

8/5/07

Acts 11

We come to the chapter eleven which retells the event at the house of Cornelius by Peter.

Now to many it would seem a waste of time and paper to record this twice but God wastes neither time nor allows superfluous revelation to be recorded.

1. It marks God's direct revelation of accepting the Gentiles apart from the law.
2. Acts contains just what God intended to communicate His will, not everything that took place.
3. The longest roll used was about 35 feet long, approximately the size of Acts, we are told.

11:1-18 The defense of Peter at Jerusalem.

11:1-3 The inquiry came from the church.

- 1) The news of Cornelius had been born again reached Judea. vs. 1
 - a) The apostles, the eleven.
 - b) The brethren, believers in Christ.
 - c) The word of God is the Gospel.
 - d) They heard, it is interesting how things can get twisted and turned into gossip traveling like a fire.

- 2) The apostle Peter arrived at Jerusalem. vs. 2-3
 - a) The time between Cornelius and this is not stated, some believe about two weeks or so.
 - b) The circumcision were the Jewish Christians.
 - c) They contended "diakrino" with Peter, meaning to take sides against, to make a change.
 - d) The charges were two. vs. 3
 - 1)) He went in to a Gentile home.
 - 2)) He ate with Gentiles.

11:4-17 The report to the church by Peter.

- 11:4 Peter responded to the allegations.
- 1) The word "But" marks the sharp adversative situation.
 - 2) Peter gave an account of the events in their order or succession..

11:5-10 The vision Peter experienced at Joppa.

11:5-6 The vision.

- 1) The entire account is not as detailed, more of a summary, emphasizing the important things and it is in the first person.

- 2) There are minor differences but they only complement the account, instead of contradicting it.
- 3) He named the city is where the vision took place, Joppa. vs. 5
- 4) He stated he was praying at the time and that he went into a trance. vs. 5
- 5) “He then told them he saw a vision, an object descending like a great sheet, let down from heaven by four corners; and it came to me. vs. 5
- 6) He observed it intently and considered, seeing four-footed animals of the earth, wild beasts, creeping things, and birds of the air. vs. 6

11:7-10 The visions message.

- 1) The authority behind the message was from heaven commanding Peter personally “Rise, Peter; kill and eat.” vs. 7
- 2) The reluctance of Peter was clearly stated, “But I said, ‘Not so, Lord! For nothing common or unclean has at any time entered my mouth.’” vs. 8
- 3) The sharp reproof and correction from heaven was addressed to Peter. vs. 9
 - a) The voice from heaven rejected Peter words. vs. 9a
 - b) The voice from heaven was commanding Peter to agree with the

will and revelation from heaven,
 “What God has cleansed you must not call common.” vs. 9b

- 4) The divine source of the vision was confirmed. vs. 10
 - a) Three times this occurred.
 - b) All the unclean animals were drawn up again into heaven.

11:11-14 The reception of the servants of Cornelius and the visit to Cornelius.

- 1) The divine timing was emphasized, “At that very moment, the three men sent by Cornelius were standing before the house of Simon the Tanner. vs. 11
 * God is never late, always on time!
- 2) The divine instruction was given, “Then the Spirit told me to go with them, doubting nothing, without hesitation.” vs. 12a-b
- 3) The human witnesses were provided, six brethren accompanied Peter and went with him into the house of Cornelius. vs. 12c-d
 * To verify and confirm the work of God to those in Jerusalem!
- 4) The personal account from Cornelius was related. vs. 13
 - a) That he had seen an angel standing in his house. vs. 13a

- b) That the angel told him to him, “Send men to Joppa, and call for Simon whose surname is Peter,” vs. 13b-d
- c) That Peter would tell him words by which he and all your household would be saved. vs. 14
 - * The gospel of Good news, in and through the person of Jesus Christ!

11:15-17 The pouring out of the Holy Spirit on the people.

- 1) Peter reported he began to speak, the Holy Spirit fell upon them, as in the day of Pentecost. vs. 15
 - a) The word upon “epi” was the promise of Jesus. Acts 1:8
 - b) The empowerment for service, the Baptism of the Holy Spirit.
- 2) Peter reported that when it took place he remembered the word of the Lord, how He said, ‘John indeed baptized with water, but you shall be baptized with the Holy Spirit.’ vs. 16
 - a) Making the clear distinction between the baptism of the Spirit and water.
 - b) Making the clear distinction between the agency of the Spirit of God and man. Acts 1:5
- 3) Peter reported that God had done all of this. vs. 17

- a) God was responsible for the pouring out of the Holy Spirit as with them, “If therefore God gave them the same gift as He gave us.” vs. 17a
- b) God did it as evidence of their faith in Jesus as they, “When we believed on the Lord Jesus Christ.” vs. 17a
- c) God was no one Peter wanted to fight, “Who was I that I could withstand God?” vs. 17b
 - * Peter declared his refusal to object to the sovereign work of God.

11:18 The affirmation that Gentiles could be saved.

- 1) The saints at Jerusalem remained silent, God set the rules for his church not man!
- 2) The saints at Jerusalem gave glory to God, no man could take the credit!
- 3) The saints at Jerusalem concluded that God had equally given to the Gentiles repentance to life, it is a gift of God to all who believe and repent!

11:19-30 **The ministry of Barnabas and Saul at Antioch.**

11:19 The persecution since Stephen resulted in going to other nations northwards. Acts 8:4

1) Phoenicia means “land of palm trees” a territory of the province of Syria, situated on the coast of the Mediterranean between the river Eleutherus and the promontory of Carmel, some 30 miles long and 3 broad.

