

**"The Church at Antioch"**

**Acts 11:19-30**

**Introduction:** Last week in our study of Acts we looked at Acts 11:1-18. In these verses Peter returned to Jerusalem and there he was confronted by the Jews because he had eaten with the Gentiles. Peter then detailed to the Jews how God had led him to the house of Cornelious and how all the events had been ordained by the Lord. Peter pointed to three points of evidence to show to the Jews that it was God's will for him to go to the Gentiles. He pointed to the vision, the Spirit, and the Word. He explained that he too was just like they were but he could not possibly stand in the way of God.

**Notice Acts 11:17-18**

Now as we move on in the next verse the focus is going to change. The Holy Spirit is going to focus upon the church that will develop in Antioch.

**The Results of the Persecution**

**Notice Acts 11:19**

Here in this verse the Holy Spirit is taking us back to what happened in chapter 8.

**Acts 8:1**

*And Saul was consenting unto his death. And at that time there was a great persecution against the church which was at Jerusalem; and they were all scattered abroad throughout the regions of Judaea and Samaria, except the apostles.*

Acts 11 gives to us a little more information for it is here that we see the persecuted believers went out preaching the Gospel but only to the Jews. Satan attempted to put out the "fire" of the Gospel but what happened was, the harder he stomped the more the sparks flew out igniting other small "fires" that would turn into major "fires". It was not a mission board that sent the believers out, it was persecution. There was a problem however and that was that they were only preaching to the Jews. They were reluctant to share the Gospel with the Gentiles, but this was all about to change. These believers did not know what Peter learned at the house of Cornelious. It is interesting to look at what Jesus had told His disciples concerning the Great Commission.

**Matthew 28:18-20**

<sup>18</sup> *And Jesus came and spake unto them, saying, All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth.*

<sup>19</sup> Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost:

<sup>20</sup> Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world. Amen.

**Mark 16:14-16**

<sup>14</sup> Afterward he appeared unto the eleven as they sat at meat, and upbraided them with their unbelief and hardness of heart, because they believed not them which had seen him after he was risen.

<sup>15</sup> And he said unto them, Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature.

<sup>16</sup> He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned.

**Luke 24:45-47**

<sup>45</sup> Then opened he their understanding, that they might understand the scriptures,

<sup>46</sup> And said unto them, Thus it is written, and thus it behooved Christ to suffer, and to rise from the dead the third day:

<sup>47</sup> And that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his name among all nations, beginning at Jerusalem.

Those who were scattered and preaching to the Jews were not enlightened to the fact that the Gospel was for the entire world.

**Notice Acts 11:20**

This verse contains some very interesting information. There were some believers mixed in with those mentioned in the previous verse and these unnamed believers carried the Gospel to the Grecians. The Grecians were Gentiles. This took place in the city of Antioch. This city was the third largest in the Roman Empire and it was the most immoral. It was certainly a city where Satan had set up a workshop of corruption. Temple prostitution was widespread in this city. It was truly a city where the Gospel was needed. Let us take a moment and consider the believers who made the decision to share the Gospel with the Gentiles here. Notice the words of Barclay on these people.

*"Here we have a truly amazing thing. The Church has taken the most epoch-making of all steps; and we do not even know the names of the people who took that step. All we know is that they came from Cyprus and Cyrene. They go down to history as nameless pioneers of Christ. It has always been one of the tragedies of the Church that men have wished to be noticed and named when they did something worthwhile. What the Church has always needed, perhaps more than anything else, is people who never care who gains the credit for it so long as the work is done."*

Why did they make the choice to preach to these Gentiles? We are not told but we can be sure the Lord burdened their hearts because He is not willing that any should perish. Most likely, the burden was compassion for the people as they watched them go about their lives with no direction while living for the lusts of the flesh. Antioch was much like Corinth and therefore immorality was right out in the open. Whatever stirred them to share the Gospel to the Gentiles one thing we can be sure of was that it was Jesus Christ in them.

**Matthew 9:35-36**

*<sup>35</sup> And Jesus went about all the cities and villages, teaching in their synagogues, and preaching the gospel of the kingdom, and healing every sickness and every disease among the people.*

*<sup>36</sup> But when he saw the multitudes, he was moved with compassion on them, because they fainted, and were scattered abroad, as sheep having no shepherd.*

**Mark 6:34**

*<sup>34</sup> And Jesus, when he came out, saw much people, and was moved with compassion toward them, because they were as sheep not having a shepherd: and he began to teach them many things.*

**Notice Acts 11:20 again.**

At the end of the verse, we are told that they preached "THE LORD JESUS" to them. It is important to notice that they did not preach the "Messiah" or the "Christ". Why is this important? We must understand that these Gentiles were not like the Gentiles at the house of Cornelious. Cornelious and those with him were believers and they had knowledge of God and the Old Testament., The Gentiles at Antioch had no Old Testament knowledge therefore it was needful for those preaching to bring the Gospel right down to their level.

