

Communicating the Gospel in the Early Church: Jesus, Peter, and Paul

The communication of the gospel in the early church has two major aspects: global strategy and local methods. The global strategy focuses on the proclamation of the good news of God's revelation in Jesus, Israel's messiah and savior of the world, to as many people as possible. While Jesus' ministry focused largely on the Jewish people, the ministries of Peter and Paul extended the proclamation of the good news of God's revelation beyond the Jewish people to Syrians, Greeks, and Romans. We will discuss relevant promises and prophecies of the Old Testament Scriptures, Jesus' ministry, call, and commission, Peter's global missionary vision, and Paul's global missionary strategy.

The global strategy of Jesus, Peter, and Paul is translated into tangible reality by local methods. We will discuss Jesus and the people of Galilee, Peter's work among the people living in Jerusalem, Samaria, and Judea, and Paul's work among the people living in cities in the eastern Mediterranean, with a focus on Paul's missionary tactics. We will see that the geographical scope of Paul's missionary work was not controlled by a grand global strategy which he used to decide in which cities he should start a new missionary initiative, such as focusing on big cities, or on Roman colonies, or on the regions in which the descendants of Japhet settled, or because he wanted to fulfill the 'program' of Isa. 66:19. The evidence indicates that Paul moved to geographically adjacent areas which were open for missionary work, which means that it was 'local methods' that account for his geographical movements.

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Introduction

1. Reaching the world: Global strategies

1.1 The promises and prophecies of the Old Testament Scriptures

- A. Gen 12:3; 15:18; 17:4-8, 16; 22:16-18

- B. Isa. 11:3-5, 6-10; 49:6; 42:18-20; 52:15; 53:5; 42:6-7; 55:3-5; 56:6-8; 66:19-21

1.2 Jesus' ministry, call, and commission

- A. Mk. 1:17; Mt. 4:19

- B. Mt. 8:5-13 / Lk. 7:1-10; Mt. 8:28-34 / Mk. 5:1-20 / Lk. 8:26-39; Mt. 15:21-28 / Mk. 7:24-31; Mk. 7:32-37; Mk. 8:1-10 / Mt. 15:32-39

- C. Mt. 21:12-13 / Mk. 11:15-17 / Lk. 19:45-46 (Isa. 56:7)

- D. Mt. 28:18-20; Acts 1:8

- E. Diogn. 5:1-5; Clement, *Stromata* 1.15.71

1.3 Peter's global missionary vision

- A. Acts 2:38-39 (Isa. 57:19)

- B. Acts 8:14-25

- C. Acts 10:1–11:18

1.4 Paul's global missionary strategy

- A.* 1 Cor. 9:19-23; Rom. 1:18-32 / Rom. 2:1-3:20; Rom. 3:23
- B.* Rom. 1:14; Gal. 3:28; 1 Cor. 1:26-29; 9:22-23; Rom 15:19
- C.* Contacts with Jews, proselytes, Godfearers, pagans: Acts 13:13-48; 14:8-18
 - 1. with slaves: Acts 16:15-18; 16:23-34
 - 2. with beggars: Acts 13:50
 - 3. with philosophers: Acts 17:18
 - 4. with members of the municipal elites: Acts 17:19-34; 19:31
 - 5. with Roman governors: Acts 13:6-12; 24:1-26:32
 - 6. with synagogue officials: Acts 13:15; 18:8
 - 7. with women: Acts 17:14-15; 17:34

2. Reaching people: local methods

2.1 Jesus and the people of Galilee

- A.* Mt. 4:12, 18, 21, 23-25; 5:1-2; 8:1, 3
- B.* Mk. 1:21, 25, 35
- C.* Lk. 1:14-17, 20-21
- D.* Mk. 6:6; Lk 4:43
- E.* Mt. 10:5-16 / Lk. 9:1-6

2.2 Peter and the people in Jerusalem, Samaria, and Judea

- A.* Mt. 16:18
- B.* Acts 1:12, 13; 2:1, 14; 3:1, 11; 5:12, 20, 25, 42 etc.

