

6th Lesson from the Synoptic Gospels

JESUS' JEWISH AND GENTILE MISSION

**Biblical Passages to support the lesson: Isaiah 42:1/60:11/ Matt 10, 15 / Luke 4/ Acts 13/
Galatians 3:28
(Matthew 20:1-16/ Luke 14:15-23)**

Who is a Jew? The dictionary definitions a “Jew” as “a member of the tribe of Judah,” “an Israelite,” “a member of a nation existing in the land of Israel. The Jews were the chosen people of God, coming from Abraham.

What do the Jews believe in? And what are the basic precepts of Judaism? There are five main forms or sects of Judaism in the world today. They are Orthodox, Conservative, Reformed, Reconstructionist, and Humanistic. The beliefs and requirements in each group differ dramatically; however, a short list of the traditional beliefs of Judaism would include the following:

- ★ God is the creator of all that exists; He is one, incorporeal (without a body), and He alone is to be worshiped as absolute ruler of the universe.
- ★ The first five books of the Hebrew Bible were revealed to Moses by God. They will not be changed or augmented in the future.
- ★ God monitors the activities of humans; He rewards individuals for good deeds and punishes evil.
- ★ Jewish belief does not accept the Christian concept of original sin
- ★ Jewish believers seek to sanctify their lives and draw closer to God by fulfilling mitzvot (divine commandments).
- ★ The 613 commandments found in Leviticus and other books regulate all aspects of Jewish life. The Ten Commandments, as given in Exodus 20:1-17 and Deuteronomy 5:6-21, form a brief synopsis of the Law.
- ★ According to Judaism, the Messiah “anointed one of God” will arrive in the future and gather Jews once more into the land of Israel. There will be a general resurrection of the dead at that time. The Jerusalem temple, destroyed in AD 70 by the Romans, will be rebuilt.
- ★ Beliefs about Jesus vary considerably. Some view Him as a great moral teacher. Others see Him as a false prophet or as an idol of Christianity. Some sects of Judaism will not even say His name due to the prohibition against saying an idol’s name.

The Jews are often referred to as God’s chosen people. This does not mean that they are in any way to be considered superior to other groups. Bible verses such as Exodus 19:5 simply state that God has selected Israel to receive and study the Torah, to worship God only, to rest on the Sabbath, and to celebrate the festivals. Jews were not chosen to be better than others; they were simply selected to be a light to the Gentiles and to be a blessing to all the nations.

Who is a Gentile? The word Gentile is an English translation of the Hebrew word goyim (“people, nations”) and the Greek word ethnē (“nations, people groups, people”). The Latin Vulgate translated these words as gentilis, and this word was then carried over into English as “Gentile.” The term refers to a person who is not a Jew. From the Jewish perspective, Gentiles were often seen as pagans who did not know the true God. During Jesus’ time, many Jews took such pride in their cultural and religious heritage that they considered Gentiles “unclean,” calling them “dogs” and “the uncircumcision.” Gentiles and the half-Gentile Samaritans were viewed as enemies to be shunned (John 4:9; 18:28; and Acts 10:28). Gentiles were long seen as enemies of the Jewish people, yet Christ provided good news for both Jews and non-Jews.

The origin of Jews and Gentiles in the OT: God promised Abraham in Genesis 12 that He would be a **Father of one great nation** (Israel) from his “own flesh and blood,” (Genesis 15:4). But as Abraham and his wife Sarah aged without bearing any children, this promise became increasingly difficult to believe. In time, God fulfilled His promise by providing the couple with a son, Isaac (Genesis 21:2). Now it would actually be possible to build a nation. However, the story took a turn when God told Abraham to sacrifice his only son. Abraham shows his reverential obedience to God by taking Isaac up to the altar. With Abraham’s heart fully surrendered to God’s revealed will, we pick up in Genesis 22, where the angel of the Lord stopped Abraham from killing Isaac and provided a substitute sacrifice (an allegory for the coming Jesus Christ).

God’s promise to bless the nations of the earth – the Gentiles. “The angel of the LORD called to Abraham from heaven a second time and said, ‘I swear by myself, declares the LORD, that because you have done this and have not withheld your son, your only son, I will surely bless you and make your descendants as numerous as the stars in the sky and as the sand on the seashore. Your descendants will take possession of the cities of their enemies, and through your offspring all nations on earth will be blessed, because you have obeyed me’” (Genesis 22:15-18). God’s plan all along was one of blessing for all nations. Because of Israel’s witness to God’s power and love, Gentiles throughout the Old Testament were drawn to the God of Israel. They came to know God by the testimony of his people and the Word he revealed.

Gentiles in the Old Testament: God declared and demonstrated his heart for the nations from the beginning in the way he reached out to Gentiles and welcomed them into the faith. **He reached out to Gentiles.** Nineveh: The Assyrian city, Nineveh, was a sinful Gentile city in desperate need of repentance. God told the Jewish prophet, Jonah, “Go to the great city of Nineveh and preach against it, because its wickedness has come up before me” (Jonah 1:2). Once they heard Jonah’s message, they believed God and repented from evil (Jonah 3:5-8). Then, “when God saw what they did and how they turned from their evil ways, he relented and did not bring on them the destruction he had threatened” (Jonah 3:10). Hagar: God also reached out to Hagar, a Gentile slave of Abraham and Sarah, when she was treated poorly and in need. (Genesis 16.)

He welcomed Gentiles into the faith. Ruth: Ruth, a childless Gentile widow, went with her mother-in-law to live in Israel, seeking refuge under the wings of the God of Israel (Ruth 2:12). God cared for the

women, vulnerable and alone, by providing Ruth with a good husband and a son. She was not only included in God's blessings, but also in the lineage of Jesus Christ. Rahab: The man who married Ruth was the son of another Gentile woman, Rahab. Rahab was spared from death as the city of Jericho burned (Joshua 6:25) because she had faith in the God of Israel (Ruth 2:9-11) and protected Jewish men spying out her country (Ruth 2:4). Rahab is the first recorded Gentile convert.

What was Jesus' mission? Why did Jesus come? Several times in Jesus' life, He shows that He was a man on a mission. He had a purpose, which He intentionally fulfilled. Even at a young age, Jesus knew that He "must be about [His] Father's business" (Luke 2:49). The following passages make it even more clearer of Jesus' mission mindedness.

Mark 1:38 "Let us go on to the nearby villages that I may preach there also. For this purpose have I come."

Matt 9:35 "Jesus went around to all the towns and villages, teaching in their synagogues, proclaiming the gospel of the kingdom, and curing every disease and illness.

Lk 4:18-19 "The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he has anointed me to bring glad tidings to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim liberty to captives and recovery of sight to the blind, to let the oppressed go free, and to proclaim a year acceptable to the Lord

John 6:38 "I came down from heaven not to do my own will but the will of the one who sent me"

Did Jesus come only for the Jews and not the Gentiles? Jesus is the Messiah that the Jews had been anticipating for centuries (Luke 2:25; 3:15). As such, He was born into a Jewish family and was reared according to Jewish law in a Jewish town (Luke 2:27; Galatians 4:4). Jesus selected Jewish disciples, spoke in Jewish synagogues and taught in the Jewish temple and traveled mostly in Jewish areas: Bethsaida, Cana, Capernaum, Chorazin, Gennesaret, Mount of Transfiguration, Nazareth, Sea of Galilee. His mission, in fulfillment of the Jewish prophets, was to the Jewish people first. However, none of this means that Jesus' ministry was limited exclusively to the Jews.

In Matthew 15, there is an incident that, at first, seems to confirm the idea that Jesus came only for the Jews. Jesus was traveling through Tyre and Sidon, a Gentile region, and "a Canaanite woman from that vicinity came to him, crying out, 'Lord, Son of David, have mercy on me! My daughter is demon-possessed and suffering terribly'" (Matthew 15:22). This Gentile woman recognized Jesus as the Messiah ("Son of David"), but "Jesus did not answer a word" (verse 23). As the woman kept up her appeals, Jesus finally responded, but His words seemed to hold little hope: "I was sent only to the lost sheep of Israel" (verse 24). However, the woman did not give up, and Jesus eventually granted her request, based on her "great faith" (verse 28). We should understand Jesus' words here not as an outright rejection of the Gentiles—moments later, He heals the woman's daughter (Matthew 15:28)—but as a fulfillment of prophecy, a setting of priorities, and a test of the woman's faith.

