



THE MISSION OF CHRIST ADVANCES



In this chapter you will ...

- (1) Understand the Day of Pentecost as the pivotal fulfillment of Acts 1:8.
- (2) Observe the inaugural missions teams as believers scatter from Jerusalem into Judea and Samaria as a result of Jewish persecution.
- (3) Recognize the early church's archenemy Saul of Tarsus as he becomes God's unique choice to carry the message of the Gospel to the gentiles.
- (4) Marvel at how imprisonment doesn't silence Paul, but he shares with all who will listen.

Acts 13:42-52 - The Church On Mission



Through preaching and through persecution God was advancing the mission of the Gospel. At Pentecost we saw God fulfilling the New Covenant promise of the Spirit coming to indwell believers. With the coming of the Spirit of God, a new era in redemptive history was being unleashed. Indeed it was good for Jesus to return to heaven, for then the Spirit would come. Now, God had reversed the course of Saul the murderer, and transformed him into Paul the missionary. God would use him to bring the Gospel to the gentiles and begin the ingathering of the nations to Christ. No longer merely a Jewish thing, persecution would spread the Gospel outside of Jerusalem. Followers of the risen Jesus would scatter and soon the church in Antioch became the hub for this new missions movement to spread. And spread it did ... around the world!



Power To Be Witnesses

Just prior to Jesus ascending into heaven He told the disciples that they would receive the empowering they needed to be witnesses of the Gospel message for the fulfilling of the Great Commission. What was that power? The Spirit of God now making His home in believers. From God's glory filling the Temple, to Jesus dwelling among mankind, to now ... followers of Jesus being the temple of the Holy Spirit. At Pentecost, and each subsequent advance beyond Jerusalem, the Spirit dwelling in men was clearly seen. The story was moving forward just as God planned.

Acts 29 And Beyond



The books of Acts ends abruptly at chapter 28. We don't know the outcome of Paul's Roman imprisonment, and we don't see the Gospel get to every nation on the planet. Why? Because Acts 29 is still being written by the Church today. Jesus said, "The gospel of the kingdom will be proclaimed throughout the whole world as a testimony to all nations, and then the end will come" (Matthew 24:14). The Church has been given a mission - Take the glorious message of Christ to every people group on the planet. The Church has been given the power - God the Spirit will do the work of changing hearts as you are witnesses of the truth. The Church has been given a motivation - Mission is the activity the Church gives itself to for the glorious return of Christ to come. The only question is ... will the Church be faithful? Will you be faithful? Will Leroy Chapel write the pages of Acts 29 and beyond?

Story-Tellers Takeaways ...

- (1) Acts 1:8 is the blueprint for the work of the Spirit in establishing the witness of the Gospel.
- (2) Persecution was God's tool to move the gospel out of only Jewish hands in Jerusalem .
- (3) The conversion of Saul was a shining example of what God does in transforming people for His good works. Paul was the missionary to the gentiles.
- (4) Paul's fervent witness to the power of God at any cost is an example we all should follow.

My Notes:

How to Read the Story ... the Big into the Small, and the Small into the Big ... all to Penetrate Our Hearts!

Feathers - You must have an understanding of the epic narrative of God's story ... this is Biblical Theology that guides our reading of the story.

Shaft - You must approach each text of Scripture honestly and openly ... this is Exposition of Scripture that shapes our understanding of the story.

Point - You must have a soft heart to worship the author of the story ... this is Gospel Centeredness that changes life.

For Discussion:

- (1) Discuss how the coming of the Holy Spirit is more than just a personal experience. How is the Pentecost phenomena of the Spirit's coming repeated three more times and why?
- (2) How does understanding the diaspora (scattering) of the believers from Jerusalem effect your view of suffering?
- (3) What do you find most fascinating about the conversion of Saul? Do you truly believe that it is as glorious a miracle every time an enemy of God becomes a son of God?
- (4) How are your current circumstances positioned by God for you to be a witness of the Gospel to others? Do you view them this way? What do you need to do to maximize where God has you?