LESSON 9

FIRST CALLED CHRISTIANS AT ANTIOCH

Read Acts 11:19-30 & Study Note: The Church

LESSON QUESTIONS

1. How did the Lord continue to use persecution to expand His Church? Have you ever suffered any sort of persecution because of your faith? How did the Lord grow your faith through that situation?

2. Why is it significant that the Word was being spread among both Jews and the Greeks? What barriers had to come down for this to happen **(Ephesians 2:11-22 and Romans 1:16-17)**?

3. Why was Barnabas sent to Antioch? What do you remember about Barnabas from previous chapters? What was his “nickname?” For what character trait(s) are you best known by your friends and family? **(Ask them!)**

4. What did Barnabas do and see when he was in Antioch? What were the results of his ministry?

HEART APPLICATION QUESTIONS

5. The disciples were first called Christians at Antioch. What is the definition of a Christian? Do you think there are people today who are confused about what it is to be a Christian? What does Jesus say is required to be His disciple?

6. What do you think it did for this young church in Antioch to have Saul and Barnabas teach there for an entire year? How long have you been studying God's Word? How are you sharing what you have learned about God?

7. What kind of person do you need to be if you claim to be a Christian? Are you that kind of person? **(Personal)**

8. The church grew from 120 gathered together in prayer to thousands of believers in a short period of time. Do you know places in the world where the gospel is exponentially growing today? How can you grow the gospel in your own community, school, home...?

Memory Verse - Luke 9:23

"Then he said to them all: 'Whoever wants to be my disciple must deny themselves and take up their cross daily and follow me.'"

LESSON 9

STUDY NOTES

THE CHURCH

The Doctrine of the Church

What is the Church? It's not the building—it is God's redeemed people. The building is just a meeting place for the true Church. Everywhere around the world believers gather together for worship, prayer, and the study of the Word.

> **DEFINITION**
> The Church is a community of believers, or "the called out assembly," united by faith in Jesus Christ.

The first mention of the Church in the Bible is found in **Matthew 16**.

Jesus said, "And I tell you that you are Peter, and on this rock I will build my church and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it" **(v. 18)**.

The Church is not built on a man but on the unique God-man, Jesus Christ. Not only did Jesus say that He would build His church, but in **Ephesians 5** Paul declares that Jesus would die for His church:

"Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her that he might sanctify her, having cleansed her by the washing of water with the word, so that he might present the church to himself in splendor, without spot or wrinkle or any such thing, that she might be holy and without blemish."

The Church began on the day of Pentecost with the unique baptism and indwelling of the Holy Spirit. The church will be completed when the Lord Jesus Christ returns.

In the Bible, there are various metaphors for the church:

1 The Church is called the body of Christ.

"For just as the body is one and has many members, and all the members of the body, though many, are one body, so it is with Christ" **(1 Corinthians 12:12)**.

"And he is before all things, and in him all things hold together. And he is the head of the body, the church. He is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead, that in everything he might be preeminent" **(Colossians 1:17-18)**.

2 The Church is a spiritual dwelling place for God with Christ as the Cornerstone.

"So then you are no longer strangers and aliens, but you are fellow citizens with the saints and members of the household of God, built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets. Christ Jesus himself being the cornerstone in whom the whole structure being joined together; grows into a holy temple in the Lord. In him you also are being built together into a dwelling place for God by the Spirit" **(Ephesians 2:19-22)**.

3 The Church is called the bride of Christ.

In **John 3**, John the Baptist declares that he is the friend of the bridegroom. Jesus Christ is the Bridegroom.

"For I feel a divine jealousy for you, since I betrothed you to one husband, to present you as a pure virgin to Christ" **(2 Corinthians 11:1-2)**.

"Hallelujah! For our Lord God Almighty reigns.
Let us rejoice and be glad and give him glory!
For the wedding of the Lamb has come,
And his bride has made herself ready.
Fine linen, bright and clean, was given her to wear."

(Revelation 19:6-8)

4 The Church is also a mystery.

"This mystery is that through the gospel the Gentiles are heirs together with Israel, members together of one body, and sharers together in the promise in Christ Jesus" **(Ephesians 3:6)**.

The Church exists to glorify God, to worship Him and to make disciples of all nations. The mystery of the church is the blending of both Jews and Gentiles into one body. According to **Romans 11**, the Gentiles have been "grafted in" as the people of God.

The Church is composed of the body of believers who have joined together through faith in Jesus Christ and are under the dominion and authority of Christ.

Before His ascension, the Lord Jesus mapped out the growth of the Church. It would begin in Jerusalem, then spread to all Judea and Samaria, and finally to the ends of the earth **(Acts 1:8)**.

TAKEAWAY
The blessings of the church include: serving one another, admonishing one another, encouraging one another, learning from one another, and being devoted to one another in love.

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PRAISES & PRAYER REQUESTS