

## **Antioch – Acts 11:19-30; 12:24-13:3**

### **1. Introduction**

- Antioch was the site of the first Gentile Church. The gospel had reached Jews (Acts 2-7), Samaritans (Acts 8) and moral monotheistic Gentiles (Acts 10)
- Now for the first time the good news reaches full blown pagans – the kind of people describes in Romans 1:18-31

### **2. Antioch – “The Queen of the East”**

- Third largest city in Roman Empire with half a million people
- 300 miles north Jerusalem - wealthy and beautiful
- Cosmopolitan - people from Gaul, China, India and the whole world.
- Many religions – occult, astrology and Baalism – but deeply immoral.

### **3. The Mystery of its Birth (11:19-21)**

#### ❖ *The courage of the witnesses (19-20)*

- ⇒ The courage to gossip the gospel. The winds of persecution had blown them 300 miles north. These faceless, nameless, plan-less, penniless lovers of Jesus shared their faith.
- ⇒ The courage to cross barriers. They left the safety of the synagogue and reached out to pagans.

#### ❖ *The hand of the Lord (21)*

- ⇒ The church was created by God’s powerful hand (21), established by God’s grace (22-23) and extended as God added to it (24).

### **4. The Means of its Growth (11:22-26)**

#### ❖ *A godly leadership (22-24)*

- ⇒ The church sent Barnabas to check it out – he was “Mr Encouragement” (4:36-37; 9:26-27)
- ⇒ He came alongside them and encouraged them (23) seeing evidence of God’s grace in transformed lives (1 Thessalonians 1:9-10)
- ⇒ He was a good and godly man – character is more importance than competence and conviction.
- ⇒ He built a multi-national team (13:1-3).

#### ❖ *A balanced diet (25-26)*

- ⇒ Barnabas hunted out Paul so to help with the teaching (26).
- ⇒ The church grows through a healthy biblical diet (2 Timothy 3:14-4:5; 1 Peter 1:23-2:3)
- ⇒ They were first called Christians here - “*little followers of the Messiah*”. The Word transformed them in a visible way.

### **5. The Marks of its Maturity (11:27-30; 13:1-3)**

#### ❖ *A loving church (11:27-30)*

- ⇒ Their love for their needy brothers and sisters was visible and tangible.
- ⇒ It also crossed barriers of race and culture – the first time this happened in history.

#### ❖ *A sending church (13:1-3)*

- ⇒ They set aside and sent their best leaders to spread the gospel to the ends of the earth.
- ⇒ This launches the second part of Acts (Acts 13-28), where the emphasis is on the ministry of Paul, the Apostle to the Gentiles.