

Acts 11:1-30

“And the apostles and brethren that were in Judea heard that the Gentiles had also received the word of God. 2 And when Peter was come up to Jerusalem, they that were of the circumcision contended with him, 3 saying, Thou wentest in to men uncircumcised, and didst eat with them. 4 But Peter rehearsed *the matter* from the beginning, and expounded *it* by order unto them, saying, 5 I was in the city of Joppa praying: and in a trance I saw a vision, A certain vessel descend, as it had been a great sheet, let down from heaven by four corners; and it came even to me: 6 upon the which when I had fastened mine eyes, I considered, and saw fourfooted beasts of the earth, and wild beasts, and creeping things, and fowls of the air. 7 And I heard a voice saying unto me, Arise, Peter; slay and eat. 8 But I said, Not so, Lord: for nothing common or unclean hath at any time entered into my mouth. 9 But the voice answered me again from heaven, What God hath cleansed, *that* call not thou common. 10 And this was done three times: and all were drawn up again into heaven. 11 And, behold, immediately there were three men already come unto the house where I was, sent from Caesarea unto me. 12 And the Spirit bade me go with them, nothing doubting. Moreover these six brethren accompanied me, and we entered into the man’s house: 13 and he shewed us how he had seen an angel in his house, which stood and said unto him, Send men to Joppa, and call for Simon, whose surname is Peter; 14 who shall tell thee words, whereby thou and all thy house shall be saved. 15 And as I began to speak, the Holy Ghost fell on them, as on us at the beginning. 16 Then remembered I the word of the Lord, how that he said, John indeed baptized with water; but ye shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost. 17 Forasmuch then as God gave them the like gift as *he did* unto us, who believed on the Lord Jesus Christ; what was I, that I could withstand God? 18 When they heard these things, they held their peace, and glorified God, saying, Then hath God also to the Gentiles granted repentance unto life. 19 Now they which were scattered abroad upon the persecution that arose about Stephen travelled as far as Phenice, and Cyprus, and Antioch; preaching the word to none but unto the Jews only. 20 And some of them were men of Cyprus and Cyrene,

which, when they were come to Antioch, spake unto the Grecians, preaching the Lord Jesus. 21 And the hand of the Lord was with them: and a great number believed, and turned unto the Lord. 22 Then tidings of these things came unto the ears of the church which was in Jerusalem: and they sent forth Barnabas, that he should go as far as Antioch. 23 Who, when he came, and had seen the grace of God, was glad, and exhorted them all, that with purpose of heart they would cleave unto the Lord. 24 For he was a good man, and full of the Holy Ghost and of faith: and much people was added unto the Lord. 25 Then departed Barnabas to Tarsus, for to seek Saul. 26 And when he had found him, he brought him unto Antioch. And it came to pass, that a whole year they assembled themselves with the church, and taught much people. And the disciples were called Christians first in Antioch. 27 And in these days came prophets from Jerusalem unto Antioch. 28 And there stood up one of them named Agabus, and signified by the Spirit that there should be great dearth throughout all the world: which came to pass in the days of Claudius Caesar. 29 Then the disciples, every man according to his ability, determined to send relief unto the brethren which dwelt in Judea: 30 which also they did, and sent it to the elders by the hands of Barnabas and Saul.”

Introduction

[Audio version: <http://resources.ccphilly.org/SPM607>]

“Acts chapter 11, the first half of the chapter, Luke is going to reiterate one more time the record of Peter, the house of Simon the tanner, the sheet is let down from heaven, the challenge to kill and eat, the men coming from the house of Cornelius, we watched that whole scene. Then we’re taken to the house of Cornelius, and it’s kind of stated over again, and we see the Holy Spirit fall as Peter begins to speak. So in chapter 11 the leadership in Jerusalem is hearing that Peter is eating with the Gentiles, that the Gospel’s going to the Gentiles, and they call him into account and begin to question him. And remember, the huge problem is not so much even amongst the Jerusalem believers that Gentiles could be saved, because they’ve gone through their struggles with Samaria and so forth.

They're struggling with the fact that the Gentiles could be saved without becoming Jews first, and that for them to be saved they don't need to be circumcised, they don't need to keep the dietary law, they don't need to do any of the things that they consider necessary, even as Jewish believers in the early church. So Peter is going to tell them again, so this is kind of the third time this is reiterated, which tells us the importance of this scene, because it's setting the stage for the 13th chapter, where we were this morning, where the Gospel begins to go to the Gentile world, and it's why we're sitting here this evening. So the first half of this chapter kind of reiterates that story again, that record, and then we find ourselves going to Antioch with the seeds that are being planted there, and then in chapter 13 when we get there we will pick up, ah, a number of years into the growth of that church in Antioch.

Peter Rehearses To The Jerusalem Church What Had Occurred At Cornelius' House

But chapter 11 begins by saying, **“And the apostles and brethren that were in Judea heard that the Gentiles had also received the word of God. And when Peter was come up to Jerusalem, they that were of the circumcision contended with him,”** (verses 1-2) they began to strive with him. Having to wait, they couldn't contend with him on email or on cell-phones, so it's a wonderful thing, Peter had time to think until they got there, **“saying, Thou wentest in to men uncircumcised, and didst eat with them.”** (verse 3) *‘Now Peter, it's fine, you're gonna preach the Gospel to them, that's wonderful, but you gotta eat with them?’* Isn't it interesting, breaking down prejudices, *‘You actually went in, and you ate with them.’* Peter's gonna say *‘How do you think I felt, a sheet came down from heaven, I understand exactly how you feel.’* **“But Peter rehearsed the matter from the beginning, and expounded it by order unto them, saying, I was in the city of Joppa praying:”** he doesn't say *‘I was daydreaming thinking about food and got hungry while I was praying, that's what happened.’* **“I was in the city of Joppa praying: and in a trance I saw a vision, A certain vessel descend, as it had been a great sheet, let down from heaven by four corners; and it came even to me: upon the which when I had fastened mine eyes, I considered, and saw**

fourfooted beasts of the earth, and wild beasts, and creeping things, and fowls of the air. And I heard a voice saying unto me, Arise, Peter; slay and eat. But I said, Not so, Lord: for nothing common or unclean hath at any time entered into my mouth.” (verses 4-8) Now isn't it interesting, he said *'I heard a voice,'* his answer to the voice is *'Not so, Lord.'* so he knows the voice. And I wonder, if the Lord in his glory as he spoke to Peter, if his voice was that voice that he knew so well? that he had listened to for three and a half years? He said **“I heard a voice” ‘and the voice said to me, Peter’** now I'm sure the Lord had a specific way he addressed Peter, **“Peter; slay and eat. But I said, Not so, Lord:”** again, you can say 'Not so,' you can say 'Lord,' but you can't say 'not so, Lord,' you'd think an apostle would know that, this guy's an a-postle. **“Not so, Lord: for nothing common or unclean hath at any time entered into my mouth.”** (verse 8) a very observant Jew. Sometimes we don't perceive Peter that way, he was [despite the fact that he was a burly fisherman with a fisherman's mouth on him]. **“But the voice answered me again from heaven, What God hath cleansed, that call not thou common.”** (verse 9) if God has cleansed it, don't call it unclean [and God, Jesus here is not talking about food, but people the Jews had been calling unclean for centuries]. **“And this was done three times: and all were drawn up again into heaven. And, behold, immediately there were three men already come unto the house where I was, sent from Caesarea unto me.”** (verses 10-11) now he's setting the stage, he's answering the question, notice, he's telling the voice that spoke, spoke to me, it was a voice from heaven, *'I knew the voice, I said 'not so, Lord.'* the sheet that was let down, it was let down from heaven, it was taken back up into heaven, he's being very specific, he's going to tell *'there's angels involved, heaven's involved, the Lord's involved, you're blaming me, I was just in the circumstances here,'* **“And the Spirit bade me go with them, nothing doubting. Moreover these six brethren”** who must be present with him there at Jerusalem **“accompanied me, and we entered into the man's house:”** (verse 12) Now remember, he took six men from Simon's house, Jewish believers, so he'd have witnesses, not knowing what he was getting into, and evidently knowing Jerusalem has heard, he drug all of them to Jerusalem with him. And he says *'these six guys, they were there, they'll tell you, they saw the whole thing.'* **“And he shewed us how he had seen an angel in his house, which stood and said unto him, Send men to Joppa, and call for Simon, whose surname is Peter;”**

notice this, **“who shall tell thee words, whereby thou and all thy house shall be saved.” (verses 13-14)** Words are awfully important, aren't they? Words, that's by the way why we invest in radio and not in television, there's such power in the spoken word, **“who shall tell thee words,”** by the way we have a bigger fellowship out there, we get on an average a thousand hits a day from 40 different countries on our website, downloading, we're getting around 30 to 40 thousand hits a month from all over the world. [The spoken and written Word of God are very powerful. I hope this website contributes in a small way to the overall health of the Body of Christ that's out there.] And I'm technically challenged, so, at some point I have to figure how to get on there and say hello to our Internet congregation, which, you know, I don't even do that, so I get other people to do that for me, and they'll all think I'm smart if they see a message from me [laughter]. **“who shall tell thee words”** I love that **“whereby thou and all thy house shall be saved. And as I began to speak, the Holy Ghost fell on them, as on us at the beginning.” (verses 14b-15)** Now Peter betrays that fact here, that he had a longer sermon, but he was interrupted by the Holy Spirit. I think he got through point one, he probably had at least a five-point sermon and was interrupted. He said **‘I was just warming up, and began to speak, the Holy Ghost fell on them, as on us at the beginning.’**

*The Holy Spirit Baptizes Them And Us Into The Mystical
Body Of Christ*

“Then remembered I the word of the Lord, how that he said, John indeed baptized with water; but ye shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost.” (verse 16) Notice Peter's perception of the baptism of the Holy Spirit is Jesus baptizing the believer with power. There is a baptism that every believer experiences the second you're saved. And in that baptism we are baptized by the Spirit, he's the one whose baptizing, into the mystical Body of Christ, we're all baptized by one Spirit into one Body. And you're not asking for that, you're asking to be saved, that's something you learn as you go on, we're baptized into one Body, we're sealed, the Holy Spirit does that baptizing. There is **this** baptism that Peter's talking about, and Jesus in that baptism is the baptizer, and he's baptizing in that baptism with the Spirit, and that's anointing, the Spirit coming

upon, empowering the believer. The Spirit came upon Samson, the Spirit came upon Othniel, and Spirit came on many in the Old Testament, the Spirit coming upon, and there were things that were noticeable about that. So Peter here is talking about the baptism of the Spirit. [Comment: Now this is a Calvary Chapel doctrinal teaching where they kind of break the baptism of the Holy Spirit into two specific kinds of baptism, which may be true, or it may not. Either way, true or not, we'll find out if this is true at the Wedding Feast of the Lamb, it's not a major doctrine. Understanding about this is not an essential of being saved.] We can call it the filling, we can call it whatever we want, the Spirit coming upon and so forth, but here he says ***'I remember the Spirit came on them, on these Gentiles, the word of the Lord how that he said John indeed baptized with water, but you shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost,'*** **"Forasmuch then as God gave them the like gift as he did unto us, who believed on the Lord Jesus Christ; what was I, that I could withstand God?"** (verse 17) And Peter had preached in chapter 2 that it was a gift, a promise, that was to them, to their children, to as many as are afar off, and should not have been surprised when it fell on the Gentiles, it was his own sermon being fulfilled. **"Forasmuch then as God gave them the like gift"** notice this **"as he did unto us, who believed on the Lord Jesus Christ;"** *'as he did on us, having believed,'* it's the idea is, they were in the state of having believed, Linksy, the old German Greek grammarist says *"as having come to believe"* that was the state that they were in. And this is an important verse, because the context of the verse is, that that manifestation of the Spirit could not have happened to the Gentiles unless they had believed, *'and like as we have believed.'* And what Peter is saying, is when the Holy Spirit, the baptism of the Holy Spirit, the Book of Acts took place in their lives, they were already in the state of believing. And he's saying here, that when the Holy Spirit fell on them, it was evidence to him that they in fact also then had believed, that was why God bestowed that on them. [that's clear as mud, and perhaps an overcomplication of this passage, we'll find out at the Wedding Feast of the Lamb.] He said, **"who was I that I could withstand God?"** please notice, you and I just read this verse, but it is staggering in many ways, **"When they heard these things, they held their peace, and glorified God, saying, Then hath God also to the Gentiles granted repentance unto life."** These are those of the circumcision. What they're saying then is, *'Alright then, 2,000 years of Jewish tradition needs to be set aside here.'* That's an incredible statement for them to make, **"they**

held their peace,” “saying, Then hath God also to the Gentiles granted repentance unto life.” They’re realizing the picture is bigger than they thought. And for them to admit that is huge, because Judaism, again, they were steeped in that. Peter’s the one whose saying **‘I never touched anything unclean.’** So this is a remarkable statement.

