

Gospel for Gentiles

Acts Chapter 11

Act 11:1 **1) Defending Ministry** vs 11:1 - 18

Now the apostles and the brethren who were throughout Judea heard that the Gentiles also had received the word of God

Act 11:2 And when Peter came up to Jerusalem, those who were circumcised took issue with him,

Act 11:3 saying, "**You went to uncircumcised men and ate with them.**" .

- The Jerusalem Jews were not happy about Peter's trip to Caesarea.
- Eating together was more meaningful to this culture than ours. They believed that as one eat and fellowshiped the nature and essence of a people were also shared. So how could a Jew and Gentile eat together?

Act 11:4 But Peter began {speaking} and {proceeded} to explain to them in orderly sequence, saying,

Act 11:5 "I was in the city of Joppa **praying**; and in a trance I saw a **vision**, an object coming down like a great sheet lowered by four corners from the sky; and it came right down to me,

- Defense Point 1 -Peter was in prayer.
- Defense Point 2 -Peter saw a vision. (not his idea)

Act 11:6 and when I had fixed my gaze on it and was observing it I saw the four-footed animals of the earth and the wild beasts and the crawling creatures and the birds of the air.

Act 11:7 "I also heard a voice saying to me, 'Get up, Peter; kill and eat.'

Act 11:8 "But I said, 'By no means, Lord, for nothing unholy or unclean has ever entered my mouth.'

Act 11:9 "But a **voice from heaven** answered a second time, 'What **God** has cleansed, no longer consider unholy.'

- Defense Point 3 -Peter heard from heaven.
- Defense Point 4 -Peter received an instruction from God.

Act 11:10 "This happened **three times**, and everything was drawn back up into the sky.

- Defense Point 5 -Peter confirms vision by seeing it 3x.

Act 11:11 "And behold, at that moment three men appeared at the house in which we were {staying,} having been sent to me from Caesarea.

Act 11:12 "**The Spirit told** me to go with them without misgivings. These **six brethren also went** with me and we entered the man's house.

- Defense Point 6 -Peter says the Spirit told him.
- Defense Point 7 -Peter took witnesses.

Act 11:13 "And he reported to us how **he had seen the angel** standing in his house, and saying, 'Send to Joppa and have Simon, who is also called Peter, brought here;

Act 11:14 and he will speak words to you by which you will be saved, you and all your household.'

- Defense Point 8 -Peter points out that Cornelius saw an angel and received similar instructions.

Act 11:15 "And as I began to speak, **the Holy Spirit fell upon them just as {He did} upon us** at the beginning.

- Defense Point 9 -Peter shows the Holy Spirit moved "just as" He did on day of Pentecost
- This is God's stamp of approval on the gentiles.

Act 11:16 "And I remembered the **word of the Lord**, how He used to say, 'John baptized with water, but you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit.'

- Defense Point 10 -Peter used the teachings of Jesus to support the event in Caesarea.

- Act 11:17 "Therefore if God gave to them the same gift as {He gave} to us also after believing in the Lord Jesus Christ, who was I that I could stand in God's way?"
- Supported by 10 arguments Peter declares "Therefore" this is a God thing.
 - "Who am I that I could stand in God's way"
 - Peter recognized that God was moving in a particular direction. He knew to follow God rather than move the way he wanted and asked God to follow him.
 - Peter remembers Jesus rebuking him when he stood in the way of Jesus when Jesus told him that He needed to go to Jerusalem, suffer, be killed and rise again. Peter has said "*far be it from thee*" and Jesus told Peter "*Get behind me Satan*" and He went on to say "*If any [man] will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me*"
Matt 16:21-24
 - We need to be observing where his Holy Spirit is leading and follow. Not just doing things and asking His blessing.
- Act 11:18 When they heard this, they quieted down and glorified God, saying, "Well then, God has granted to the Gentiles also the repentance {that leads} to life."
- These in Jerusalem understood the divinely lead events, supported by Jesus teachings and they responded by accepting and glorifying what God is doing.
 - These saints were able to go against their internal grain and follow the leading of the Lord.
- Act 11:19 **2) Church in Antioch** vs 11:19 - 26
- So then those who were scattered because of the persecution that occurred in connection with Stephen made their way to Phoenicia and Cyprus and Antioch, speaking the word to no one except to Jews alone.
- Phoenicia an area 25 miles to the north along the coast
 - Cyprus an island in the Mediterranean Sea
 - Antioch 100 miles north of Israel (3rd largest city in Roman Empire Rome, Alexandria, Antioch)
 - These scattered saints of the first church spoke to Jews alone in these areas.
 - (KJV = preach but it is same word in verse 20 as to speak)
- Act 11:20 But there were some of them, men of Cyprus and Cyrene, who came to Antioch and {began} speaking to the Greeks also, preaching the Lord Jesus.
- Act 11:21 And the hand of the Lord was with them, and a large number who believed turned to the Lord.
- Men from Cyprus & Cyrene crossed the barrier and began speaking to Gentiles.
 - 1st mention of Gentiles being targeted with the message of the Gospel
 - These are not Apostles bringing the good news but
 - Verse 19 & 20 use the word "SPEAKING" gk= *laleo* means to talk, to have a conversation
 - Verse 20 uses another word "PREACH" gk= *euaggelizo* means to announce or declare
 - The Lord was in this and many were believing in and turning to the Lord. (Believe and Repent)
 - "THE HAND OF THE LORD" is what our ministries need. Not more people or more money. But we need the Lord's direction and our responsive obedience to Him.
- Act 11:22 The news about them reached the ears of the church at Jerusalem, and they sent Barnabas off to Antioch.
- Denominational Headquarters heard about the Gentiles believing in these areas. But it wasn't by the oversight of an Apostle. Peter witnessing the Holy Spirit falling on the Gentiles in Caesarea was substantiated, but Who were these spreading the gospel in these areas? What are they teaching?
 - In response to these questions the church at Jerusalem sent Barnabas to check it out.
 - Barnabas we saw his generosity for the church in Acts 4:36-37
 - Barnabas we saw his grace and mentoring for Saul (Paul) when others were fearful of him in Acts 9:26-28
- Act 11:23 Then when he arrived and witnessed the grace of God, he rejoiced and {began} to encourage them all with resolute heart to remain {true} to the Lord;
- Act 11:24 for he was a good man, and full of the Holy Spirit and of faith. And considerable numbers were brought to the Lord.

- When Barnabas arrived
 - He could have focused on the wickedness of the city of Antioch. For it was a large city and had temples unto many Greek gods and just as in Corinth, had temple prostitutes and was filled with the same indulgences of the flesh.
 - He could of looked at the task in front of the these saints and judged them according to their ability to meet the assignment.
 - He could have looked that their knowledge and dissuaded them to continue until they knew more.
- But He Saw The Grace OF God.
 - Grace isn't preached in all churches. There is a fear in preaching grace. That it would be abused. Sin then just ask for grace.
 - What is great about grace is that it demands a relationship with the Give of Grace - Jesus.
 - Works of Rules are given by man and is about keeping what man places on a person.
 - Hebrews 13:9 *"Be not carried about with divers and strange doctrines. For [it is] a good thing that the heart be established with grace; not with meats, which have not profited them that have been occupied therein."*
- He Rejoiced and told them to keep it up.
 - With resolute heart. Not with your brain. Resolute = gk 'protheses' to set it forth with purpose
 - We need to be pro-active in putting forth our heart to be true to the Lord. It doesn't just happen to us. We need to set our heart forth on purpose to be His.
 - Colossians 2:6 *"As you therefore have received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk in Him,"* This is how simple it is. Don't make it more difficult than it is. As the grace is given to you walk in it.

Act 11:25 And he left for Tarsus to look for Saul;

Act 11:26 and when he had found him, he brought him to Antioch. And for an entire year they met with the church and taught considerable numbers; and the disciples were first called Christians in Antioch.

- It has been 8 years. Barnabas searches for Saul.
- Barnabas has seen the Gentiles receiving the Gospel. He remembers Saul receiving a commission to preach Jesus to the Gentiles (Acts 9:6+15) So what Barnabas saw in Antioch is just what he remembered was Saul's commission. He needs to be there in Antioch.
- Barnabas and Saul stayed in Antioch for a year teaching.
 - Christians Speak the Word to People vs 19+20
 - Christians Preach Jesus to People vs 20
 - Christians Teach People vs 26
- These were first called "CHRISTIANS" - little Christ or 'ian' meaning 'belonging to' or 'followers of'.
 - 1st century this was a title that was spoken as a derogatory expression. But by the 2nd century, Justin Martyr, uses this term as a title of honor.
 - This causes us to ask of ourselves, do unbelievers recognize in us a striking difference from the rest of the world AND a do they see a close resemblance to Jesus so that they would call us Christian?

Act 11:27 **3) Prophets in Antioch** vs 11:27 - 30

Now at this time some prophets came down from Jerusalem to Antioch.

- "Christian" Prophets from Jerusalem came to Antioch.
 - New Testament Prophets not Old Testament Prophets that ended with John the Baptist. Jesus said *"For all the prophets and the law prophesied until John."* Matt 11:13.
 - Old Testament prophets are looking forward to a Messiah but their seeing or understanding was unclear. 1 Peter 1:10-12 *"Of this salvation the prophets have inquired and searched carefully, who prophesied of the grace [that would come] to you, searching what, or what manner of time, the Spirit of Christ who was in them was indicating when He testified beforehand the sufferings of Christ and the glories that would follow. To them it was revealed that, not to themselves, but to us they were ministering the things which now have been reported to you through those who have preached the gospel to you by the Holy Spirit sent from heaven--things which angels desire to look into."*
 - These New Testament Prophets could see clearly the Messiah. They don't for tell the coming but are now telling forth His arrival.
 - In the New Testament the role of prophet is sparse compared to the Old Testament yet it is still not completely done away with.

- Role now to expound or preach the word or to speak of events coming.

Act 11:28 One of them named Agabus stood up and {began} to indicate by the Spirit that there would certainly be a great famine all over the world. And this took place in the {reign} of Claudius.

- Agabus - Here he is accepted by the church and in Acts 21 we will see him again.
- There was a great famine (Tachicus in 109 AD; Eusebus around 300 AD; Josephus in 94 AD in The Jewish Antiquities; all wrote about famine during the reign of Claudius.

Act 11:29 And in the proportion that any of the disciples had means, each of them determined to send {a contribution} for the relief of the brethren living in Judea.

Act 11:30 And this they did, sending it in charge of Barnabas and Saul to the elders.

- These Christians received the word and are proactive concerning it.
- They take up a relief offering for these in Judea. As they had means and as each determine (or are able - voluntary).
- We also see they determined to give. If a person does not *determine* to give, they often never do.
- Barnabas and Saul head to Jerusalem with the offering.
- Chapter 12 is an interlude back to Peter but at the end of the chapter we return to Barnabas and Saul as they are returning to Antioch.

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