- C.* Acts 12:17
- D.* Explaining Scripture: Acts 1:16, 20-20; 2:16-21, 25-36; 3:24-25
- E.* Leading the followers of Jesus: 1:15-26
- F.* Explaining the visible manifestations connected with the Spirit: 2:1-36
- G.* Proclaiming the Jesus as Israel's crucified and risen Messiah: 2:22-36; 3:13-26; 4:10-12; 5:30-32
- H.* Pleading with the Jews of Jerusalem to confess their sins: 2:38-40
- I.* Assisting people to be immersed in water in the name of Jesus: 2:41
- J.* Praying in the Temple: 3:1
- K.* Praying with believers: 4:24-30
- L.* Praying alone and/or with the other members of the Twelve: 6:4
- M.* Healing the sick: 3:1-10; 5:12, 15; 9:32-35, 36-42
- N.* Explaining miracles: 3:11-26
- O.* Confronting believers who want to deceive the church: 5:1-10
- P.* Teaching daily in the Temple court: 5:42
- Q.* Teaching daily in private homes: 5:42
- R.* Suffering repeated arrest: 4:1-3; 5:18; 12:3-4
- S.* Suffering the punishment of flogging: 5:40
- T.* Reporting to the congregation: 4:23
- U.* Supervising the distribution of funds among the needy: 4:35, 37; 6:1-2
- V.* Reorganizing the structure of the church: 6:1-6
- W.* Installing and praying for new ministry leaders: 6:6
- X.* Consolidating the missionary expansion of the church: 8:14-25
- Y.* Helping new converts to receive the Holy Spirit: 8:15-17

- Z.* Confronting and correcting new converts with defective understanding: 8:18-23
- AA.* Preaching about Jesus in Samaria: 8:25
- BB.* Traveling to various cities in Judea: 9:32
- CC.* Visiting believers in Judean towns: 9:32
- DD.* Receiving and responding to a divine audio-vision: 10:9-29
- EE.* Explaining the good news about Jesus to Gentiles: 10:34-43
- FF.* Accepting the hospitality of new converts: 10:48
- GG.* Defending his actions that other believers find problematic: 11:11-18
- HH.* Leaving Jerusalem when his life is in danger: 12:1-17

2.3 Paul and the people living in cities in the eastern Mediterranean

- A.* The geographical scope of Paul's missionary work was not controlled by a grand global strategy which he used to decide in which cities he should start a new missionary initiative, such as focusing on big cities, or on Roman colonies, or on the regions in which the descendants of Japhet settled, or because he wanted to fulfill the 'program' of Isa. 66:19. The evidence indicates that Paul moved to geographically adjacent areas which were open for missionary work, which means that it was 'local methods' that drove his movements.
- B.* Damascus: Acts 9:19-21, 23-25; Gal. 1:17
- C.* Arabia/Nabatea: Gal. 1:17; cf. 2 Cor. 11:32; Acts 9:23-25
- D.* Jerusalem: Acts 9:26-29; Rom. 15:19
- E.* Syria and Cilicia: Gal. 1:26; Tarsus: Acts 9:30; 11:25-26
- F.* Province of Syria: Antioch (Acts 11:26-30; 13:1)
- G.* Province of Cyprus: Salamis, Paphos (13:4-12)

- H.* Province of Galatia: Pisidian Antioch (13:13-52), Iconium, Lystra and Derbe (14:1-21)
- I.* Province of Pamphylia: Perge (14:25)
- J.* Attempt to reach the province of Asia: 16:6
- K.* Attempt to reach the province of Pontus–Bithynia: 16:7
- L.* Province of Macedonia: Philippi (16:10-40), Thessalonica (17:1-9), Berea (17:10-15)
- M.* Province of Achaia: Athens (17:16-34), Corinth (18:1-18)
- N.* Province of Asia: Ephesus (19:1–20:1)
- O.* Province of Illyricum? Rom. 15:19
- P.* Spain? Rom. 15:23-28

3. Conclusion

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