Paul and Barnabas initially; but left mid trip. His departure upset Paul, and was the cause for Paul and Barnabas to split up into two teams. Barnabas had no issues with this. Later on, Paul changed his mind, and he asked for Mark to rejoin him since he was very helpful.

Paul followed a pattern from city to city. He would go to the synagogue and recite the history of his people from a Jesus-centric angle. This led to the conclusion and description of what Jesus has done and who is and what scriptures he fulfilled.

Read Acts 13: 42-52: The momentum built as Paul and Barnabas preached. It is interesting how the Holy Spirit can open up old material to you in a new way. I was raised in the Lutheran church, which was probably reasonably biblically correct. I was asked by a friend in High school to attend his church's High School Bible study group. I replied that my church has all those same facts. Why would it be better for me to hear it elsewhere? I eventually went once, and I was blown away at the depth of knowledge and detail and spiritual gleaning. I never wanted to return to my correct but stale church. The Bible is as boring as a newspaper if that is how you read it. You are best off reading it conversationally with God. You should be seeking answers while praying and thanksgiving. Otherwise, it is just another boring book club. Like the church in Jerusalem, my church was filled with the nicest people in the world...but I was dying emotionally from boredom. I could not force myself to get much out of it. The worship section sounded more like a funeral dirge.

More and more people would come to the next service to hear these apostles. The new churches were on fire with many new converts. Afterall it was a pretty exclusive proposition previously if you were not a Jew. Now it was a Gentile focus.

Paul and others developed proselytes to raise up into future church leaders. There were too many places to be. Not to mention future incarceration. In fact, we would not even have most our New testament if Paul was not imprisoned. His letters to the churches are our New Testament. As the church grew it also developed a reaction from dyed-in -the wool Judaizers who could not make the leap to Christ part of their Judaism beliefs. Ultimately, the apostles were chased out from city to city by the Judaizers. Christianity began as a rogue offshoot of Judaism. Everywhere Paul went churches seemed to start; and yet they would be chased out by the old-school legalistic resistance. This was also God's invisible hand. This made Paul make many more stops than he had planned. Instead of building up one church for years, they kept moving and built up 14 churches.