

**How to get involved.**

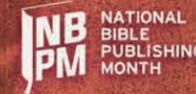
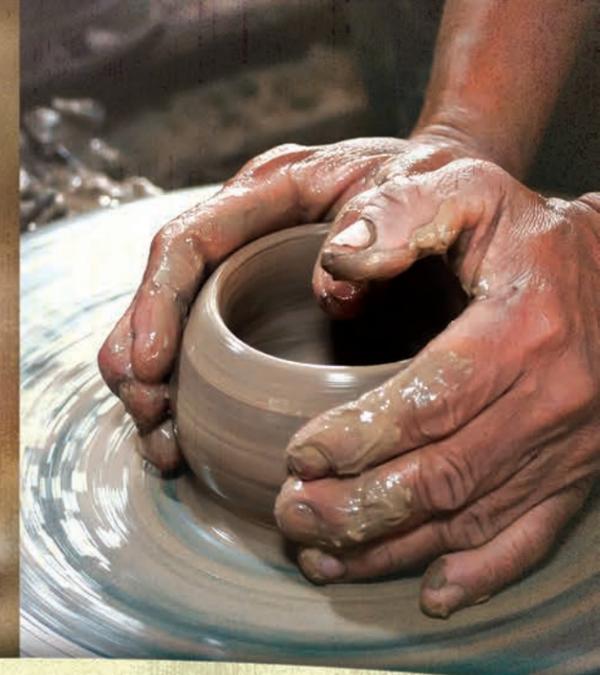
This may be a question you have now that you realize that God uses anyone for His work. Here's my recommendation to you:

**First**, be attentive to needs. Listen for ministry areas in need of help where you would feel comfortable serving. If you don't know of any, then ask. Don't be afraid to ask your pastor or someone else who might be able to help you find something fit for your abilities.

**Secondly**, start small. Find a project you can do behind the scenes to help out in a larger project your church is doing. A great example of this would be decorations for VBS. You will continue to find that even small things can make a big difference in the bigger picture.

So, you may not be the next Adoniram Judson, Jim Elliot, or Amy Carmichael reaching the world for an eternal impact. That's okay. Just be willing to let God use you and your talents where He sees fit. Ultimately it is for His glory and not ours. John 3:30 "He must increase, but I must decrease.

**TEACHER NOTES:**



NATIONAL  
BIBLE  
PUBLISHING  
MONTH

TEEN LEADER GUIDE 2

*the failure*  
of the Church at Jerusalem



*Bearing Precious Seed is a ministry of First Baptist Church of Milford, Ohio*

# The failure of the Church at Jerusalem

## TEACHER NOTE:

**The Successful Beginning:** What began in just a room soon spread to the city of Jerusalem, and then beyond that to the surrounding regions of Judaea. These believers were very active in telling those around them the Gospel; however, they seemed to fall into a one-mode aspect of their commission, focusing only on Jerusalem and Judaea. Through the avenue of persecution, God then scattered them to the rest of the areas where He had commanded them to go. These scattered believers bore the marks of Christ, the Spirit of God, a burning testimony, and were armed with what form of the Scriptures that were then available. Combined with persecution, this act caused the Word of God to grow and to be multiplied (Acts 12:24).

## DISCUSSION:

Consider some of the ministries of your church: Bus Ministry, Youth Group, Nursing Home, Radio Ministry, Vacation Bible School, Master Club etc.) Talk about how the Lord is working in your church, souls that were saved, people's lives restored, or even personal testimonies from your students. Make a list of positive influences your church has on your community.

## READ:

**Acts 2:37-47**

The Church at Jerusalem must have been an exciting place to be! Can you imagine being a part of a service when 3,000 walk the aisle to accept Christ as their Savior? What about seeing a crippled man rise and walk? There was an unmistakable, genuine movement of God.

What is surprising is in spite of such love and devotion that these saints showed for our Lord, they still had a seemingly glaring omission which limited their efforts to only reaching the Jewish people.

Jesus had instructed them in the beginning to target the "house of Israel" (Mt. 10:6; 15:24). His plan for them was to grow in their relationship with Him, and with the work of the Holy Ghost in their lives to go way beyond that. He changed this initial assignment of who they were to reach with the Gospel after He resurrected and was getting ready to ascend into heaven. He clearly told them who they were to reach. He said, "...Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature" (Mk 16:15). He told them specifically in Acts 1:8 to evangelize "Both" in Jerusalem, Judaea, Samaria, and the uttermost part of the earth, "Both" meaning simultaneously. While they were reaching their Jerusalem, it spread to Judaea.

Take a moment to think about that statement, "both in Jerusalem, and in all Judaea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth." Ask your students what they think this means. Where is their Jerusalem? Where could their Judaea be? Who are their Samaritans? Make a list of places they consider as uttermost parts. Now help them understand that Jesus expects them to be His witnesses in "both in Jerusalem, and in all Judaea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth."

