

Notes for Acts - Chapter 11

John's title for Chapter 11: "Reacting to Change"

A Summary of Chapter 11:

- Verses 1-18 are about the Christian-Jews reacting to the news that Peter "converted" a Gentile!
 1. Peter recounts the story of the "great sheet vision" and how Cornelius saw an angel.
 2. The Christian Jews accepted the news once they heard Peter tell the story.

- Verses 19-26 are about "un-named" Christians converting Gentiles in the City of Antioch.
 1. Antioch is in Syria, a country neighboring Israel.
 2. Peter recounts the story of the "great sheet vision" and how Cornelius saw an angel.
 3. The Christian Jews accepted the news once they heard Peter tell the story.
 4. The Jerusalem Church sends Barnabus to encourage the new Gentile-Church
 5. The new church grows
 6. Barnabus finds Saul to lead this church.

- Verses 27-30 are about a Christian Prophet coming to Antioch to announce a famine.
 1. The church of Antioch believes the prophecy
 2. They take up a collection to help the church in Jerusalem.

Introduction - Prior to Jesus, How did Gentiles get saved?

- It took the acknowledgement that the "God of the Israelites is the true God".
- God judges people fairly based on the evidence that a God exists, and their behavior on that action. This is what Romans Chapter 1 teaches. Here are some examples of Gentiles who were "saved" and those who weren't
 1. Rahab the Harlot from Joshua Chapter 2. She acknowledged that the God of the Israel "spies" was greater than their gods (implied).
 2. King Nebuchadnezzar from the book of Daniel. I believe he was saved because he acknowledged that "Daniel's God is the "God of God's" in Daniel 4 and acted upon it.
 3. In Exodus, Pharaoh's magicians realized that the plagues were done "by the finger of God", (Exodus 8:19) but never did anything to respond/repent, and thus, are not saved.

Notes for Acts - Chapter 11 (cont.)

Verse 10 - Peter gets a visit from 3 men after the "sheet vision" is repeated 3 times.

- Peter figures out the vision refers to the 3 men.
- This verse teaches of the danger of never reading a verse out of context
- Can you imagine the weird interpretations Christians would have of the "sheet-vision" if you read this verse *without* the adjoining verse about the 3 men?
- "A text taken out of *context* becomes a *pretext*".

Verse 21 - The 3 men told Peter "An angel told our boss Cornelius" to come find you.

- Application - Be cautious when people say "God spoke to us and we have a message for you!"
- God hasn't lost your telephone number! In this case God was working "both ends" to bring them together.
- John said, "but test the spirits, whether they are of God;" (1 John 4:1)

Verse 30 - Cornelius arranges for his family & friends to hear Peter's message.

- Charles Spurgeon was once asked, "What does it take to be a great preacher?"
His answer: "A great audience!" (He meant one that is receptive to God's message.)

Verse 41 - Peter says, Jesus was not seen by all the people (when he rose again), but by witnesses whom God had already chosen

- For those who argue "pre-destiny" over "free-will", this is one of those verses!
- Some people use this verse to argue for "limited atonement". That is the belief that Jesus *only* died for those are pre-destined.
- I simply disagree. Christ died for *all*. Some simply *choose* not to accept that free gift God gives. Here is a supporting Bible Verse:
- "And he (Jesus) died for all, that those who live should no longer live for themselves but for him who died for them and was raised again. " (2 Corinthians 5:15 NIV)

Verse 27 - A prophet named Agabus predicted a famine. Luke records that this famine occurred during the reign of Roman Emperor Claudius. Roman Historians verified the famine that was

- "Although there is no record of a single famine that ravaged the whole empire in the time of Claudius, various Roman historians referred to a series of bad harvests and famine conditions during his reign (cf. Suetonius *Vita Claudius* 18:2; Tacitus *Annales* 12.43; Dio Cassius *History of Rome* 60.11; Orosius *History* 7.6.17)". Bible Expositor Encyclopedia

Personal Application:

- The Jewish Christians had to deal with changes in their beliefs. The lessons teach us that God works on our own personal prejudices.
- Are there any believers you look down upon, (i.e. "unclean"), when you know God has forgiven them of their sins?