

Acts 13:46, 48-49

⁴⁶ And Paul and Barnabas spoke out boldly, saying, “It was necessary that *the word of God* be spoken first to you. Since you thrust it aside and *judge yourselves unworthy of eternal life*, behold, we are turning to the Gentiles. ...

⁴⁸ And when the Gentiles heard this, they began rejoicing and glorifying the word of the Lord, and as many as were appointed to eternal life believed. ⁴⁹ And the word of the Lord was spreading throughout the whole region.

Acts 19:20

So the word of the Lord continued to increase and prevail mightily.

Summary:

This results, of course, in individual congregations growing and being built. But the emphasis is not on the growth of the congregation as a structure—in numbers, finances and success—but on the growth of the gospel, as it is spoken and re-spoken and under the power of the spirit. (p. 37)

“Congregational growth is certainly a good thing as long as it represents true *gospel growth*.” – Pastor Kitchen

*What in the World is God Doing?
Getting on Board with God's Plan for His Church*

Sunday School Class

November 24, 2000



Class Outline

Class #1:

Introduction: The Cry of the Prophets

(Psalm 80; Hosea 10:1-2; 14:4-7)

Class #2:

All the Promises of God find their Yes in Jesus

(2 Corinthians 1:20; 1 Peter 1:10-12)

Class #3:

What God is Doing Now?

(John 15:1-11)

Class #4:

Three Implications

(Luke 9:60; 2 Corinthians 6:1-10)

Review:

The Vine of Israel (Hosea 10:1-2; 14:4-7)

1. Suffering Judgment for Sin
2. Restoration to Glory

All the Promises of God find their Yes in Jesus (1 Peter 1:10-12)

What the prophets didn't know was that the path to glory would be via the sufferings of God's Christ—which is exactly what you would expect you think about it. God's message to Israel throughout the prophets was always this: you will suffer deeply because of sin, but glory and restoration will be there to greet you on the other side. When the Christ came to stand in the place of Israel, to be Israel, what would we expect but that he would suffer judgment because of sin before being vindicated and glorified on judgment's far side? (p. 34)

What God is Doing Now? (Read - John 15:1-11)

1. Who is the vine? (v. 1)
2. What are we in this metaphor? (v. 2)
3. What is it that made Jesus' disciples clean? (v. 3)
4. How do we abide in Jesus? (vs. 4-6; 7-11)
 - a. How do we bring glory to God the father?
 - b. How do we abide in the love of Jesus?
 - c. What has Jesus given to his disciples to make their joy complete?

This is what God is now doing in the world: Spirit-backed gospel preaching leading to the salvation of souls. It's his program, his agenda, his priority, his focus, his project, or whatever business-related metaphor you'd like to use. And by it, he is gathering a

new Christ-centered people as his very own; a quiet, steadily growing profusion of leaves on the great vine of his kingdom.

This is what we see happening in Acts. We call it the Acts of the Apostles, but a better name would perhaps be 'The Acts of the Word and Spirit of God through the Apostles', because that's how it seems to go. (p. 35)

Examples in Acts:

Acts 1:4-5

⁴ And while staying with them he ordered them not to depart from Jerusalem, but to wait for the promise of the Father, which, he said, "you heard from me; ⁵ for John baptized with water, but you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit not many days from now."

Acts 2:4, 6, 11

⁴ And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other tongues as the Spirit gave them utterance. ...

⁶ And at this sound the multitude came together, and they were bewildered, because each one was hearing them speak in his own language. ...

¹¹ ...—we hear them telling in our own tongues the mighty works of God."

Acts 4:31

And when they had prayed, the place in which they were gathered together was shaken, and they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and continued to speak the word of God with boldness.

Acts 6:2-4, 7

² And the twelve summoned the full number of the disciples and said, "It is not right that we should give up preaching the word of God to serve tables. ³ Therefore, brothers, pick out from among you seven men of good repute, full of the Spirit and of wisdom, whom we will appoint to this duty. ⁴ *But we will devote ourselves to prayer and to the ministry of the word.*" ...

⁷ And *the word of God* continued to increase, and the number of the disciples multiplied greatly in Jerusalem, and a great many of the priests became obedient to the faith. ...