



WEEK 8: THE CHURCH GROWS ACROSS THE WORLD

Route for this week:

1. The Jerusalem Council (Acts 15:1-35)
2. Love is the Greatest (1 Corinthians 13:1-13)
3. Have the Attitude of Christ (Philippians 2:1-18)
4. Great Examples of Faith (Hebrews 11:1-40)
5. The New Jerusalem (Revelation 21:1-22:6)
6. Jesus is Coming (Revelation 22:7-21)
7. Getting Your Bearings: Waiting for Christ

SUMMARY

God's plan for his people to spread throughout the world is not without struggles. Some believers share the message of Jesus even among Gentiles who are not in any way following the Jewish Law, and this disturbs some of the Jewish followers of Jesus. The leaders of the church meet together and recognize that the Holy Spirit has truly come to live in these Gentiles. They see that he is working within them to give them the power to represent God to their neighbors and to people in distant lands. God's people are no longer defined by a physical nation on earth; through Jesus and the indwelling Spirit, those boundaries are torn down. Paul, Peter, John, and other church leaders travel beyond Israel to spread the message of the Good News, and they write many letters explaining who Jesus is, what God has done, and what that means for humanity. These letters continue to guide God's people as we eagerly await Jesus' return when he will finally make all things new and put an end to sin and death once and for all. Come, Lord Jesus!

DISCUSSION GUIDE

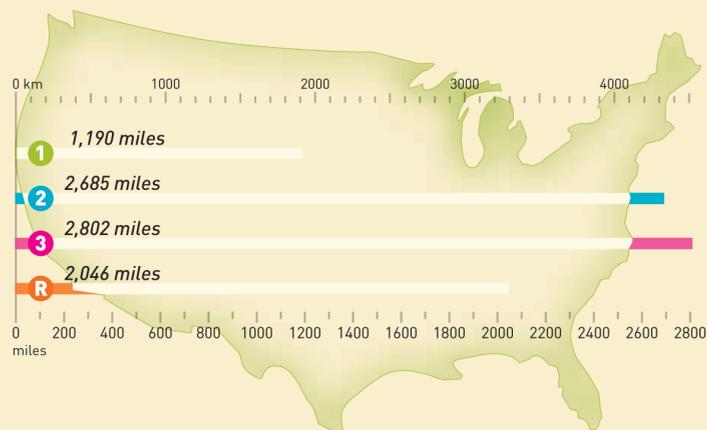
1. Clearly both the need for the Jerusalem Council (Acts 15:1-35) and the confrontation of Peter by Paul (Galatians 2:11-16) show us how difficult it was for the early church to adjust to the presence of Gentiles as part of God's people while also continuing to be faithful to the Gospel of Jesus Christ. According to what was spoken in Acts 15 and in Galatians 1-2, what is the Gospel and how does one appropriate this news to their life?
2. Compare Colossians 1:15-20 with Philippians 2:5-11, both of which are early hymns or confessions that were probably well known and taught throughout the early church even before the Bible was available to ordinary believers. What do you learn about Jesus both in his exalted and in his humble state?
3. What are the characteristics of those who lived by faith in the midst of waiting for God's promises or in the midst of suffering for their faith both according to Hebrews 11 and 1 Peter 1:1-12?
4. According to 1 John (especially 1:5-2:11), what is the relationship between truth, obedience and love?
5. Here we come to the end of the journey through the story of the Bible. How does the worship scene in Revelation 5 summarize what you have been learning about the plan of God in history both through the people of Israel, Jesus Christ and the church?

APPLICATION QUESTIONS

1. In what ways are we in danger of distorting the message of the Gospel? In what ways are we guilty of making it difficult for people to come to faith?
2. How can you and your church be more intentional about showing those in your community the relationship between truth, obedience and love?



- 1** → **FIRST:**
Antioch—Antioch
Acts 13:1-14:28
- 2** → **SECOND:**
Antioch—Antioch
Acts 15:36-18:22
- 3** → **THIRD:**
Antioch—Jerusalem
Acts 18:23-21:16
- R** → **TO ROME:**
Caesarea—Rome
Acts 21:17-28:31



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