

the remotest part of the earth

#13, first called Christians – Acts 11: 1-30

The news had preceded Peter on his return to Jerusalem. In fact, the brethren were speaking, about the events in Caesarea, through out all Judea. So in the city, there were those who wanted an explanation.

1 Now 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,

[1.] v:1-3, You went to uncircumcised men, **How can we tell that, to these new believers, the works of the law were of more value than a sinner plucked from hell?**

[2.] question [1.], In your congregation, what is a good attitude in dealing with "the old ways"?

[3.] v:4, Peter began speaking, **There is a good lesson here. As Peter explained the events, how do you think his voice sounded?**

[4.] v:4 again, Why is reporting in an "orderly sequence" important?

v:5-10, Something to think about

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 (**heavens**); 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 (**heavens**).

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This is the second time in our study that this “heavenly” vision is documented. The first time was in lesson 10. The elements of these verses are: 1) an object (from heaven) containing various animals, creatures and birds of the earth. 2) command to kill and eat. 3) Peter’s refusal and the statement, ‘ What God has cleansed, no longer consider unholy. 4) Finally the whole thing was repeated 3 times and the object returned to heaven.

1st, Consider: The object contained all nations (Jews and Gentiles).

2nd, Peter would not eat because law forbade it.

3rd, With the law removed, those unholy or unclean would be cleansed.

Bearing these in mind and looking at Eph 2:11-16, Therefore remember that formerly you, the Gentiles in the flesh, who are called “Uncircumcision” by the so-called “Circumcision,” which is performed in the flesh by human hands – 12 remember that you were at that time separate from Christ, excluded from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers to the covenants of promise, having no hope and without God in the world. 13 But now in Christ Jesus you who formerly were far off have been brought near by the blood of Christ. 14 For He Himself is our peace, who made both groups into one and broke down the barrier of the dividing wall, 15 by abolishing in His flesh the enmity, which is the Law of commandments contained in ordinances, so that in Himself He might make the two into one new man, thus establishing peace, 16 and might reconcile them both in one body to God through the cross, by it having put to death the enmity.

One: v:14, Enmity between God and the human race (Jews and Gentiles).

Two: v:15, The enmity is revealed as the Law (Law of commandments contained in ordinances,).

Three: v:15 again, Christ’s death abolished the enmity (for those who put their faith in Christ).

Four: v:15-16, human race (Jews and Gentiles) formed into one new man and reconciled to God.

Conclusion

With the vision, God revealed to Peter His complete work of Reconciliation. Peter initially understood God’s favor to the Jews but then learned this work was extended, not only to the just the Jews, but the Gentiles also. Though the world was reconciled, this is “only” effective to those who put their complete faith in Christ’s sacrifice (Eph 2:14, For He Himself is our peace,).

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Acts 11:11 "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."

[5.] v:11-12, without misgivings, Peter had learned a very important revelation. Who or what was his teacher?

[6.] question [5.], Is this teacher still active in your time?

[7.] v:13-14, the angel standing in his house, Here is an example God's specific choice of who would be saved. Write down, from these two verses, the "steps" God used to bring Cornelius, and household, to salvation.

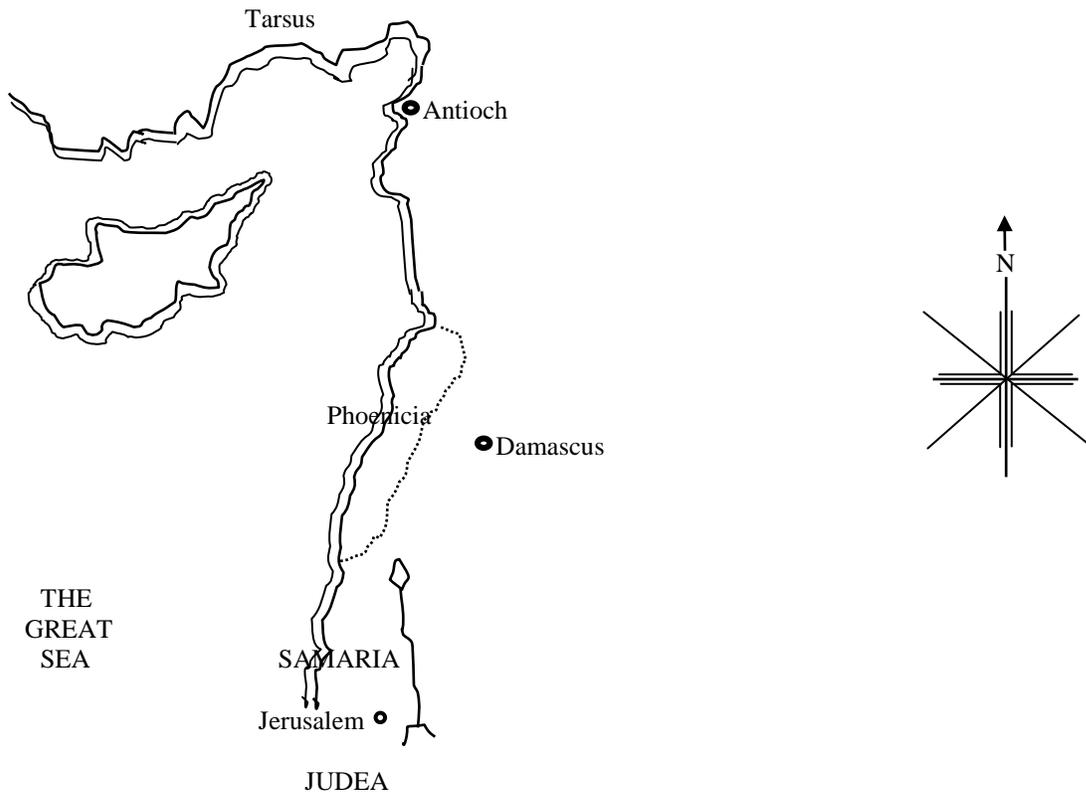
[8.] v:15-18, as He did upon us at the beginning, Reviewing Acts 2:1-4, What did Peter and the six brethren see and hear when Peter started speaking?

[9.] question [8.] Why might it have been important for the new believers to know this had happened to the Gentiles?

[10.] v:15-18 again, At this time the majority of the members of "the church" was made up of those from a Jewish background. How is it in your time?

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19 So 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.

[11.] v:19, persecution that occurred, **Because of the Jewish leader's murder of Stephen, the persecuted believers fled into Judea, Samaria and now to the remotest parts. Why or why isn't this the providence of God?**

[12.] v:19, speaking the word to no one except to Jews alone, **Why did this happen?**

[13.] v:19-20, This question has two parts. Find and identify Cyprus and Cyrene. In which country are they located(hint lesson 2)?

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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.

27 Now 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.

[14.] v:21-24, they sent Barnabas off to Antioch, Why did the church at Jerusalem send Barnabas?

[15.] v:25-26, to look for Saul Why did Barnabas go after Saul?

[16.] Why in any congregation does it take more than a few workers to do all the various jobs?

[17.] v:27-28, in the reign of Claudius, Who was Claudius?

[18.] v:29-30, contribution for the relief, Recalling Acts 4:32-37, Other than the famine, what happened to personal means of the brethren living in Judea?

[29.] v:29-30 again, Why did Barnabas and Saul give the contribution to the elders?

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NOTES