

Acts 11

Acts 11.1-8

V1 – The Jew-Gentile division was similar to the black-white division today and many other divisions between people around the world (Turks and Armenians, etc.)

-The news of Peter's baptism of Cornelius travelled faster than he did

V2 – The Jewish Christians had big questions to ask Peter

-Remember that the Catholic Church says that Peter was the first pope, but here the other apostles took issue with him – they did not consider him the "Holy Father"

-They "came up" to Jerusalem, because Jerusalem was at a higher elevation

-**Who came with Peter?** 6 Jewish brethren (v 12 – "these")

-**Why bring these 6 men to Jerusalem?** As witnesses of what happened

V3 – **What was their disagreement with him?** He had taken the gospel to the Gentiles (the uncircumcised) and had eaten with them

V4 – Notice that he explained everything in an "orderly sequence"

-Remember *1 Cor. 14.33* - ...*for God is not a God of confusion....*

V 5-10 – Peter retold the details of the vision that God gave him with the sheet and the clean and unclean animals - See *Lev. 11.1-18, Deut. 14.3-21*

V11 – **What happened after the vision?** Men sent by Cornelius appeared at the house where Peter was staying

V12 – Peter left with 6 Jewish brethren

V13 – He retells the story of the vision that Cornelius had seen

V14 – Notice that the good moral life that Cornelius had been living was not enough to save him

-He had to obey the words of Peter in order to be saved (concluding with being baptized in water)

V15 – **What happened to Cornelius and his household at that time?** They received the baptism of the Holy Spirit

V16 – **What did Peter recall at that time?** The words of Christ in *Acts 1.5*

V17 – See *Acts 10.47* – The same question (the climax of his speech)

V18 – **Why was this event recorded twice in Acts?** To emphasize the importance of accepting all people into the church, if they humble themselves and are willing to obey the commandments of God in the New Testament

Acts 11.19-26

V 19 – What began the persecution? *Acts 8.2* – the death of Stephen

-Where were they scattered? Throughout Judea and Samaria

-Where had they gone now? Phoenicia, Cyprus, and Antioch

-Why did they preach only to Jews? They had not heard about Peter and the baptism of Cornelius

-What is the usual effect of persecution?

1. Unity of Christians

2. The spreading of the gospel

Antioch in First Century AD: a population of about 500,000 (a very large population for the ancient world)

-It was the crossroads of caravans and had a navigable river to the Mediterranean Sea (about 15 miles away)

-It was located in the middle of snow-covered mountains

-It was an aggressive city and was noted for educational facilities, but also for much wickedness

-It was the location of the first Gentile church, and this congregation sent Paul out on his first 3 missionary journeys

-He reported back to this congregation as his "supporting church"

-Carl Sandburg's poem "Chicago" would have described the city of Antioch of Syria in the First Century: "Tall bold slugger set vivid against the soft little cities...."

V 20 – The men from Antioch preached to Gentiles (they had not heard about Cornelius)

-Simon was from Cyrene – **Read Luke 23.26**

-Also, Lucius was from Cyrene and was a relative of Paul – *Acts 13.1, Romans 16.21*

V 21 – The "anthropomorphic" view of God (giving human features to God) – **Does God have hands?** (a good thought question)

-God is a spirit, so we would assume that he does not have "hands" in the sense that we do

-Remember Michelangelo and the Sistine Chapel and the famous panel of the hand of God giving life to Adam

-It is comforting to think of God in anthropomorphic terms, but the Bible does not present him in that way (except figuratively, as in this passage)

V 22 – Why did the Jerusalem church send Barnabas to Antioch? To find out more about the Gentiles Christians

-Barnabas – See *Acts 4.36* – first mention of him, the "Son of Encouragement"

-A Levite from Cyprus – gave money to the apostles (did not lie, as did Ananias and Sapphira)

-*Acts 9.27* – He introduced Saul (Paul) to the apostles

V 23 – Did he live up to his name? Yes, the Son of Encouragement

V 24 – A "good man" – only used one other time in the New Testament not referring to Jesus

-In *Luke 23.50*, this phrase was used in describing Joseph of Arimathea

-Notice the use of "the Lord" – *v 20, 21, 23, 24*

-**Reason for success at Antioch?** *1 Cor. 1.22-24* – They preached the Lord Jesus Christ and him crucified

V 25 – This refers to *Acts 9.30* – The church at Jerusalem sent Barnabas to Tarsus to find Paul, so that he could help at the church at Antioch

V 26 – Use of "Christian" - **Origin?**

-The people of Antioch were famous for classifying people and philosophies (for example, the Platonists and the Epicurians)

-What had the Christians been called up to this point?

-The saved (*Acts 2.47*)

-The church (*Acts 8.3*)

-The Way (*Acts 9.2*)

-Disciples (*Acts 9.19*)

-Are we to use the term "Christians" today? Yes – Read Acts 26.28 and 1 Peter 4.16

-Read *Gospel Advocate Commentary on Acts*, H. Leo Boles, p. 185

-The prophet Isaiah prophesied that God's people would have a new name in the kingdom – he made this prophecy in 720 BC – here it is being fulfilled over 750 years later!

-Read Isaiah 62.1-2

V 27 – **Prophets?** Refers to teachers

-"Down to Antioch"? Jerusalem was 2550 feet above sea level

V 28 – Date of Famine: 45-48 AD

-Agabus (*Acts 21.10-11*) bound himself (at Caesarea) to warn Paul not to go to Jerusalem

V 29 – Contributions from the church at Antioch were sent to the elders of the church in Jerusalem by Paul and Barnabas

-For those in the "non-institutional" movement who believe that money from one congregation cannot be sent to another congregation, this is a rebuttal of that belief

V 30 - First mention of "**elders**" in the New Testament

-As we go through the book of *Acts*, elders gradually replaced the apostles as the leaders of the church in Jerusalem

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