The church at Jerusalem had a problem, their Jewish culture only allowed them to focus on Jerusalem and Judaea while Samaria and the uttermost were forgotten. Their reasons for stopping short of Samaria are not specifically portrayed for us in Scripture; however, there are some references that would lead us to a conclusion. Jesus, when going to the Samaritan woman at the well, was asked about His boldness in breaking the ethnic barrier to speak with her (Jn. 4:9-10). In Mt. 15:21-28, when dealing with a woman from Canaan whose daughter was demon possessed, Jesus made reference to the social view of the day. This being the opinion of the Jews that the Gentiles were as dogs (a deep cultural insult). Therefore, in spite of Jesus' best efforts to adequately expose their attitudes, it is likely that those deep-seated prejudices caused the Jerusalem church to set their limits on how far they were willing to go for our Lord. They would surrender to anything in reaching their own people group, but they would not go any further (Acts 2:9-11, 14, 22, 36, 39; 3:12; 4:10; 6:7; 11:19).

**Is there a group of people in your community that you would consider "Samaritans"? How are you trying to reach them with the Gospel? Is there something in your heart that would prevent you from reaching them?**

It has been said for this reason that God brought about the strong persecution and scattered them in Acts 8:1. They would not fully obey and take the Gospel to everyone for whom Jesus died. He then caused them to do it. When Philip (Acts 8) and Peter (Acts 10), being directly sent by God, stepped outside of that realm and went to Gentiles also, the church legalists got upset with them (Acts 11:2-3). Acts 8:25 tells us how Peter, John, and Philip "preached the word" and "preached the gospel" in many villages of the Samaritans on their way back to Jerusalem. The preaching of the Gospel is necessary for salvation (Gospel tracts), but the preaching of the Word of God is necessary to show that saved person how to live. Literally, as the saved Jews were scattered to various lands, they took with them the Word of God available at that time. As a result, "the word of God grew and multiplied," (Acts 12:24).

## DISCUSSION:

Consider the thought process of the Christians at Jerusalem. It would have been much easier to have stayed in their churches in Jerusalem for the rest of their lives instead of taking the Gospel to foreign lands. Why leave the place where God was working to go to a place that was difficult and unfamiliar? They left their friends, their home, their culture, and their language. They went to places where they were not even wanted to give a Message that was new and foreign. They were stretched out of their comfort zone. Why would they want to leave? Discuss how selfish that sounds.

If God wanted you to leave your friends and family to live in a place outside your comfort zone, would you be willing to go? Would you freely surrender or would it take persecution for you to go?

## AVAILABILITY, THE GREATEST ABILITY

BY MIKE CARRUTHERS  
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"You were probably the last one of our children I expected to be in the ministry." This was a statement my mom made to me one evening when we were catching up during a recent visit when my family came to see us. This took place two or three years after we had been serving at *First Baptist Church of Milford* (FBCM). She wasn't saying I was such a bad kid growing up and that I had no place in ministry, but rather that my personality didn't lend itself that way. You see, growing up I was quite the "home-body" and "momma's boy." I wasn't outspoken. I wasn't one to go off to camp or even stay over at a friend's house. Honestly, the thought of going off to college for four years scared me to death. One semester away at college was probably more nights away from home than I had spent away during my entire life at that point. But God can use anyone for His glory. Consider Moses in the book of Exodus, or Gideon in the book of Judges, or David in the books of Samuel, or Mary the mother of Jesus in the Gospels. The list can go on and on. God can use people who may not seem to be the expected ones for His ministry and ultimately for His glory.

### How can God use someone like me?

This question seems to plague young people in our churches. Although this may seem like a hard question to answer, I feel that it actually has a very simple answer - Be Willing. Your talent may not be in speaking to large crowds or organizing large outreach events to get the Gospel to your community, let alone around the world. Yet, your talent is important to God. So be willing and ready to use it when called. My wife and I have had the privilege to participate in several missions trips since we started serving at *FBCM*. Most recently, we went to the unlikely field of Armenia with *firstBible International*. While there, we were able to help do some shopping for and distributing of groceries to needy families. That type of service didn't require the types of skills you would expect someone in missions work to "need." The only prerequisite was just a willingness to help in any way was possible.

### Behind the scenes is my center stage.

This is how I feel when it comes to playing a part in God's ultimate goal of the Great Commission (Matthew 28:19-20). I tend to not enjoy getting up in front of people and giving a lesson or presenting a Bible truth; although, I have done this to the best of my abilities when asked. But give me a job that I can do without the glow of the spotlight and I thrive! Much of what I do on a daily basis is not seen on a grand scale for our entire church congregation or our community or our world, but it makes a difference. Even if my seemingly small contributions go unnoticed by everyone, if they contribute to the larger objectives of our church for our community and our world, then I have accomplished great things for the cause of Christ! Take some time to read and meditate on the truths of I Corinthians 12. This passage of Scripture speaks of the Body of Christ and how all the members have different roles, but with one ultimate goal, and all are doing their part for that goal.