* Modern day Lebanon, the cities of Tyre and Sidon.

2) Cyprus was an Island on the Mediterranean Sea from which Barnabas was from. Acts 4:36

3) Antioch became the missionary center distinct from Jerusalem.

a) It was the third largest city of the Roman world, Rome being first then Alexandria

b) It was located on the Orontes River, 15 miles from the Mediterranean Sea.

c) It was founded by Seleucus Nicator of the Seleucid dynasty and was the capital of Syria, named after his father.

d) It was a wealthy city called “The eye of Asia”, with a large Jewish colony but prominently Greek and the city was a byword for luxury and immorality.

e) It had a temple to Daphne who was said to have been changed into a laurel bush to avert Apollos sexual pursuit, the sacred priestesses in the

laurel groves reenacted the preset with sexual rites only five miles outside the city.

f) It’s population was about 500,000.

4) Preaching the word only Jews only.

11:20-21 The Christians became more zealous to reach out to with the Gospel.

1) Men from Cypress and Cyrene arriving at Antioch preached the Lord Jesus to Hellenist. vs. 20

a) Cyrene is in north Africa.

b) The term Hellenists is used of the Jews of Greek culture but in this instance these have to be Greeks because the previous verse said they preached to the Jews only. vs.19d

2) The evidence of the Lord Jesus directing the work is stated. vs. 21

a) The hand of the Lord was with them. vs. 21a

b) A great number believed and turned to the Lord. vs. 21b

11:22-24 The man Barnabas was sent by the church at Jerusalem.

1) News of the word reached Jerusalem, so they sent Barnabas. vs. 22

a) Possibly to confirm the work.

b) Peter and John had been sent to Samaria. Acts 8

- 2) The arrival of Barnabas. vs. 23
 - a) He saw the grace of God and was glad. vs. 23a-b
 - b) He encouraged them all that with purpose of heart they should continue with the Lord. vs. 23c
- 3) The commentary on Barnabas. vs. 24
 - a) He was a good man.
 - b) He was full of the Holy Spirit.
 - c) He was full of faith.
 - d) The result was that many people believed.
 - e) He was from Cyprus. Acts 4:36; 21:16

11:25-26 The man Barnabas sought out Saul.

- 1) Barnabas departed for Tarsus to seek Saul. vs. 25
 - a) Barnabas knowing about Saul's background and the work he was doing up in Tarsus concluded Paul to be the man for the work to disciple the Gentiles.
 - b) Barnabas I am sure was led of by the Holy Spirit, being God's timing after years of Paul's absence in the region.
 - c) Barnabas sought out Paul a distance of 125 miles northwest of Antioch.
- 2) Barnabas finding Saul brought him to Antioch. vs. 26

- a) The Greek phrase "found him" suggests Saul was not easy to find and that he searched out for him. vs. 26a
- b) Remember Saul had been converted for a number of years by now.
 - 1)) He was saved on the Damascus Road in 35 A.D.
 - 2)) He went to Jerusalem in 38 A.D.
 - 3)) He now was sought out at Tarsus in 43 A.D.
- c) They both assembled for a year with the church and taught a great many people. vs. 26b
 - 1)) The year spent at Antioch was 43-44 A.D., Barnabas pouring himself into Saul!
 - 2)) The need was for teaching to provide assurance of mind and heart for stability in the faith, the very purpose of the church. Eph. 4:11-16
- d) The disciples were first called Christians at Antioch. vs. 26
 - 1)) They were called those on "the way" prior to being called Christians. Acts 9:2; 24:14, 22
 - * They were also called Nazarenes, those on the way, brethren and saints prior to Christians.

- 2)) The term Christian appears only three times in the New Testament. Acts 26:28, 1Pet. 4:16
 * The term Christians was used by Rome with contempt but the believers took it in honor of Christ.

11:27-30 The man Barnabas and Saul were guided by God's Spirit at the ministry at Antioch.

- 1) The Prophets from Jerusalem came to Antioch, in those days, 43-44 A.D. vs. 27
 - a) This is the first time prophets appear in the book of Acts of the New Testament.
 - b) The office of prophets once again affirmed the work at Antioch to be of God.
 - c) The primarily task of a prophet was to be the mouthpiece for God **NOT** to predict the future, this was the secondary function!
 * Today too many are using this office to ascribe to them some special anointing and level of spiritual importance, which is unscriptural!
- 2) The particular prophet was Agabus. vs. 28

- a) He prophesied by The Spirit about a famine to come upon the whole Roman world. vs. 28a-b
- b) He did so in the days of Claudius Caesar. vs. 28c
 - 1)) Claudius Caesar reigned in 41-54 A.D.
 - 2)) Josephus tells of famine between 44-48 A.D.
- c) He will appear again when Paul returns to Jerusalem after his third missionary journey, declaring Paul would be bound at Jerusalem. Acts 21:10
- 3) The disciples , each according to their ability sent relief to the brethren in Judea. vs. 29-30
 - a) The Gentiles at Antioch demonstrated the love of Christ to the Jews. vs. 29
 - 1)) It was according to each person's ability.
 - 2)) The word relief "diakonia" means to serve, or wait on tables.
 - b) The gift was sent to the elders at the hand of Barnabas and Saul. vs. 30
 - 1)) It was voluntary.
 - 2)) It was at the discretion of each individual.
 - 3)) It was from the heart.
 - 4)) It was Paul's second time in Jerusalem.