

Back to the Future, Part 3

Dr. Mark Rutland June 25, 2017

Back to the Future — the Future from Antioch

A word about this series — the Book of Acts is often viewed historically, as a stationary museum piece of the past — and nothing to do with the present. That teaching reduces it to a document in church archives.

*The other viewpoint is — Going Back to the Book of Acts is Going Back to the Future — There are **Three Major Church Intersections** in the book of Acts. Last week we looked at the Future at Joppa.*

Today — Back to the Future — the Future from Antioch

Introduction

The first 12 chapters of Acts, the missionary thrust of the Church is almost accidental, meaning God has to force the church out. The Church "hunkers down" so to speak. Each passage ends with the disciples going back to Jerusalem.

Chapter 13 opens with the first missional, intentional church listening to and going where God tells them to go.

What God does there (in Antioch) is the beginning of what we understand to be the global mission of the church.

Third Major Intersection

• Acts 13:1-13

1 Now in the church that was at Antioch there were certain prophets and teachers: Barnabas, Simeon who was called Niger, Lucius of Cyrene, Manaen who had been brought up with Herod the tetrarch, and Saul. **2** As they ministered to the Lord and fasted, the Holy Spirit said, "Now separate to Me Barnabas and Saul for the work to which I have called them." **3** Then, having fasted and prayed, and laid hands on them, they sent them away. **4** So, being sent out by the Holy Spirit, they went down to Seleucia, and from there they sailed to Cyprus. **5** And when they arrived in Salamis, they preached the word of God in the synagogues of the Jews. They also had John as their assistant. **6** Now when they had gone through the island[a] to Paphos, they found a certain sorcerer, a false prophet, a Jew whose name was Bar-Jesus, **7** who was with the proconsul, Sergius Paulus, an intelligent man. This man called for Barnabas and Saul and sought to hear the word of God. **8** But Elymas the sorcerer (for so his name is translated) withstood them, seeking to turn the proconsul away from the faith. **9** Then Saul, who also is called Paul, filled with the Holy Spirit, looked intently at him **10** and said, "O full of all deceit and all fraud, you son of the devil, you enemy of all righteousness, will you not cease perverting the straight ways of the Lord? **11** And now, indeed, the hand of the Lord is upon you, and you shall be blind, not seeing the sun for a time." And immediately a dark mist fell on him, and he went around seeking someone to lead him by the hand. **12** Then the proconsul believed, when he saw what had been done, being astonished at the teaching of the Lord. **13** Now when Paul and his party set sail from Paphos, they came to Perga in Pamphylia; and John, departing from them, returned to Jerusalem.

- This passage contains a critical phrase that has become controversial in the modern church - "*the Holy Spirit said*"
- There are many who believe that upon completion of the Bible, the Holy Spirit no longer needs to speak beyond what is written in the Bible.

The Church at Antioch

- God tells this first "mega church" to separate two of its most powerful and influential leaders - Barnabas and Saul (Paul) - for a purpose that transcends the church's location.
- It's never a good ministry idea to break up something which is going well - this tells us a few very important things about God:
 1. **The logic of God is not necessarily our logic**
 2. **His geography is not necessarily our geography**
 3. **The outcome of God may not be obvious to you now or ever** - such is the case with our passage, as Paul's ministry (who ends up writing 3/5ths of the New Testament) and the worldwide missionary impulse of the Church is established.

**Serving God and being open to anything
that He calls you to is an adventure! (if we
believe God still speaks).**

TESTIMONY: Please watch Dr. Mark Rutland's story/testimony about "Going to Ghana" by clicking [HERE](#)

Closing Thoughts

- a) Don't turn your Christian walk into day after day, business as usual. We are called to so much more – God is calling us on adventure.
 - b) God has the right to turn your life upside down – His logic, His geography, and His outcome may not be yours.
 - c) God is still alive, God still speaks to His church, and God is still God!
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Discussion Questions

1. Discuss "God's logic is not necessarily our logic" - have you seen this specifically play out in your life?
2. Do you find your Christian walk "business as usual?" If so, where can you go on adventure with God?
3. How can you be more missional in your life? How can the Church (globally) be more missional?
4. What is one thing God has taught you in this series that you can practically implement or obey?