**Application:**

This is a great reminder to all of us today that the Gospel is not complicated and it needs to be presented to people on their level. Many people make salvation and the Gospel so complicated that people struggle to get their minds wrapped around it.

**1 Corinthians 15:1-4**

Moreover, brethren, I declare unto you the gospel which I preached unto you, which also ye have received, and wherein ye stand;

<sup>2</sup> By which also ye are saved, if ye keep in memory what I preached unto you, unless ye have believed in vain.

<sup>3</sup> For I delivered unto you first of all that which I also received, how that Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures;

<sup>4</sup> And that he was buried, and that he rose again the third day according to the scriptures:

The bad news is that we are all sinners, the Good News is that God provided a Savior to die in our place and so that we can be forgiven and our Savior is alive today and He is the Son of God. That is the Gospel. We are saved by grace through faith. It is God's GRACE and FAITH PLUS NOTHING that saves us.

**Ephesians 2:8-9**

<sup>8</sup> For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God:

<sup>9</sup> Not of works, lest any man should boast.

**Notice Acts 11:21**

Here are the results of preaching the Gospel in Antioch. I want to draw your attention to the end of the verse that tells us "**Many believed and turned unto the Lord**". We see in this verse both faith and repentance. The repentance is these people turning away from their sin and turning to the Lord. This statement makes it quite clear that every unbeliever is moving in a direction away from the Lord. They are on a path on which they are chasing the lusts of the flesh.

**Ephesians 2:1-3**

And you hath he quickened, who were dead in trespasses and sins;

<sup>2</sup> Wherein in time past ye walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience:

<sup>3</sup> Among whom also we all had our conversation in times past in the lusts of our flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind; and were by nature the children of wrath, even as others.

Repentance is not preached much today but it is what happens when a person is truly saved. Let us notice the verses that picture this.

**Acts 9:35**

<sup>35</sup> And all that dwelt at Lydda and Saron saw him, and turned to the Lord.

**Acts 14:12-15**

<sup>12</sup> And they called Barnabas, Jupiter; and Paul, Mercurius, because he was the chief speaker.

<sup>13</sup> Then the priest of Jupiter, which was before their city, brought oxen and garlands unto the gates, and would have done sacrifice with the people..

<sup>14</sup> Which when the apostles, Barnabas and Paul, heard of, they rent their clothes, and ran in among the people, crying out,

<sup>15</sup> And saying, Sirs, why do ye these things? We also are men of like passions with you, and preach unto you that ye should turn from these vanities unto the living God, which made heaven, and earth, and the sea, and all things that are therein:

**Acts 15:19**

<sup>19</sup> Wherefore my sentence is, that we trouble not them, which from among the Gentiles are turned to God:

**Acts 26:18-20**

<sup>18</sup> To open their eyes, and to turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins, and inheritance among them which are sanctified by faith that is in me.

<sup>19</sup> Whereupon, O king Agrippa, I was not disobedient unto the heavenly vision:

<sup>20</sup> But shewed first unto them of Damascus, and at Jerusalem, and throughout all the coasts of Judaea, and then to the Gentiles, that they should repent and turn to God, and do works meet for repentance.

**1 Thessalonians 1:9-10**

<sup>9</sup> For they themselves shew of us what manner of entering in we had unto you, and how ye turned to God from idols to serve the living and true God;

<sup>10</sup> And to wait for his Son from heaven, whom he raised from the dead, even Jesus, which delivered us from the wrath to come.

Now let me show you something that we looked at in our Kingdom study.

**Matthew 13:18-20**

<sup>18</sup> Hear ye therefore the parable of the sower.

<sup>19</sup> When any one heareth the word of the kingdom, and understandeth it not, then cometh the wicked one, and catcheth away that which was sown in his heart. This is he which received seed by the way side.

<sup>20</sup> But he that received the seed into stony places, the same is he that heareth the word, and anon with joy receiveth it;

<sup>21</sup> Yet hath he not root in himself, but dureth for a while: for when tribulation or persecution ariseth because of the word, by and by he is offended.

The seed that fell upon stony ground is a picture of the sinner who receives the Gospel with joy and endures only for a short time. As we considered before that which is missing in this person's life is brokenness and repentance.

**Conclusion:**

**Acts 17:30**

<sup>30</sup> And the times of this ignorance God winked at; but now commandeth all men every where to repent: