

Ministry of The Holy Spirit
Peter Makes a Stand and Saul Gets in the Game
Acts 11

Last time...The Gentile Pentecost

The Lord tore down the wall of “separateness” between Jew and Gentile because the God-ordained purpose of the wall – the preservation of the line of the Messiah of all mankind – has been accomplished

As a result, the mystery of the Church was further revealed, first to and then thru Peter
Peter took some Big Steps of faith to be a part of what God was doing

This time...Peter is called out for what “he did”

Peter makes a stand for what he knows the Lord did

Then, elsewhere, Saul’s time of preparation in Tarsus comes to an end and his ministry resumes

We are in Acts 11

v1-3 in Judea heard...contended...rehearsed:

Word of what happened in Cornelius’ home gets back to Jerusalem

The other 10 apostles and believers/disciples in Jerusalem learned that the Gospel was preached to the Gentiles...and the Gentiles believed it!

So, when Peter leaves Caesarea after certain days (Acts 10:48) and goes home to Jerusalem, the Jews (believers, the Church) contended with him...
called him out for what “he did”

- You went into a Gentile home
- You ate with Gentiles
 - common bowls and double-dipping
 - to be one with, to commune with
 - very intimate thing to do

What were you thinking?

How dare you do what you did!

You defiled the “separateness” of the Law of Moses!

What is now brewing in the church in Jerusalem is...a division

The Church in Jerusalem is comprised of

- the apostles, except Saul (he is at home in Tarsus)
- about 3000 Jews as a result of Peter's Pentecost preaching (Acts 2:41)
- about 5000 Jews who heard Peter's preaching after the "Beautiful Gate" healing of the man born lame (Acts 4:4)
- other Jews who believed after the Ananias and Sapphira "lesson" and the subsequent healings using Peter (Acts 5:14-15)
- a great number of priests (Acts 6:7)

In the Church are believers in Jesus Christ who taught that it was necessary for the followers of Jesus (Jews only) to keep the Jewish religious customs and practices described in the Law of Moses
From this camp will come "Judaizers"...fierce legalists

The simmering division is going to come to full boil in Acts 15 at the first Church council regarding Gentile believers

Seen at that first Church Council will be a division along "gospel lines"

1. the Gospel of Jesus Christ (grace)
2. the Gospel of salvation by works (Jesus Plus)...another gospel

Starting then the rabidly legalistic proponents of the false gospel will oppose the true gospel and the preachers of the Gospel of grace everywhere...SDA is a form of it to this day
We will see the "Judaizers" follow and harass the Apostle Paul at every stop

It is here in Acts 11, after the wonderful work of God in Cornelius' home, that the trouble to come starts

What does Peter do?

v4-8 But Peter rehearsed from the beginning:
Peter makes a stand on the Truth

1. Peter stands on his personal testimony

He has confidence...he (doubting nothing) KNOWS the Holy Spirit

- spoke to him
- led him
- spoke thru him

Peter is even humble enough to include his contentious back talk to the Lord,
his self-righteous proclamation of keeping the Jewish religious customs
and practices

v9-10 What God has cleansed call not common:
Reciting what was spoken to him 3 times by God,

2. Peter stands on the Word of God

v11-14 the Spirit bade me go...nothing doubting...shall be saved:
What was God saying to Peter and then thru Peter?
What was God doing with the Gentiles?

It was revealed to Peter as he obeyed the Lord's command "arise and go"...
nothing doubting – this was not a time for questions, but a time for action

God was

- answering Cornelius' prayer...
Ps 119:94 I *am* thine, save me; for I have sought thy precepts.
"whereby you and all your house shall be saved"
- working to tear down the wall of "separateness" in the Law of Moses
Later inspired words in 1 Tim 2:4
2 Peter 3:9

What God is doing is the salvation of the 1st Adam (mankind) by the 2nd Adam
(God made flesh, Immanuel)

3. Peter stands on God the Holy Spirit

4. Peter stands on the testimony of eyewitnesses

6 believers from Joppa accompanied Peter to Caesarea as his witnesses
They have come to Jerusalem with him

Another "6 + 1" (6 witnesses + Peter) pattern we see throughout Scripture

v15-16 the Holy Ghost fell on them:

Just as Peter was just getting started in his preaching to the Gentiles,
the Holy Spirit fell on them, just as He had on the Jews in Acts 2

