

# Unleashing the Gospel - *Perspectives* #5

## Book of Acts – Chronology



### Beginnings

- Jesus' resurrection
- 40 days, ascension
- Wait in Jerusalem
- Coming of Holy Spirit



### Witness in Jerusalem

- Nations on the street (Acts 2:5-11)
- People in the temple (Acts 3: lame man)
- Jewish leaders (Acts 4ff)



### Pre-Pauline spread (Acts 11:19-20)

- Steven Martyred (Acts 6-7)
- Saul's persecution scatters believers
- Philip - Samaria, Ethiopia (Acts 8)
- Saul converts, preaches in Damascus (Acts 9)



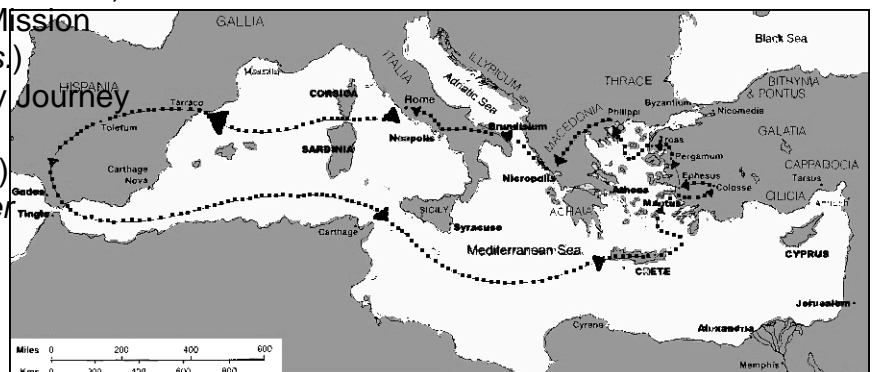
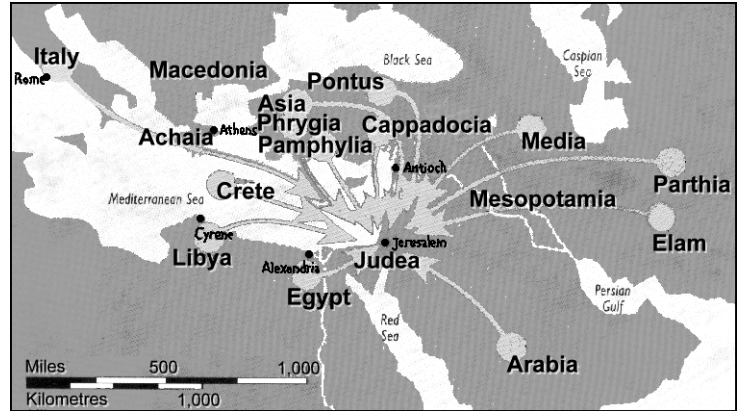
### Petrine History (Acts 10)

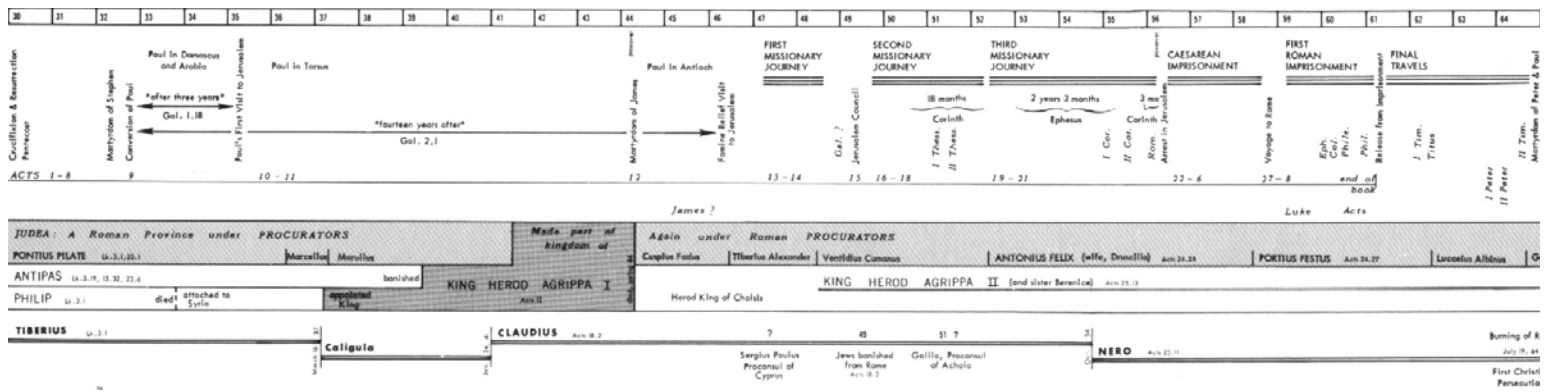
- Samaritans (Phillip)
- Greeks/Gentiles (Joppa)
- Romans (Cornelius)



