

A Simple Step of Faith and Obedience That Changed History

“Those who were scattered.”

Arguably the most influential church in history was started by a small band of refugees who, in the midst of their most painful season, took a simple step of faith and obedience that changed history.

“Now those who were scattered by the persecution that arose over Stephen traveled as far as Phoenicia and Cyprus and Antioch, preaching the word to no one except Jews. Some of them were men of Cyprus and Cyrene, who, when they had come to Antioch, spoke to the Hellenists, preaching the Lord Jesus. The hand of the Lord was with them, and a great number believed and turned to the Lord” (Acts 11:19-21).

Luke, the writer of Acts, gives us no insight into how the decision was made for these displaced believers to reach out across the “dividing wall of hostility” to share the gospel with people who were ethnically, culturally, politically, socially different than they were, but I am sure that the journey of their displacement from the Jewish “hub” of Jerusalem and their pilgrimage throughout the Greco-Roman world had much bearing on their eventual conclusion to preach the gospel to “the Hellenists” and thus change history.

What was God doing with this company of people that prepared them to pioneer the apostolic missions base of the New Testament? I believe that was God using their displacement according to His purposes and for His glory. I would go as far as to say that it was necessary for them to go through their scattering in order to dislodge some fatal value systems they inherited from the Jerusalem church that would have prevented

them from ever becoming the sending center they were destined to be together.

What was God aiming to dislodge and ultimately expel out of the hearts and minds of these Jewish believers by driving them from house and home, out of the bubble of Jerusalem Christianity as refugees into cities and towns to which they did not belong? I believe the Lord was warring against two subtle and lurking enemies of the gospel that were settling into the culture back in Jerusalem.

What was this monster hiding in the shadows right under Peter and James' noses?

This is an excerpt from Antioch Series: When Worship, Prayer and Missions Collide. Read the whole blog series at . Read the remainder of the article here.

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