In Jeremiah 50:6, God calls Israel His people and “lost sheep.” The Messiah, spoken of throughout the Old Testament, was seen as the one who would gather these “lost sheep” (Ezekiel 34:23-24; Micah 5:4-5). When Jesus presented Himself as a shepherd to Israel, He was claiming to be the fulfillment of Messianic prophecy (Mark 6:34, 14:27; John 10:11-16; see also Hebrews 13:20; 1 Peter 5:4; and Revelation 7:17).

Jesus’ words to the Canaanite woman also show an awareness of Israel’s place in God’s plan of salvation. God revealed through Moses that the children of Israel were “a holy people to the LORD . . . chosen . . . a special treasure above all the peoples on the face of the earth” (Deuteronomy 7:6). It was through the Jews that God issued His Law, preserved His Word, and sent His Son. This is why, elsewhere, Jesus tells a Samaritan that “salvation is of the Jews” (John 4:22). In Matthew 15, when the Jewish Messiah says that He was sent to “the house of Israel,” He is simply connecting His presence with God’s purpose in Old Testament history. Christ was “born under the law, to redeem those who were under the law” (Galatians 4:4-5).

Every ministry must have priorities and Christ’s ministry was no exception. When Jesus sent His disciples to preach the good news of the kingdom, He expressly told them, “Do not go into the way of the Gentiles, and do not enter a city of the Samaritans. But go rather to the lost sheep of the house of Israel” (Matthew 10:5-6). Jesus did not forbid their preaching to all Gentiles; He did, however, narrow their focus to the areas which should be most receptive—those who knew the Law and were expecting the Messiah. Paul, in his missionary journeys, followed the same priority of preaching to the Jews first (Romans 1:16).

The fact that Jesus helped the Canaanite woman, even though His mission was to the Jews, is a significant detail in the Gospel narrative. Throughout His earthly ministry, Jesus gave other indications that His power and compassion reached to all people. He healed a Roman centurion’s servant (Luke 7:1-10). He traveled through the Gentile region of the Gerasenes (Mark 5:1). He ministered in a Samaritan city (John 4). Jesus came to save everybody (1 John 2:2). Jesus Christ is God Himself (John 1:1). Jesus died on the cross as the payment for all our sins, and He rose from death in resurrection (1 Corinthians 15:3-4). Jesus said He was the Good Shepherd, and He predicted that His flock would be greatly expanded: “I have other sheep that are not of this sheep pen. I must bring them also. They too will listen to my voice, and there shall be one flock and one shepherd” (John 10:16).

It took a while for the early church to recognize that salvation was available to the Gentiles. The Jewish Christians who fled the persecution in Jerusalem went into the Gentile regions of Phoenicia, Cyprus and Antioch, but they were “spreading the word only among Jews” (Acts 11:19). Peter was hesitant to bring the gospel to a Gentile household, but God made it plain that Cornelius was also one of the elect (Acts 10). “Is God the God of Jews only? Is he not the God of Gentiles too? Yes, of Gentiles too” (Romans 3:29). Jesus was the Jewish Messiah, but He had come to offer salvation to everybody. The Messiah was to be a “light for the Gentiles” (Isaiah 42:6). So call on Jesus, because “everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved” (Acts 2:21).

Jesus was born a Jew, according to His human nature, and He ministered in Israel. Is it correct to say that the Gospels only deal with the gentiles unintentionally? The main focus of the Gospels is indeed Israel. Did Jesus minister to gentiles during His earthly ministry? He certainly did.

Jesus' Ministry Strategy: The vision of a kingdom that included Jews and Gentiles was part of Jesus' plan from the very beginning of His ministry. Jesus' first sermon in his hometown of Nazareth demonstrates that His life purpose extended far beyond the nation of Israel. He was not surprised that His own people, the Jews did not receive His message. He then gave an example: "There were many widows in Israel in the days of Elijah ... and Elijah was sent to none of them but only to Zarephath, in the land of Sidon, to a woman who was a widow" (Luke 4:25-26). His hearers knew the rest of the story told in the Old Testament book of 1 Kings 17. Received into a Gentile home, Elijah performed the remarkable miracle of replenishing the flour and oil, then later restored the widow's son to life, not a Jewish widow, but a Gentile!

