Q1. (Faith) Here we see Sts Paul and Barnabas ordaining priests in the Churches they had founded on their missionary journey. They are exercising their authority as bishops. They are clearly identified as Apostles, one who is sent out. St. Paul being called and sent out by the Risen Lord, Himself. In these acts, how do you see a Biblical support for the Sacrament of Holy Orders?

Acts 14:23

They appointed presbyters for them in each church and, with prayer and fasting, commended them to the Lord in whom they had put their faith.

Didache Commentary on Acts 14:23

Appointed: The Greek cheirotonesantes means to "extend one's hand" in order to give authority for a particular position or task. Here, the Sacrament of Holy Orders conferred the authority to lead the Christian community and to celebrate the Sacraments.

Q2. (Hope) Last week’s lesson focused on St. Paul’s sermon to the Jews, and many came to faith in Jesus as the Promised Messiah primarily because Jesus fulfilled the Messianic prophecies of the Old Testament. This week, we see St. Paul preaching to the Gentiles, still referring to Old Testament prophecies; but this time, the prophecies relate to the mission of Sts. Paul and Barnabas and the Old Testament Jews to bring salvation to the Gentiles. What hope does this give you, a modern-day Gentile, to know that the message of salvation and the Sacrifice of Jesus was always intended for you as well as the Jews?

Acts 13:47

For so the Lord has commanded us, ‘I have made you a light to the Gentiles, that you may be an instrument of salvation to the ends of the earth.’”

Q3. (Love) Frequently in Acts, we see that not only did the Jews consider Gentiles to be a source of ritual impurity rendering anyone in contact with a Gentile unclean, but many Jewish Christians carried this belief into Christianity. What must your attitude toward fellow Christians today be in regard to varying practices in the Church with which you may disagree, e.g., Latin Mass or kneeling to receive the Eucharist?

Didache Commentary, Acts 13:44-52

The animosity of Jewish Christians against Gentile Christians, who were considered unclean as they did not follow the Law of Moses, reappears repeatedly throughout Acts. These misunderstandings would eventually require a council to resolve the issue of the Gentile Christians

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By the actions of Sts Paul and Barnabas ordaining priests by extending their hands and granting authority, we see the beginnings of the Sacrament of Holy Orders in the early Church. It is accomplished through the authority of a bishop (Apostle) by the laying on of hands. In this way the Church will grow and spread until the end of time. By this time, the Church has already grown beyond the capability if the original twelve Apostles to manage. (Note that by this time nearly 17 years have passed since the conversion of St. Paul.

Galatians 1:18

Then after three years I went up to Jerusalem to confer with Cephas   
and remained with him for fifteen days

Galatians 2;1

Then after fourteen years I again went up to Jerusalem with Barnabas,  
 taking Titus along also

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If Christianity were only for the Jews, I as a Gentile would be excluded from the faith. The fact that God loves me and every human being who has ever lived, even those in Hell, is beyond my ability to comprehend. It is one of the Graces that God gives that I can only grasp by simply accepting His Word as truth. By accepting His Word, believing in Jesus as my Redeemer, my Lord, and my God, and diligently attempting to live my life in accordance with His Word, I have an absolute faith in His love and mercy that I believe will bring me to eternal life with Him is I persevere to the end.

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I believe that I must be tolerant of other people’s attitudes toward the practices in the Church, yet, I must also hold firm to the teachings of the Church. It is not my responsibility to “correct” the attitudes of other people regardless of my understanding of Church teaching. I must always treat everyone with love and respect. However, when asked, I must always respond with the truth of the teachings of the Church regardless of my, or anyone else’s, personal opinion. For example, I do not care for hymns and responses being sung in Latin. To me they are a pretty noise. I realize other people are very fond of them from the times when they were in common practice. I am tolerant and simply do not express my distaste.