### Pauline History

- 14 silent years – rallying (Gal. 1:18, 2:1)
- Paul & Barnabus 1<sup>st</sup> Journey
  - Paul & Barnabus “set apart” & “sent out”
  - Turkey: Paul's homeland
  - Jerusalem Council
- Paul & Silas 2<sup>nd</sup> & 3<sup>rd</sup> Missionary Journey
  - Beyond Asia to Macedonia
  - *I & II Thess. I & II Cor.*
  - Athens – “Unknown God” sermon
  - Ephesus – School of Tyrannus
- Paul & Luke Caesarea, Journey to Rome
  - “Testify before Kings” (Acts 9:15)
  - Nerve Center of World Mission (*Ephes., Philipp., Coloss.*)
- Post-Acts Paul's 4th Missionary Journey
  - “All Asia” (Acts 19:10)
  - Europe! (Rom. 15:19-20)
  - *I & II Tim., Titus, I & II Peter*
  - Paul & Peter Martyred in Rome





# Book of Acts - Mission Strategy

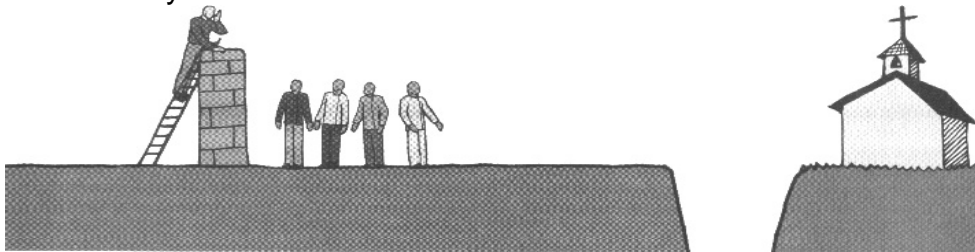
## Cross-Cultural Barriers

- Geography: Acts 16:9 – “Come over to Macedonia”
- Language: Acts 14:11-14 – Lyconia (Paul & Barnabus worshipped as Hermes & Zeus)
- Ethnicity: Acts 16:20 - "Jews proclaiming customs not lawful for ... Romans"
- Religious: Acts 19:24-28 Ephesian idol-makers threatened by Paul's teaching
- Social Class: James 2:3 - rich & poor

Jerusalem Council (Acts 15:1-31, Book of Galatians)

Law vs. Grace?

## Wall & Canyon



## Cultural vs. Essential

- |  |   |   |
|--|---|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> 16<sup>th</sup> century hymns accompanied by an organ.</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Church building</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Baptism</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Alcoholic wine in the Lord's Supper</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Vocational clergy</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Bible teaching</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Meeting together in person</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Seating arrangement – audience facing pastor</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Weekly vs. monthly observance of Lord's Supper</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Observance of Passover, Pentecost, and Succoth</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Avoid eating pork</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Avoid eating blood</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Silent prayer during worship service</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Singing during worship</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Use of the cross as a symbol</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Washing your hands</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Underground sewage</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Observance of a Sabbath rest</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Pulpit or lectern</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Asking the blessing over food</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Sunday night service</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Wearing a suit and tie to church</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Restitution for theft</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Not charging usury</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Not cutting sides of your beard</li> </ul> |
|--|---|---|



