



MZBMP

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TITLE:

Paul's Early Ministry (Part 3)

TEXT:

Acts 11:19-30; 12:24-25

IN ANTIOCH:

- Antioch:
 - It is referred to as “Antioch on the Orontes” to distinguish it from 15 other Antiochs in the Roman world.
 - In Paul’s day, the population was around 500,000 – the third largest city in the Roman world (next to Rome and Alexandria).
 - The city was beautiful, luxurious, cultured, and cosmopolitan.
 - The social life was openly immoral and sensual.
 - It was famous for its worship of the goddess Daphne.
 - It is now modern-day Antakya in Turkey.
- Some believers who were scattered due to persecution after Stephen's martyrdom went to Phenice, Cyprus, and Antioch, preaching the word to Jews only (Acts 11:19).
- However, some of them, who were originally from Cyprus and Cyrene, preached to the Grecians (Greek-speaking Jews) (Acts 11:20-21).
 - A great number believed and turned unto the Lord
- When the church in Jerusalem heard about this, they sent Barnabas to Antioch (Acts 11:22).
- Barnabas was pleased with what he saw - the grace of God at work among the people. He exhorted them to cleave to the Lord with the purpose of heart (Acts 11:23-24).
 - Many people were added unto the Lord.
 - Barnabas was described as a good man, a Spirit-filled man, and a man of great faith.
- Barnabas then went to Tarsus to find Paul and brought him back to Antioch (Acts 11:25-26).
 - For a whole year, they assembled with the church and taught a great many people.
 - They became members of the church at Antioch.
 - It is evident that they probably served as pastors of the church based on their teaching ministry.
- The disciples were called Christians first in Antioch (Acts 11:26).
 - It means a follower of Christ, a “little-Christ” or “Christ-like.”
- During this time, prophets came from Jerusalem to Antioch. One of them, Agabus, stood up and predicted a severe famine throughout the Roman world (Acts 11:27-28).
- This prophecy prompted the disciples in Antioch to send relief to the brethren living in Judea. They sent their gift with Barnabas and Saul, showing their solidarity and support for the believers in need (Acts 11:29-30).

IN JERUSALEM:

- Paul and Barnabas had fulfilled their ministry and took with them John Mark, nephew of Barnabas, and went back to Antioch (Acts 12:24-25).

APPLICATION:

- New Testament churches were autonomous and independent.
- Barnabas was described as a good man, a Spirit-filled man, and a man of great faith.
 - The character of a church is often a derivative of the character of its pastor.
- Barnabas seeks Paul’s help. This shows the importance of the team in the ministry.
- The church at Antioch was a giving church.