

- i. By conquering Antioch, Christ has effectively conquered Syria and the eastern Roman Empire.
- ii. From an earthly perspective, James and Herod reach the same end. From an eternal perspective... they could not be more different.

LIVE THE STORY

We must not only love the Gospel Story, we must begin to live the Gospel Story, indeed, to have the Central Character live in us.

- How is it that the church in Antioch is planted? What role did leaders play? What role did the believers play? What brought together a Gospel-community?
- Barnabas was not only full of the Spirit, but full of faith. Does 4:36 perhaps reveal that faith? How does sacrificial giving require both faith and provide an opportunity for faith to grow?
- What scriptures can you think of that speak to the fact that we are all to emulate Barnabas, the son of Encouragement, by speaking to one another with Spirit inspired, Gospel-centered exhortations? How can you grow in walking this out?
- Barnabas sought out Saul to teach the Scriptures in Antioch – the first Gentile dominant church. Based on Paul's letters, and on the rest of the book of Acts, what kinds of things do you think Paul was teaching? How might he have answered questions like (use Paul's letters for answers):
 - Do we have to worship on the 7th day?
 - Do we have to keep Jewish holidays?
 - Do we need to follow Jewish dietary standards?
 - Do believing men have to be circumcised?
- What did the church do to combat the power of Herod? What do we learn from this story that might surprise those who follow some of the modern notions of how faith works?

The Gospel's Unstoppable Conquest

Jerry Cisar — September 28, 2014

Text: Acts 11:19 – 12:25

Introduction: Scattering Continues

A. Scattered seed by scattering saints.

i. Acts 8:1-4

ii. Acts 11:19

B. The 3 stories of our text are tied together.

i. The Word of God increasing and growing

ii. Hands of Power

iii. Man-hunts

I. The Advance of the Gospel into Antioch (11:19-30)

A. Three Ways the Message Infiltrated Antioch

i. Evangelism

ii. Exhortation / Encouragement

a) The Son of Encouragement

➤ Acts 11:23

➤ Behind this is a life of character, a man full of the Holy Spirit, and a man full of faith (24)

b) How do we encourage one another?

- Hebrews 10:24-25

- 1 Corinthians 14:1-4

- Numbers 11:29

c) Barnabas is a leader with this gift.

iii. Teaching (11:25-26)

B. How is the Gospel Message going to conquer today?

C. *Called Christians first.* (11:26)

D. Relief and Help for the Saints in Jerusalem (11:27-30)

- i. Love

- ii. Wisdom

- iii. Fulfillment

II. An Attack on the Gospel in Judea (12:1-19)

A. The violent hands of Herod Agrippa I in Jerusalem.

B. Peter's Miraculous Deliverance

C. Did Peter have more faith?

FF Bruce: ...*That James should die while Peter should escape is a mystery of divine providence which has been repeated countless times in the history of the people of God. By faith, says the writer to the Hebrews, some "escaped the edge of the sword"; by faith others "were killed with the sword" (Heb. 11:34, 37).*

D. Does God still work like this? (The Story of Sundar Singh.¹)

III. The Conquering Hand of Christ (12:20-25)

A. Herod and the people of Tyre and Sidon (Phoenicia).

B. Herod sets out to kill the messengers of the Gospel; But the Gospel, the Word, increases and multiplies.

¹ See B. H. Streeter and A. J. Appasamy, *The Sadhu* (London, 1921), pp. 30-32. (quoted in FF Bruce)