

# The Church Jesus Built

## Lesson 6: Where: Where Has Jesus Built His Church

Jesus has been building His church consisting of those who submit their lives to His authority and have been saved (Matthew 16:18). Still, we need to consider another question: Where? That is, where are these people who submit themselves to Jesus's authority located in this world. Namely, what we will discover is that the people who submitted to King Jesus would start out small, but then spread throughout the entire world (Matthew 13:31-33; Acts 1:8).

**1) In Jerusalem.** Jerusalem was identified as the place something special was going to begin (Isaiah 2:1-4; Micah 4:1-8; Luke 24:44-49; Acts 1:4-5, 8). It was here that Jesus's authority as King was first declared and people obeyed the gospel on the Day of Pentecost (Acts 2, v. 41). Jesus's church was now established and growing (Acts 2:42-47). While those who had traveled to Jerusalem for Pentecost and turned to Jesus may have likely traveled back home and taken the gospel with them (establishing local churches there), the story of Acts focuses on Jerusalem for a time (Acts 2-7). For example, the number of those who believed in King Jesus came to be around 5,000 by Acts 4:4. In fact, the gospel was spreading so much in Jerusalem that the Jewish leaders who put Jesus to death wanted to stop the apostles from filling Jerusalem with this teaching (Acts 5:27-28). Interestingly, a Pharisee teacher named Gamaliel advised the Sanhedrin (highest Jewish council) that if this movement was of human origin, it would fail; but if it was of God, it would not be stopped (Acts 5:38-39). Every day, there was more teaching being done in Jesus's name throughout Jerusalem, despite persecution (Acts 5:41-42).

**2) In Judea and Samaria.** God's plan was not for the gospel and His church to remain just in Jerusalem (Acts 1:8). Through persecution that hit the church in Jerusalem, God's people were scattered throughout Judea and Samaria (Acts 8:1-3).

However, these who had submitted to King Jesus were not abandoning the faith. Rather, they were taking the gospel's message with them wherever they went (Acts 8:4). Particularly, Acts shows the work of an evangelist named Philip coming to a city of Samaria and preaching Jesus to them, which resulted in people responding in obedience (Acts 8:5-13). After Peter and John were sent to Samaria and preached there, they then returned to Jerusalem, preaching the gospel in many villages of the Samaritans (Acts 8:14, 25). Later, Philip was sent to meet a man from Ethiopia as he was traveling back to Ethiopia from Jerusalem, who responded in obedience (Acts 8:26-40). Philip also preached from Azotus to Caesarea (Acts 8:40). Then, even the great persecutor Saul was converted to Christ and began to preach (Acts 9:28). The church was growing (Acts 9:31, 35).

**3) To the ends of the earth.** The gospel of the kingdom was spreading in many places throughout Palestine. However, Jesus's mission concerning His gospel and His people involved more (Matthew 28:18-20; Mark 16:15-16; Acts 1:8). The book of Acts then demonstrates how Jesus's gospel and church then spread throughout the world by giving us snapshots of how it spread. We see the gospel spreading in Caesarea (Acts 8:40), including the Gentiles being welcomed into Jesus's church (Acts 10-11; 11:18). Those who were scattered from the persecution made their way as far as Phoenicia, Cyprus, and Antioch, preaching the word (Acts 11:19-24). The church in Antioch grew and sent Saul (Paul) and Barnabas to preach the gospel in other places (Acts 13:1-3; 14:26-27). The apostle Paul's journeys and preaching work are the primary focus of Acts 13-28, showing how the gospel spread throughout many places (i.e. 19:8-10). However, other apostles, prophets, evangelists, shepherds, teachers, and saints were also working to spread God's message of salvation. This happened so much that Paul said the gospel had spread throughout the world about

30 years after the Great Commission (Colossians 1:23)!

**4) The mission continues today.** Jesus's church is clearly not limited to any one specific place. Rather, Jesus's mission has always been to fill the world with the gospel that calls people to submit to Him as King and experience salvation through Him (Mark 16:15-16). Although this mission was accomplished in the first century, it has continued throughout the centuries. Today, you can know the gospel's message and choose to submit yourself to King Jesus so as to be added to His church. In doing so, you can join others who have submitted themselves to Jesus as part of His church, thereby forming a local church in your community – just like people did throughout the book of Acts and the New Testament. This church should follow the pattern of belief, teaching, and practice outlined in the New Testament God has given for local churches (2 Timothy 1:13). This local church then becomes an outpost for building up Christians in that area and for continuing Jesus's mission to spread the gospel of the kingdom throughout that community and beyond (1 Thessalonians 1:8-10; 1 Timothy 3:15; 2 Timothy 2:2; Romans 10:13-18). For, Jesus has given His church everything needed to grow and be equipped to continue His mission of spreading the gospel in every generation (Ephesians 4:11-16)!

Jesus has built and is continuing to build His church (Matthew 16:18)! He invites you to be part of this special group of saved people who will live on mission to glorify God and spread the message about the kingdom of God today. There is certainly no mission on earth that comes close to the importance of the mission of Jesus's kingdom! For, you can be part of planting the seed of the kingdom of God that will have an eternal impact on others!

## Thought Questions

(2 Timothy 3:16-17)

**Teaching:** What are some key lessons learned from this lesson?

**Rebuking:** What are some ways this lesson challenges you to live differently?

**Correcting:** How does this lesson help you make positive changes for Christ?

**Training & Equipping:** How can you apply this teaching to be trained in righteousness and equipped for every good work?