Jesus did not stop with the example from the ministry of the Prophet Elijah. He rubbed salt into the wounded feelings of His audience with the story of Naaman, the Syrian. He was not only a Gentile but a military leader-captain of the Syrian army, which at that time was at war with Israel and had almost eradicated the hapless little nation (2 Kings 5:1-14). Naaman was stricken with leprosy, and although there were many lepers in Israel, "... none of them was cleansed, but only Naaman the Syrian" (Luke 4:27). These passages show that the grace of God was not limited to the people of Israel alone but the Gentiles too often displayed great faith.

First Strategy: To the Jews Jesus did have a deep conviction of a special mission to the Jewish nation who were God's treasured possession (Exodus 19:5). He expressed this so strongly that some have concluded that He envisioned no mission beyond Israel. But careful consideration of all His words and actions reveals that it was a question of strategy: As Paul later expressed it, His mission was "to the Jew first, and also to the Greek" (Romans 1:16; 2:10, King James Version).

Jesus' concern for Israel was shown in the instructions to the 12 disciples as He sent them out on their first preaching mission. "Do not go in the way of the Gentiles," He said, "and do not enter any city of the Samaritans; but rather go to the lost sheep of the house of Israel" (Matthew 10:5-6). His ministry was restricted primarily, but not exclusively to the Jews (Matthew 8:1-13). Indeed, in the very same context is the prediction that the preaching ministry of the disciples would be extended to the Gentiles; "You shall even be brought before governors and kings for My sake, as a testimony to them and to the Gentiles" (Matthew 10:18).

Luke's Gospel tells of a later preaching mission in which 70 others were sent out two by two (Luke 10:1). Just as the 12 apostles symbolically represent the 12 tribes of Israel, the 70 symbolize the Gentile nations. In Genesis 10, the descendants of Noah are listed, 70 in number. Rabbinical tradition assumed that this was the total number of nations scattered over the earth after the Tower of Babel and repeatedly referred to the 70 Gentile peoples. Jesus may have used this means of symbolizing His long-range purpose. The 12 were sent to heal the sick and announce the nearness of God's kingdom. The 70 were

sent later on a training mission in preparation for their ultimate mission to the whole world. Jesus ministered to the Jews for the Gentiles.

Second Strategy: To the Gentiles: Most of the public ministry of Jesus was conducted in Jewish territory. Under the circumstances, the number of personal contacts with Gentiles recorded in the Gospels is surprising. He healed a Gerasenes (Gentile) demoniac (Matthew 8:28-34). Another time, among 10 lepers healed, one was a Samaritan (a mixed race, half-Jew), and Jesus remarked upon the fact that only the foreigner returned to thank Him (Luke 17:12-19). A Samaritan woman was the sole audience for one of Jesus' greatest dialogues. She received the assurance that the time was near when God would be worshipped, not just in Jerusalem (where the Jews worshipped) or at Mt. Gerizim (where the Samaritans worshipped), but all over the world "in spirit and in truth" (John 4:5-42). A Canaanite (Gentile) woman's faith was rewarded when her daughter was healed.

Another example of Jesus reaching the Gentiles involved a Roman centurion whose servant was healed. Commander of a band of 100 foreign soldiers quartered at Capernaum to keep the peace, this Roman leader was despised by the Jews who resented this "army of occupation." Conscious of his own authority as a military man, he humbly assured Jesus that it would not be necessary for Him to go to his house to heal his servant (thus render Himself unclean – because He was a Jewish man – by entering a Gentile home). "But only say the word, and my servant will be healed," he declared with genuine faith (Matthew 8:8). Jesus turned and announced to the Jewish crowd which was following Him: "Truly, I tell you, with no one in Israel have I found such faith" (Matthew 8:10). He did not stop there but continued with this solemn prediction: "I tell you, many such foreigners shall come from the east and the west to join Abraham, Isaac and Jacob in the kingdom of heaven. But many others who thought they were 'sons of the kingdom' (the chosen people of Israel) shall be shut out" (Matthew 8: 11-12).

Jesus' Teaching in His Last Earthly Week: Jesus went to the temple and found greedy religious businessmen taking advantage of those that had come to worship. So He cleansed this corruption from the court of the Gentiles (the outermost court of the temple in Jerusalem that could be entered by all peoples), declaring sternly, "My house shall be called a house of prayer for all the nations" (Mark 11:17). Standing in the temple, He denounced the chief priests and Pharisees, the official leaders of the Jewish nation, for having failed to be good stewards of the truths of the kingdom which had been entrusted to the chosen people, and solemnly declared, "Therefore I tell you, the kingdom of God will be taken away from you and given to a people producing its fruits" (Matthew 21:43).