When that happened, Peter remembered...i.e. John 14:26...what Jesus had said
Acts 1:4-5

And a fuller meaning of what the Holy Spirit said thru him on Pentecost is known
Acts 2:38-39 ...and to all that are afar off, *even* as many as the Lord our
God shall call.

v17 God gave them the like gift...could I withstand God:
Therefore,

5. Peter stands on reason (Is 1:18a)

- A: God gave the Jews the gift of the Holy Spirit (Luke 11:9-13)
- B: God gave the Gentiles the very same gift
- C: Therefore, Jews and Gentiles are equal in God's eyes
- D: The Lord did this..."this was not of my doing"

To oppose what God is doing is to oppose God Himself
Peter concludes his bold stand very

Acts 4:19-20-ish

Acts 5:29-ish

v18 held their peace and glorified God:

The contentious believers in Jesus Christ could not withstand Peter's stand
They came into one accord with God in what He had done and is doing
Hab 2:4b has a broader meaning than the Jews had believed

The objection of the "baby" Judaizers is temporarily quelled
Nonetheless, the division will continue to simmer, now being focused on
what must a saved Gentile do

Elsewhere...

v19-20 which were scattered...preaching...Jews only...Antioch:

Acts 8:1-4

[Scattered Saints from Jerusalem]

The scattered saints from Jerusalem (Jewish) went preaching the (true) Gospel...
to Jews only

Noted at this time are Jewish believers from Cyprus and Cyrene that came to
Antioch to preach to the (Greek speaking, Greek cultured) Jews there

Why Antioch?

In the Roman Empire, Antioch was the 3rd most important city,
behind only Rome and Alexandria

Antioch is going to become the center of evangelism to the
Greek-speaking world

It is from Antioch that the *Received Text* (the NT manuscript used by the
KJV translators, the Majority Text) came when the Muslims
conquered the area

The newer English translations use the Alexandrian manuscripts
(the Minority text) found in the center of Gnosticism
(Simon Magnus and Valentinus);
manuscripts which dilute the Deity of Jesus Christ

v21 the hand of the Lord was with them:

The hand of the Lord was upon the preachers of the true Gospel as they preached,
and a great harvest was reaped

Many Jews turned from religion to a relationship with the Messiah, Jesus Christ
the Son of the Living God, about Whom the volume of the book is written

Jesus is building His Church...Matt 16:18, Acts 2:47...far from Jerusalem too

v22-24 tidings...Jerusalem...Barnabas:

As it had from Caesarea, news of this great work of the Holy Spirit came back
“home”, to the Church in Jerusalem

Difference: Jews were saved in Antioch, not Gentiles

To check it out, they dispatch Barnabas, a Spirit-filled, Godly man gifted with
discernment

Barnabas goes to Antioch and sees with his own eyes, heart, mind, and spirit what
the Gospel of Grace has accomplished by the Holy Spirit using faithful
people preaching the true Gospel

Blessed by being in the midst of many new creatures in Christ, Barnabas has an exhortation for his new brethren:

With purpose of heart, cleave to (glued to) Jesus Christ

Dare to be a Daniel! (Dan 1:8), holy unto the Lord in an evil world
Be not “of” the world while you are “in” the world (not worldly)

Surrender to the Lord Jesus Christ, doubting nothing
Be alert – the devil is a roaring lion, roaming around looking for
some one to devour

The world is not our friend, it will put all manner of temptations
before our flesh to cripple/hinder our walk with Jesus

Walk by faith, not by sight

Be led of the Holy Spirit, not by the flesh

Do not be	Soil #1	hard
	Soil #2	shallow, superficial
	Soil #3	choked by cares, deceitfulness
Be	Soil #4	fruitful

Be diligent!

