

Sunday Field Services

Domestic Mission Field Activity
West Avenue Church of Christ

April 22, 2018

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This Week's Current Event's Picture

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U.S. Army photo by Staff Sgt. Timothy Koster

Photo 1: A Syrian family examines the reconstruction efforts and reopened markets near the Naim traffic circle, Raqqah, Syria, March 13, 2018. The return of vendors and markets are just one of the several signs that life is beginning to return to normal after the Syrian Democratic Forces, under the advisement of the Global Coalition to Defeat the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria, militarily defeated ISIS in the city.

The Men Serving

Assisting Stephen Michael Kellat

Assisting Michael John Kellat

Services Today

- Awesome God 38
- I'll Fly Away 851
- **Opening Prayer**
- Come, Share the Lord 364
- **Communion**
- ***Sermon*** Shifts In The Plot
- **Closing Song** Seek Ye First 555
- **Closing Prayer**

38.jpg

Plate I: CCLI 1299261

851.jpg

364.jpg

Plate III: CCLI 1299261

Reading for Communion

Paul writes in 1 Corinthians 11:23-26 in the Holman Christian Standard Bible translation:

For I received from the Lord what I also passed on to you: On the night when He was betrayed, the Lord Jesus took bread, gave thanks, broke it, and said, "This is My body, which is for you. Do this in remembrance of Me."

In the same way, after supper He also took the cup and said, "This cup is the new covenant established by My blood. Do this, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of Me." For as often as you eat this bread and drink the cup, you proclaim the Lord's death until He comes.■

Let us pray...

The Lesson

In the beginning of the church we find missionary journeys by the apostle Paul. Modern Syria was one of those places where Paul and friends stopped to do the work of the church. Syria is a place where we know help is needed today. In watching the news lately with President Donald John Trump, you know that our federal government recently took action there with a recent missile strike.

We're going to read about some initial missionary work. This is when the change began from the Good News being just for the children of Abraham to being for us all. We turn to Acts 11:1-26 (HCSB) which states:

The apostles and the brothers who were throughout Judea heard that the Gentiles had welcomed God's message also. When Peter went up to Jerusalem, those who stressed circumcision argued with him, saying, "You visited uncircumcised men and ate with them!"

Peter began to explain to them in an orderly sequence, saying: "I was in the town of Joppa praying, and I saw, in a visionary state, an object that resembled

a large sheet coming down, being lowered by its four corners from heaven, and it came to me. When I looked closely and considered it, I saw the four-footed animals of the earth, the wild beasts, the reptiles, and the birds of the sky. Then I also heard a voice telling me, 'Get up, Peter; kill and eat!'

"'No, Lord!' I said. 'For nothing common or ritually unclean has ever entered my mouth!' But a voice answered from heaven a second time, 'What God has made clean, you must not call common.'

"Now this happened three times, and then everything was drawn up again into heaven. At that very moment, three men who had been sent to me from Caesarea arrived at the house where we were. Then the Spirit told me to accompany them with no doubts at all. These six brothers accompanied me, and we went into the man's house. He reported to us how he had seen the angel standing in his house and saying, 'Send to Joppa, and call for Simon, who is also named Peter. He will speak a message to you that you and all

your household will be saved by.'

"As I began to speak, the Holy Spirit came down on them, just as on us at the beginning. Then I remembered the word of the Lord, how He said, 'John baptized with water, but you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit.' Therefore, if God gave them the same gift that He also gave to us when we believed on the Lord Jesus Christ, how could I possibly hinder God?"

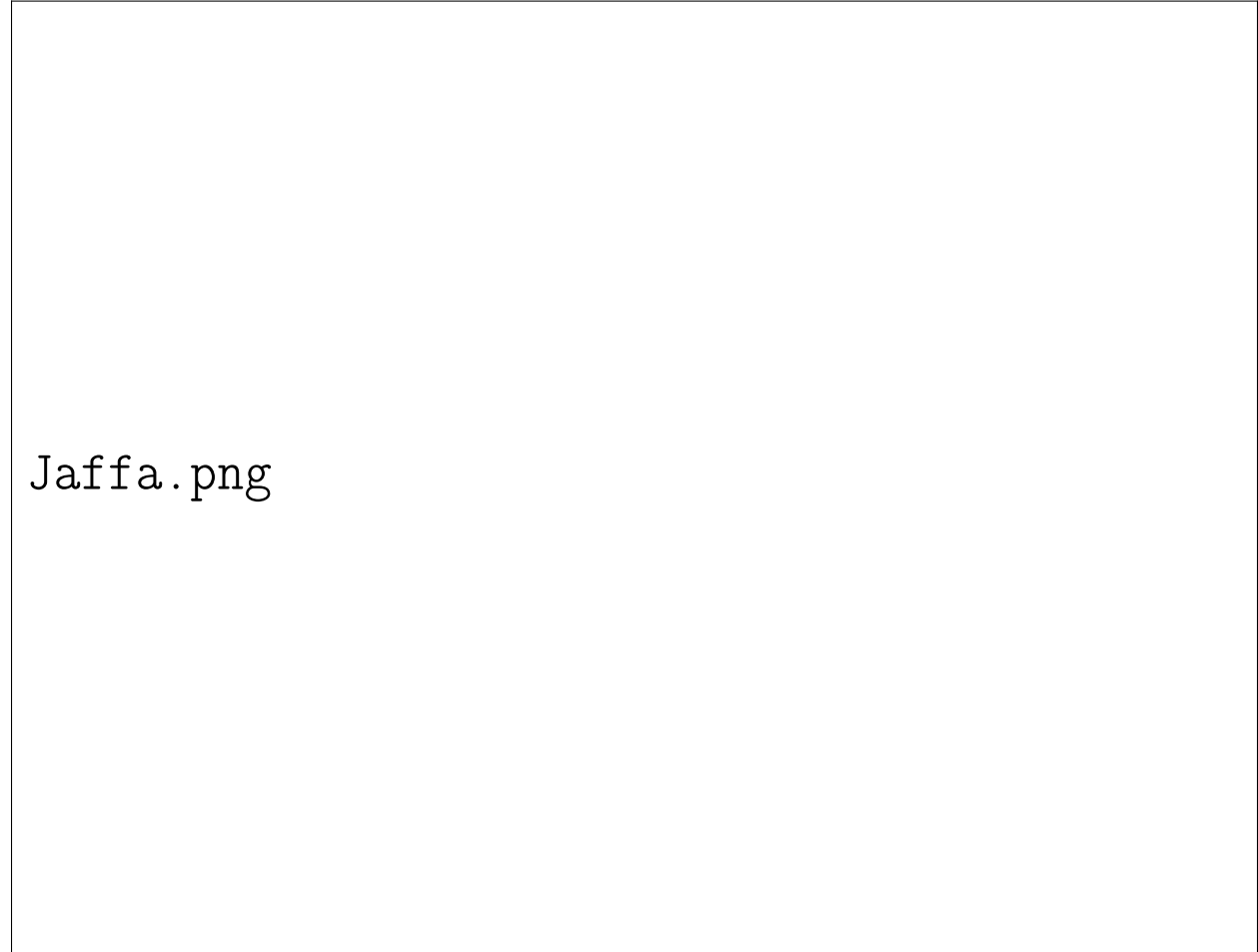
When they heard this they became silent. Then they glorified God, saying, "So God has granted repentance resulting in life even to the Gentiles!"

Those who had been scattered as a result of the persecution that started because of Stephen made their way as far as Phoenicia, Cyprus, and Antioch, speaking the message to no one except Jews. But there were some of them, Cypriot and Cyrenian men, who came to Antioch and began speaking to the Hellenists, proclaiming the good news about the Lord Jesus. The Lord's hand was with them, and a large number who believed turned to the Lord. Then the report about them

was heard by the church that was at Jerusalem, and they sent out Barnabas to travel as far as Antioch. When he arrived and saw the grace of God, he was glad and encouraged all of them to remain true to the Lord with a firm resolve of the heart, for he was a good man, full of the Holy Spirit and of faith. And large numbers of people were added to the Lord. Then he went to Tarsus to search for Saul, and when he found him he brought him to Antioch. For a whole year they met with the church and taught large numbers. The disciples were first called Christians at Antioch.

These places still exist on the map. Joppa is known today as Jaffa and is a suburb of Tel Aviv in Israel. Syrian Antioch would be found in modern Turkey today due to the way border lines are drawn as the border between today's Turkey and today's Syria is not far from ancient Antioch. Syria used to be quite a bit bigger before it was gobbled up into several different empires and then carved back into the smaller country we see today. Today's Syria is roughly 101 times the size of Ashtab-

ula County. Before we forget, Paul had his great conversion on the road to Damascus which is in Syria.



Partial screen capture from Google Maps

Photo 2: The route from Joppa, known today as Jaffa, to modern Jerusalem is roughly 40 miles. That's roughly the distance from Saybrook Landing to Kirtland.

It is written in Acts 1:6-8 (HCSB):

So when they had come together, they asked Him, "Lord, are You restoring the

kingdom to Israel at this time?"

He said to them, "It is not for you to know times or periods that the Father has set by His own authority. But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come on you, and you will be My witnesses in Jerusalem, in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth."

When the gospel is taken to the ends of the Earth for these men, their world was a lot smaller than our own. The Americas were unknown to them. Going to Rome was travel to a far distant shore. North Africa was certainly known to them as that was where Egypt is located. Places like Russia, China, most of the Pacific, were unknown. We know today that Samoans were certainly cruising the Pacific but that would have been something totally foreign to the apostles then.

Throughout the ages, our world became bigger and bigger. Supposedly through technology it has become smaller again. Our planet is even more connected now to where the gospel can be taken to the very edges of Earth and even to its moon.

These Jews among Jews had to step outside their comfort zones. They had to take big steps to spread

the Gospel. Even in these later days, how might you spread the Gospel to others? How might you share your faith?

The Christian story is not something that happened in a corner. The Christian story is a living one that we keep writing every day. How are you adding to the Christian story today?

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About Us

West Avenue Church of Christ is located at 5901 West Avenue, Ashtabula, Ohio. The located preacher is Michael Williams. Our leaders are Elmer Ford and Hays Wood. We meet Sundays at 10:30 AM for worship with bible study earlier at 9:30 AM.

The Domestic Mission Field Activity is an effort for outreach by the congregation. The Activity undertakes a variety of works as appropriate. We are implementing a video narrowcast channel for the congregation online at <http://tinyurl.com/WABBC>. A function/capability review continues.