When asked concerning the end of the age, Jesus said, in effect: "Don't be misled. It will not be as soon as some think. For this gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in the whole world for a witness to all nations, and after that, the end shall come" (Matt 24:4-14). Concerning His return in glory, He was purposely vague, declaring, "But concerning that day and hour no one knows, not even the angels of heaven, nor the Son, but the Father only" (Matthew 24:36). But when He does come, He promised, "Before Him will be gathered all the nations, and He will separate people one from another as a shepherd separates the sheep from the goats" (Matthew 25:32). After his resurrection, His last words before He went back to heaven gave instruction to His followers: "But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you, and you will be My witnesses in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the

end of the earth” (Acts 1:8). God’s heart has always been for the nations, and the global vision of the risen Jesus remains the same. Jesus’ call is for His followers to reach all peoples with the good news of His love and forgiveness.

Summary of Jesus’ life and ministry to the Gentiles: Although Jesus focused his limited time of earthly ministry teaching and making disciples of Jewish people, he knew the ultimate plan was for all nations to hear the gospel. God’s salvation was, as Paul said, “first for the Jew, then for the Gentile” (Romans 1:16, Romans 2:10). Jesus intentionally interacted with Gentiles in front of his disciples, leaving them an example of God’s heart for the nations. Jesus desired the Gentiles (the nations) in his kingdom. He felt compassion and showed love for Gentiles. He told his disciples to go to the nations with the gospel. The last recorded words Jesus said before ascending to heaven after his death and resurrection were these: “All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age” (Matthew 28: 18-20).

Jesus sent the Apostle Paul to the Gentiles. Jesus appeared to Paul (Acts 9) and named Paul his “chosen instrument to proclaim [his] name to the Gentiles and their kings and to the people of Israel” (Acts 9:15). Paul spent the rest of his life preaching the gospel and making disciples among Gentiles as well as Jews. Jews viewed Gentiles as inherently unclean, which was a significant problem in the early church. Throughout Paul’s ministry, he spoke out against this stigma and preached Jesus to the Gentiles (Romans 3:22, Romans 10:12, Galatians 3:28, Colossians 3:11). The Apostle Peter’s stigma about Gentiles was also challenged. He had a vision (Acts 10:9-22) in which a voice told him, “Do not call anything impure that God has made clean” (Acts 10:15). This referred to Gentiles, and Peter ended up inviting Gentile visitors into his home as guests, which would have made him unclean under Jewish law. But those who are in Christ are cleansed from all their sin by the blood of Jesus (1 John 1:7).

The Bible described Gentiles worshipping in heaven. God showed the Apostle John a vision of heaven, recorded in the Book of Revelation. In it, God’s kingdom was full of people – Jews and Gentiles – worshipping their savior. “I looked, and behold, a great multitude that no one could number, from every nation, from all tribes and peoples and languages, standing before the throne and before the Lamb, clothed in white robes, with palm branches in their hands, and crying out with a loud voice, ‘Salvation belongs to our God who sits on the throne, and to the Lamb!’” (Revelation 7:9-10).

What is the mind of the church now regarding her evangelizing ministry to the people of other faiths? Jesus fulfills the prophecies of Isaiah concerning his mission to the Gentiles (Isaiah 56 and 60) Isaiah clearly proclaims the radical message that God’s blessings are for all people even foreigners and eunuchs who were often excluded from worship and not even considered citizens in Israel. Whatever our race, social position, work or financial situation, God’s blessings are as much for us as for everyone else. We should not exclude anyone in any way.

Ad Gentes – “To the Nations” – is the decree issued by the Second Vatican Council that deals with the missionary activity of the Church. *Ad Gentes* affirms the work of missionary activity within the larger

context of the Church's mission of evangelization to all people, even those who are already Christian. The Church is charged with "preaching the gospel and implanting the church among people who do not yet believe in Christ" (AG 6), yet the activity of the whole church "is by its very nature missionary" (AG 2). God has sent the Church, "the universal sacrament of salvation," to the nations (Ad Gentes) to preach the gospel to all. This responsibility falls on the whole people of God. While there are people who hear a special call to serve as missionaries, spreading the faith is the responsibility of every Christian. Spreading the faith begins with interior conversion and the effort to lead a profound Christian life. Our faith is rooted in scripture and tradition and while the methodology surrounding evangelization may have changed, our mission remains the same. There are still souls who do not know Christ. We are called to spread the knowledge of the love and saving power that only Jesus Christ can give to the ends of the earth. We are called to be the sign of the living Christ Ad Gentes – to the nations.

