

ACTS CHAPTER 11

Peter Reports at Jerusalem (Acts 11:1-18)

Now the apostles and the brethren (those united in Christ) who were throughout Judea heard that the Gentiles also had received the word of God.



Map 3. Shows the location of Caesarea and Jerusalem

And when Peter came up to Jerusalem, those who were circumcised (Jewish Christians) argued with Peter, saying, “You went to uncircumcised men and ate with them.”

But Peter began speaking and proceeded to explain to them in orderly sequence, saying, “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, 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.”

“I also heard a voice saying to me, ‘Get up, Peter; kill and eat.’

“But I said, ‘By no means, Lord, for nothing unholy or unclean has ever entered my mouth.’

“But a voice from heaven answered a second time, ‘What God has cleansed, no longer consider unholy.’

“This happened three times, and everything was drawn back up into the sky.”

“And behold, at that moment three men appeared at the house in which we were staying, having been sent to me from Caesarea.”

“The Spirit told me to go with them without hesitation. These six brethren also went with me and we entered the man’s house.”

“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; and he will speak words to you by which you will be saved, you and all your household.’

“And as I began to speak, the Holy Spirit fell upon them just as He did upon us at the beginning.

“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.’

“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?”

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.”



Photo 9. Panorama of the Temple Mount from the Mount of Olives

The Church at Syrian Antioch (Acts 11:19-30)

So then those who were scattered because of the persecution that occurred in connection with Stephen (see Acts 6-7) travelled to Syrian Phoenicia (modern-day Lebanon). They also travelled to Cyprus and Syrian Antioch, speaking the word to no one except to Jews alone.

Syrian Antioch is nowadays located near the modern city of Antakya in Turkey. It was founded near the end of the 4th century BC and was the third city of the Roman empire (after Rome in Italy and Alexandria in Egypt). It was 24 kilometers (15 miles) inland from the northeast corner of the Mediterranean. Once a great metropolis of half a million people, it declined to insignificance during the Middle Ages.



Map 4.
Shows the location of Syrian Phoenicia, Cyprus, Syrian Antioch, Alexandria and Cyrene

But there were some of them, men of Cyprus and Cyrene, who came to Syrian Antioch. Cyprus is an island in the northeastern Mediterranean; the home of Barnabas (Acts 4:36). Cyrene was an ancient Greek colony and then a Roman city in present-day Lybia. These men began speaking to the Greeks (not Greek-speaking Jews, but Gentiles) also, preaching the Lord Jesus.

And the hand of the Lord was with them. This indicates divine approval and blessing, sometimes evidenced by signs and wonders. And so a large number who believed turned to the Lord. The news about them reached the ears of the church at Jerusalem, and they sent Barnabas off to Syrian Antioch.



Photo 10: Ancient Roman road located in Syria which connected Syrian Antioch and Chalcis (an ancient city in Syria)

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; for he was a good man, and full of the Holy Spirit and of faith. And considerable numbers were brought to the Lord. And he left for Tarsus to look for Saul; and when he had found him, he brought him to Syrian Antioch. And for an entire year they met with the church and taught considerable numbers; and the disciples were first called Christians in Syrian Antioch. Christians is an appropriate title for those followers of Christ or belonging to Christ (the meaning of the term).

Now at this time some prophets came down from Jerusalem to Syrian Antioch. Prophets were believers who had the gift of prophecy. Therefore they could preach, exhort, explain or foretell. One of them named Agabus stood up and began to indicate by the Spirit that there would certainly be a great scarcity of food all over the world. And this took place in the reign of Claudius, who was a Roman Emperor from 41 to 54. 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. And this they did, sending it in charge of Barnabas and Saul to the elders.

Why did the disciples sent a contribution for the relief of the Judean brethren knowing that there would be a great scarcity of food all over the world? Most probably because these brethren were very poor after having sold houses and lands (Acts 2:44,45; 4:34,35).

QUESTIONS OF ACTS CHAPTER 11

ALL ANSWERS CAN BE FOUND IN THE TEXT OF CHAPTER 11

1. Those who were circumcised argued with Peter about what?

2. What animals did Peter see in the object coming down from the sky?

3. At least how many people travelled from Joppa to Caesarea?

4. What word of the Lord did Peter remember after the Holy Spirit fell upon Cornelius and all his household?

5. To where travelled those who were scattered because of the persecution that occurred in connection with Stephen (see Acts 6-7)?

6. Where is Syrian Antioch nowadays located?

7. From where came the men who began speaking to the Greeks in Syrian Antioch?

8. What news reached the church at Jerusalem and whom did they sent off?

9. What did Barnabas do after his arrival in Syrian Antioch?

10. Where did Barnabas find Saul and what did they both do in Syrian Antioch?

ACTS CHAPTER 11 (NEW AMERICAN STANDARD BIBLE)

Peter Reports at Jerusalem

1Now the apostles and the brethren who were throughout Judea heard that the Gentiles also had received the word of God. **2**And when Peter came up to Jerusalem, those who were circumcised took issue with him, **3**saying, "You went to uncircumcised men and ate with them." **4**But Peter began *speaking* and *proceeded* to explain to them in orderly sequence, saying, **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, **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. **7**"I also heard a voice saying to me, 'Get up, Peter; kill and eat.'**8**"But I said, 'By no means, Lord, for nothing unholy or unclean has ever entered my mouth.'**9**"But a voice from heaven answered a second time, 'What God has cleansed, no longer consider unholy.'**10**"This happened three times, and everything was drawn back up into the sky. **11**"And behold, at that moment three men appeared at the house in which we were *staying*, having been sent to me from Caesarea. **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. **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; **14**and he will speak words to you by which you will be saved, you and all your household.'**15**"And as I began to speak, the Holy Spirit fell upon them just as *He did* upon us at the beginning.**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.'**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?" **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.*"

The Church at Antioch

19So 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. **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. **21**And the hand of the Lord was with them, and a large number who believed turned to the Lord. **22**The news about them reached the ears of the church at Jerusalem, and they sent Barnabas off to Antioch. **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; **24**for he was a good man, and full of the Holy Spirit and of faith. And considerable numbers were brought to the Lord. **25**And he left for Tarsus to look for Saul; **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.

27Now at this time some prophets came down from Jerusalem to Antioch. **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. **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. **30**And this they did, sending it in charge of Barnabas and Saul to the elders.

Scripture taken from the NEW AMERICAN STANDARD BIBLE(r),

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