The Founding Of The Antioch Church

Now this brings us to the 2nd half of the chapter, verse 19 here, now we begin to head into the Gentile world. Verse 19 gives us a picture of those who were spread out through the persecution that happened in the days of Stephen. When we get to the 13th chapter we there will see Barnabas and Saul sent not because of persecution, it’s the first genuine missionary endeavor into the Gentile world, and it’s led of the Spirit rather than caused by persecution. Verse 19 says this, **“Now they which were scattered abroad upon the persecution that arose about Stephen travelled as far as Phenice,”** (Phoenicia, the coast of Lebanon, north of Israel) **and Cyprus,** (an island where Barnabas was from) **“and Antioch,”** 300 miles north of Jerusalem in Syria, and it says they went that far and they were scattered because of the persecution in the days of Stephen, and it says here they went **“preaching the word to none but unto the Jews only.” (verse 19)** The word “preaching” there is simply “speaking.” They’re weren’t on the corner with a bullhorn preaching. In this context they went and they spoke to other Jews in these areas, and no doubt probably found some that had been scattered also because of the persecution, and they spoke to them about Christ. They couldn’t hold it, these were Jews that were completed, the Messiah was in their hearts, as they found fellow countrymen, fellow Jewish believers, it says “they spake to them about Jesus Christ.” **“And some of them” in verse 20, “were men of Cyprus and Cyrene, which, when they were come to Antioch, spake unto the Grecians, preaching the Lord Jesus.”** “Cyrene” that’s North Africa, no doubt this is probably Simeon and Lucius that we find in chapter 13, verse 2, **“which when they were come to Antioch, spake unto the Grecians, preaching the Lord Jesus.”** Then it says “preaching,” now we have our word “evangeliso,” specifically then preaching and proclaiming the good news of Jesus Christ, they went preaching the Lord Jesus, and it says **“And the**

hand of the Lord was with them: and a great number believed, and turned unto the Lord.” (verse 21) So we have a dramatic change now, initially, again Christianity perceived as a Jewish sect, Phariseeism, Sadduceeism, the Essenes, the Herodians, and there were **the Nazarenes**, early on Christianity in Jerusalem, not called Christianity, it was called **The Way**, it was called **The Order of the Nazarenes**, and **That Way** and so forth, it was just considered a sect of Judaism. Now though what’s happening is that it is spreading to the Gentile world, and there’s a greater openness, and these men who were spread north through the persecution initially only spoke to the Jews, must have heard what was going on with Peter, must have heard of the house of Cornelius, no doubt they had heard about what had happened in Samaria, that was through the persecution also. And now, looking at one another, they said ‘*Why shouldn’t we share this with those here in Antioch, with the Greeks?*’ And it says a great many of them believed, because God’s hand was with them. That’s an Old Testament idiom that speaks of God’s hand was there when the Red Sea was parted, God’s hand was there when the sun stood still in the Valley of Ajalon, the hand of the Lord, God’s approval and God’s power was with them. [Comment: There is an emerging alternate Messianic Jewish view being recognized about what the Book of Acts is telling us about the early Church, which they believe is based on solid historic fact. It’s worth a look-see at least. Here goes...Originally, Christian scholars thought Christianity as mainly an emerging Gentile institution which had quickly come out of Jewish roots, almost within five to six years after the founding of the Church in Jerusalem, with the conversion of Paul and his subsequent spreading of the gospel to the Gentiles. These scholars had ignored almost completely what the early Church of God in Jerusalem had been like, as well as what the Judeo-Christian churches were like later on in Asia Minor, the ones that Paul founded. But following World War II, due to the exposure of the huge Nazi atrocities against the Jews in Europe, Christian leaders and historians began to refocus their attention on the early Christian church and especially its Jewish roots. A hunger developed for the early history of the Christian church, fueled by a sincere spiritual desire to “*earnestly contend for the faith once delivered*” as Jude admonished. What was that ‘*Faith*’ like? Good question. What was it like? Honest church and religious scholars, both secular and believing, delved deeper into the past to find answers. They sought to find out what the early Church of God in Jerusalem had been like, as well as what Judeo-Christianity was

