



Tell Me the Story of Jesus

Lesson 35 – Acts 11

People — Who is involved?

Peter returns to Jerusalem to explain about the acceptance of Gentiles

The Christians are scattered by persecution.

Barnabas goes to Antioch to preach.

Saul is brought by Barnabas to Antioch

Agabus comes from Jerusalem to Antioch

Places — Where does it happen?

Jerusalem – Peter returns to the church there
Antioch in Syria – Barnabas and Saul preach there.

Judea – benevolent relief sent to the churches there from Antioch.

Pearls — What information will help me to understand better?

Vs 1 – The issue of this chapter is the Gentiles receiving the word of God in Christ.

Vs 3 – The initial verbal complaint twofold: 1) Peter had stayed with Gentiles; 2) he had eaten with them. Both of these violated Jewish halakic (traditional and/or legal) aspects of the Law.

Vs 4 – Peter does not argue his staying and eating with Gentiles. He goes directly to the reasons for his going there – he was sent by God.

Vs 12 – Notice, Peter informs us that there were “six” men with him at Cornelius’ house.

Vs 19 – The gospel is spread to Phoenicia (a coastal country north of Israel where Tyre and Sidon had been important cities); to Cyprus (an island in the Mediterranean); and Antioch (a city in Syria).

Vs 22 – Remember Barnabas from 4:36-37 and 9:27.

Vs 25 – Barnabas made a trip to Tarsus (southeastern Asia Minor) to look for Saul.

Vs 26 – Disciples are students who have received and adopted the teachings of a philosopher or teacher.

Vs 26 – It is difficult to determine certainly whether the disciples called themselves “Christians” or others used that name in referring to them. Isaiah said that God would give His people an “everlasting name” (Isa. 55:5)... a “name which the mouth of the Lord will name” (Isa. 62:2). The word “Christian” appears only three times in the New Testament (Acts 11:26; 26:28; and 1 Peter 4:16).

Vs 27 – A prophet is a spokesman who serves as God’s mouthpiece to deliver His message. These were New Testament prophets (see 13:1; 15:32; 21:10; 1 Cor. 12:28-29; 14:29-37; Eph. 2:20; 4:11).

Vs 28 – Agabus helped to relieve the damage by a famine through seeking benevolent help. Agabus also prophesies concerning Paul’s arrest in Jerusalem (Acts 21:10-14).

Vs 30 – Notice that not only are we encouraged by the generosity of the Antioch church; but we are also informed of God’s will concerning how and to whom one church may send to another.

Perspectives — What may I learn from this chapter?

1. Peter confirmed to Jerusalem brethren the need for acceptance of Gentiles as equally Christians.
2. We see here the rapid spread of the gospel to new areas.
3. We learn from example the pattern for church benevolence.