Vatican II council on non-Christian religions: Nostra Aetate (1965): This is the shortest document issued by the Second Vatican Council. It is a Declaration on the Relation of the Church to Non-Christian Religions.

Firstly the council then makes the point that the Church has a high regard for anything which may "reflect a ray of that truth which enlightens all men." Yet the Church remains duty-bound to "proclaim without fail, Christ who is the way, the truth and the life."

Secondly the Council states the Church's high regard for Muslims, because they worship "God, who is one, living and subsistent, merciful and almighty, the Creator of heaven and earth" and they strive to do His will. Muslims also have some recognition of Jesus and Blessed Mother. Therefore, the Fathers ask all to forget past quarrels and to make a sincere effort at mutual understanding: "For the benefit of all men, let them together preserve and promote peace, liberty, social justice and moral values."

Thirdly the Council acknowledges the special ties which link "the people of the New Covenant to the stock of Abraham", and so explores briefly the relationship of the Church to Judaism. The Church understands that "the beginning of her faith and election is to be found in the patriarchs, Moses and the prophets" and that the salvation of the Church is mystically prefigured in the exodus. She realizes she received the revelation of the Old testament through the Jews, and that the "she draws nourishment from that good olive tree onto which the wild olive branches of the Gentiles have been grafted" (Rom. 11:17-24), because Christ has reconciled Jews and Gentiles through His cross. She also knows that the apostles and Mary were Jews, as were many pillars of the early Church.

Therefore, "the Church awaits the day, known to God alone, when all peoples will call on God with one voice." Since all this is so, the "Council wishes to encourage and further mutual understanding and appreciation". In particular the Fathers note that "neither all Jews indiscriminately at that time, nor Jews today, can be charged with the crimes committed during the passion." Moreover, although "it is true that the Church is the new people of God", yet "the Jews should not be spoken of as rejected or accursed as if this followed from Holy Scripture." Thus the Church opposes every form of persecution and deplores all anti-Semitism. To the contrary, "it is the duty of the Church...to proclaim the cross of Christ as the sign of God's universal love and the source of all grace." Therefore, the Church reproves any discrimination

against people or any harassment of them on the basis of their race, color, condition in life or religion. Accordingly, following the footsteps of the holy apostles Peter and Paul, the sacred Council earnestly begs the Christian faithful to “conduct themselves well among the Gentiles” (1 Pet 2:12) and if possible to be at peace with all men (Rom 12:18) and in that way to be true sons of the Father who is in heaven (cf. Mt. 5:45).

Church’s multicultural mission: The Bible does not use the phrase “world missions,” but God is certainly missions-minded (Luke 19:10), and His love extends to all the world (John 3:16). The salvation of all nations is a concern for every Christian, based on the Sacred Scripture. First World missions is important because God is the Creator of all people; second, God cares about all people equally; and, third, God desires all people to be saved and come to the knowledge of the truth about Jesus Christ (1 Timothy 2:4). Because of God’s attitude toward the people of the whole world, we know that world missions—the evangelization of all the people of the world—is a worthy goal. Eventually, Paul’s missionary work took him to Europe. Always, Paul strived to be a pioneer in world missions: “It has always been my ambition to preach the gospel where Christ was not known, so that I would not be building on someone else’s foundation” (Romans 15:20). Paul preached the gospel “from Jerusalem all the way around to Illyricum” (verse 19); he had plans to go to Spain (verse 24), and he eventually made it to Rome. The book of Acts showcases the missionary fervor of the early church and emphasizes the necessity of world missions.

Questions for discussion

1. What is the mission of the church according to you?
2. Why the mission of the church matters?
3. How do/can you contribute to the life and mission of the church?
4. What is your assessment of Catholic Church’s mission both universally and locally?
5. Any thoughts on our church to be active, relevant and vibrant like the Early Christian Church IN Acts 2:42-47?