like in Asia Minor, where it spread due the evangelism of Paul, and later because of the migration of Judeo-Christians from Judea and Jerusalem just before the Romans conquered it in 70AD, accompanied by John the apostle, along with Mary the mother of Jesus, along with many Jewish Christians who also migrated to Asia Minor, and specifically to Ephesus where the apostle John settled down. Coupled to this sincere historic research, especially as key Middle Eastern countries opened themselves up willingly to outside archeologists, this all contributed to a far more accurate understanding of early church history, focusing on the early Christian community that subsequently moved out of the Holy Land into Asia Minor during the period between the first and second Jewish wars with Rome (70AD-135AD). What was the effect of all this new knowledge? Even in the mid to late 1960s it led to a huge paradigm crash for many Christians, and this paradigm crash is still occurring. Why? Early Christianity was nothing like what they'd been taught or assumed it had been like. It was Jewish. Many were stunned. Close examination of the history showed it was Jewish in Jerusalem, all of Judea, Samaria, Galilee, and then as it spread up into Asia Minor it continued to be Jewish and maintain Jewish days of worship right up through 300AD. Even up into the 300s AD Asia Minor held in excess of 3 million Judeo-Christians. The research of such church historians as Rodney Stark's *"The Rise of Christianity"*, Ray A. Pritz's *"Nazarene Jewish Christianity"*, and Oskar Skarsaune's *"In The Shadow Of The Temple"* prove that Paul's method and target in evangelism (and careful examination of the Book of Acts proves this) was to a specific kind of Gentile, starting with Cornelius. The term found throughout the Book of Acts "*God-fearer, God fearing,*" and "*devout Gentile*" means the type of Gentile that the Jews in the Diaspora synagogues had evangelized into their synagogues (Skarsaune proves this in his exhaustive work). These Gentiles the Jews had evangelized into their synagogues had actually become members within the synagogue, as Skarsaune brings out. Throughout Acts chapters 13 through 20 you see Paul going into every synagogue he could throughout Asia Minor and witnessing to the Jewish members and "*God-fearers*" the God-fearing Gentile membership. The pagan Gentiles could have cared less about the One True God, but the Jews had evangelized into their synagogues a group of Gentiles who accepted the One God of Israel. The Jews and Gentiles God was calling within these synagogues Paul was evangelizing in throughout the Middle East and Asia Minor were Gentiles who by their very presence within the synagogues

were keeping God's Sabbath and Holy Days, as well as probably the dietary laws. The Messianic Jews, along with the scholars I mentioned whose research is pretty conclusive, understand this. These Judeo-Christians and their congregations mainly resided in Asia Minor after the Jewish-Roman wars of 70AD and 135AD, up until the time of Constantine, who gave official Roman sanction to the emerging proto-Catholic church, which with the blessing of the Roman government under Constantine drove the Sabbath-keeping churches of God underground, or annihilated the ones who couldn't escape the persecution. But the old King James English term *God-fearer* or *devout Gentile* has been overlooked, not understanding what specific group of Gentiles this term represents, and that the calling of this type of Gentile wouldn't have changed the days of worship this group kept. Besides, those being called out of the synagogues Paul evangelized inside of were a mixed group of Jews and *God-fearer Gentiles*, *devout Gentiles*, they weren't a select group of either, Jew or Gentile, but a mixture of both. I put together a research article based on the research of those three scholars and their books, as it goes point by point through the Book of Acts, coupling it to the historic background of that period of time in the Middle East, Jerusalem and Judea. The article is in four parts, and starts at: <https://unityinchrist.com/history2/index3.htm>. I have nothing against Sunday-observing Christians, and I know they are also filled with God's Holy Spirit, and make up a very large part of the greater Body of Christ. But it's time to take an honest look at early Church history as it really happened, properly interpreted and colored by the actual customs of the times that existed within the Diaspora synagogues, as uncovered by Oskar Skarsaune and detailed in his book *"In The Shadow Of The Temple."* Our Messianic Jewish brothers and sisters in Christ, which have within the past 50 years gone through an explosive growth and revival, owe us that much. Actually, within the past 50 years, God has specifically revived and restored the Jewish Branch of the Body of Christ. Let's get their history correct, for a change, without the distorted image which the Catholic church has fostered onto us Gentile Christians, calling it history. I quote from Oskar Skarsaune's *"In The Shadow of the Temple,"* p. 167, about the type of Gentile being called into what has been termed a *Gentile church in Antioch*. *"It was only after a while that some of them (the ones scattered [after the persecution following Stephen's death, by Saul of Tarsus]) began preaching to the Gentiles as well. And this may have had a very simple explanation: Preaching in the synagogue(s) of Antioch, they could hardly, in*