## Witness

- Μαρτυρια ... Martyr
  - Court witness, testimony.
  - Public declaration
  - Value of faith - worthy of suffering
  - Two related words (120 times in N.T.):
    1. Κηρυσσω = Preach
    2. Ευαγγελλω = Evangelize
- What was preached?
  - 75% = story of Jesus
  - 12% = calls to repentance
  - 10% = passing on the teachings of Scripture
  - 3% = false Gospel or passing along greetings.
  - In other words, the central theme of preaching in the Bible is Jesus Christ and His Gospel
- Who was preached to?
  - The direct object is the message, not the people.
  - 60% of the time, the indirect object is a place, rest is to class of people or unstated.
  - Implies little or no established relationship with audience.
  - No instance in the entire Bible of "preaching" the gospel to a group of believers!
  - Preaching is directed at people who are not Christians = evangelism & missions!



## Scripture

- Gospels: *the message to communicate*
- Acts: 24x where message is recorded verbatim (25% of the book = sermon templates!)
- Romans: *preparation for European initiative (Glasser p.135)*



## Sodality (Missionary Bands separate from the church)

### Biblical Basis

- 1<sup>st</sup> Journey: Acts 13:1-4: at Antioch, in the church ... the Holy Spirit said, "Set apart for Me Barnabas and Saul for the work to which I have called them." Then when they had fasted and prayed and laid their hands on them, they sent them away. So, being sent out by the Holy Spirit, they went ...
- 2<sup>nd</sup> Journey: Acts 15:40 "committed by the brethren to the grace of the Lord"

<b>Historical Basis</b>	Sodality	Modality
Old Testament		
New Testament		
Middle Ages		
Modern		

### Examples from Paul's Sodalities

- Economics (I Thess. 2:9) "working night & day so as not to be a burden"
- Authority (I Cor. 14:32) "the spirits of the prophets are subject to prophets"
- Membership (Acts 15:36ff) self-chosen, not inclusive
- Purpose (Acts 14:21-23) to plant churches, not to run them



## **Church-Planting** (not just evangelism)

- Matt. 16:18 - “I will build my church”
- Matt. 28:19-20 - “make disciples ... baptizing... teaching all that I commanded”
- Acts 2:38 - Peter “repent ... and be baptized”
- Acts 26:15-18 - Paul “receive forgiveness of sins and an inheritance among those who have been sanctified by faith in Me.”



## **Prayer** - Acts 2:42: What did they pray about?

- Jesus’ teaching on prayer and mission:
  - Matt. 6:10 “thy kingdom come”
  - Matt 5:44 “pray for them that persecute you”
  - Matt. 9:38 “beg the Lord ... to thrust out laborers”
  - Mark 13:33 “watch and pray” (KJV> cf. 2 Pet. 3:12-15)
  - Luke 22:40 “Pray that ye enter not into temptation”
  - Matt. 17:18-21 Healing/Exorcism
- Paul’s prayer guidelines
  - 1 Tim 2: 1-8 “prayer for all”
  - Col. 4: 2-4 “open a door... proclaim clearly”
  - 2 Thess. 3:1-2 “that the word of the Lord may run and be glorified... and that we may be delivered from unreasonable and evil men”
  - Col. 1 – pattern of Paul’s prayer for churches



## **Suffering**

- Mark 10:29-30 “along with persecutions”
  - Acts 9:13-16 “how much he (Paul) must suffer for my Name’s sake”
  - 1 Thess 3:2-3 “we have been destined for this.”
  - Col. 1:24-25 “filling up that which is lacking in regard to Christ’s afflictions”
  - 1 Peter 4:12-19 “do not be surprised...”
  - Foxe’s Book of Martyrs on the Apostles
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- If Paul could saturate Asia in fewer than 30 years, what can the church today do in our lifetime?