Finish well our course!

v25-26 Barnabas to Tarsus...Saul...Antioch...Christians:

And now, after 7 years of preparation by the Holy Spirit, it time for Saul to get
back into the action, time for him to “Arise and go”

So Spirit-filled and Spirit-led Barnabas is sent to Tarsus to retrieve Saul and bring
him to Antioch

The Lord has much work to do from Antioch, beginning in Antioch

First, in Antioch

Barnabas and Saul were in Antioch for an entire year

- assembled together with the saints there...Heb 10:25
- teaching...disciples/believers need teaching, not preaching
“teach me” appears 9x in Ps 119, a psalm all about WoG

It is at this time in Antioch that the followers of Jesus Christ are called
Christians...”Christ-like”

This demands 2 Cor 13:5, does it not!!!

v27-28 prophets from Jerusalem...Agabus...dearth...Claudius:

Also at this time came a warning from God via His prophets from Jerusalem
One of them was named Agabus, with whom we will cross paths again in
Paul's ministry

He comes to Antioch with a dire warning:

A world-wide (world = Roman Empire) famine is coming
And it will come during the reign of Claudius Caesar (AD 41-54)
And it did...from 44AD to 48AD

To the Church, God is saying, "Very hard times are coming. Get ready."

v29-30 every man...send relief:

Hearing and receiving the warning, a word of knowledge/wisdom thru Agabus,
the Church in Antioch...

EVERY disciple, cheerfully and according to his/her ability to
participate...

gathered and sent to Judea (the Churches there, Jerusalem primarily)
a relief package

The suffering of the Church in Jerusalem by persecution is going to be
compounded by famine

The Body of Christ is getting ahead of it

Family cares for Family

Under the direction of the Head, parts of the Body minister to other parts
of the Body

Gal 6:10 As we have therefore opportunity, let us do good unto all
men, especially unto them who are of the household of faith

The relief package will be delivered by Barnabas and Saul, who will be making
his 2nd post-conversion trip to Jerusalem

Application/Lessons

1. Make a stand (v1-17)

In an increasingly hostile world,
In the midst of a crooked and perverse nation,
how do we make a stand for Jesus Christ?

By standing on our personal testimony
 The Truth, the eternal Word of God, the Final Authority
 The Holy Spirit, our Helper and Guide
 other witnesses...each other
 reason

2. Get in the game; the hand of the Lord is with us (v21)

It is time to “Arise and go” in our spheres of influence – homes, workplaces, neighborhoods
Wherever He sends us, the Lord Who will never leave us nor forsake us will be with us
as we follow Him to be a part of what He wants to do
So we go with Jesus-confidence in our Adventure of Faith

3. Purpose in our heart to cleave unto the Lord (v23)

“to purpose” like Daniel speaks of an irrevocable commitment
Deeper than a decision that can be changed when additional information is learned
A decision might falter under the heat of persecution or the lure of carnal temptation

This is an unwavering, unchangeable commitment because the Truth is known
A commitment will not falter, no matter what the world, the devil, and Self brings

4. Hard days are coming – Get ready!

What is happening in the world?

- Deception
- Confusion
- Wars and rumors of wars
- Pestilence
- Racial tensions
- Earthquakes in divers places
- Lawlessness
- Distress of nations , with perplexity
- Rampant sexual immorality (celebrated, cannot even blush anymore)
- Unspeakable shedding of innocent blood
- The love of many has grown cold...pervasive hatred and anger

Days aka

- “the beginning of sorrows” (Matt 24:4-8)
- Days of Lot and Days of Noah (Luke 17)

What is happening in Israel, God’s prophetic timepiece?

- War with Iran seems imminent
- Peace with United Arab Emirates
Sudan?
Saudi Arabia?
- IDF AF in Germany for the 1st time

What is coming in the world?

- Peace and safety (1 Thes 5:1-3)
- Famine of the Word of God (Amos 8:11-12)
- Ps 119:126 *It is time for thee, LORD, to work: for they have made void thy law.*

Our exhortation and challenge:

- Finish well our course!
To not let our love of the Lord and our joy in the Lord to fade during the
“dullness” of everyday life in this world...the “easiness” of Soil #3
The Lord must be the Alpha and Omega of our daily lives!
Ps 119:24 Thy testimonies also *are* my delight *and* my counsellors
We must be diligent to guard our hearts and minds, which are under assault!

The world says

Jesus says

You do you

deny Self, take up your Cross, follow Me

Demand your rights!

Set your affections on things above

Fight for it, you deserve it

You don’t want what you deserve

Compromise

Never compromise the Truth

Coexist

All-inclusive but absolutely exclusive

I demand service!

Serve

Get even!

Forgive, bless those who curse you

- Understand the times!
- Stand!
- Open our mouth...speak the truth in love in these momentous days
- World-wide hard times are coming – Get ready! (Luke 21:28, 36)