

Antioch: a sending church and a contested table

Which Antioch was Paul's mission base?

Antioch in Syria was a major base for Barnabas and Paul and the setting of a significant dispute about Jewish and Gentile fellowship. It is different from Pisidian Antioch, visited during the first missionary journey.

A community formed through witness

Acts describes believers reaching Antioch after the scattering connected with Stephen. Barnabas is sent from Jerusalem, recognizes God's grace, and later brings Saul from Tarsus. Their sustained teaching takes place within a community rather than a private partnership. Acts associates the name Christian with Antioch. Its account presents a church receiving instruction, sharing resources, and becoming a sending community.

Biblical references: Acts 11:19-30

Sources: acts

Prayer, sending, and accountability

Acts names a diverse group of prophets and teachers before the sending of Barnabas and Saul. After the journey, the missionaries return and report what God has done among the Gentiles. Distinguish Syrian Antioch from Pisidian Antioch on maps and in reading plans: confusing the two obscures both the return journey and the significance of the sending church.

Biblical references: Acts 13:1-3 · Acts 13:14 · Acts 14:26-28

Sources: acts

The gospel tested at a table

Galatians reports Paul's confrontation with Cephas when withdrawal from shared meals pressures Gentiles toward Jewish practice. Paul's concern is whether conduct fits the gospel. The precise chronological alignment with Acts is debated, but the ethical stakes are clear: belonging in Christ must not be undermined through a divided table. Welcome involves common life, not merely an abstract statement that outsiders are accepted.

Biblical references: Galatians 2:11-21

Sources: letters, chronology

Sources

- [acts] Acts 7–28; passage references are supplied in each section. <https://ebible.org/web/ACT.htm>
- [letters] Romans through Philemon; passage references are supplied in each section. <https://ebible.org/web/>
- [chronology] Pauline Letters chronology: Acts, the letters, dated external anchors, and explicitly qualified reconstructions. <https://paulineletters.com/explore/timeline>

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