the long run, avoid this, because at the synagogue they certainly had a mixed audience: Jews, proselytes and God-fearing Gentiles...It was in the framework of this community that some of the newcomers from Jerusalem, Jews from Cyprus and Cyrene, began to address their preaching specifically to (God-fearing) Gentiles... Some scholars speak of Paul as the second, or sometimes even the only, founder of Christianity. They imply that Paul represents a Christianity totally different from that of the early community in Jerusalem. Paul is said to be a product of Hellenistic Judaism and Hellenistic Christianity, having minimal contact with the Aramaic-speaking community in Jerusalem and disregarding its theology and authority. Acts provides no evidence to substantiate this theory. Paul is brought to Antioch by a member of the Jerusalem church [Barnabas], and he acts under the authority of Jerusalem in his teaching ministry (Acts 11:22-26)...When Paul came to Antioch, the mission among the Gentiles was in full swing, and it was begun by converted Diaspora Jews from the Jerusalem community (Acts 11:19-26). At this early stage, it seems to have caused no major problems in Jerusalem, as we have just seen. This, however, was to change within a few years. Apparently a group in the Jerusalem community could not accept the admission of Gentiles without circumcision and ritual observance of the Torah. Paul calls them “false brethren” in Galatians 2:4-5, and in Galatians 2:12 it is the same group that Paul calls “certain men from James.” This must mean that they claimed the authority of James for their own views. The evidence in Acts as well as in Galatians 2 shows that they were hardly justified in this appeal to James...”] You have to understand what a huge step this is, and listen, Antioch, this is a great church in Antioch. Before the Book of Revelation is written, Ignatius is the elder of the church at Antioch. Trajan who was Caesar then, comes to Antioch, because Antioch was the 3rd largest city in the Roman Empire, it was Rome first, then Alexandria, then Antioch. And as Trajan comes, he sees the multitudes gathering to listen to Ignatius, and because Ignatius didn’t support Caesar worship, Trajan was furious, and he took Ignatius into custody, took him back to Rome to the Colosseum and fed him to the beasts in front of the crowds. And tradition says the pastor there at this great church in Antioch, Ignatius, was the first Christian fed to the beasts in the Roman Colosseum. This church will flourish. It’s in the area where you never would have thought this would happen, when the major deities there are Apollos, or Apollo, Daphne, Artemis, Zeus, Teche, Baal, the ancient remnants of the Syrian worship of Baal are there,

there was a pantheon of worship. [But being a major city, there must have been one or two sizeable Jewish synagogues there as well, for in verse 19 it says those who were scattered abroad during the persecution at the time of Stephen “were preaching the word to none but unto the Jews only.” For that to occur, there had to be some synagogues in Antioch for these Jews to get preached to, following the same pattern Paul would follow, of entering into every synagogue as he entered a new city. The Grecians being reached were more than likely *God-fearer, devout Gentiles.*] The main street through the city was over four miles, perfectly straight, it was all paved with marble, had large marble market places on both sides, the population was always between 300,000 and half a million, it was a large city. And there was all kinds of idolatrous worship. It was known for being immoral, some of the early writers talked about the negative influence of Antioch upon Rome, if you can image that. And Apollo, in Greek culture, had had an affair and fell in love with Daphne, and it’s hard for me to get all the things straight, but had turned her into a laurel tree so that she couldn’t get away from him. And that’ll always keep your girlfriend from getting away. So, four miles south of the city of Antioch, where there were springs, was a huge temple to Apollo, and that temple was surrounded by laurel groves that represented Daphne, and the men of the city would go there, and there were thousands of temple prostitutes, and every unimaginable immoral thing, beyond our imagination took place there. These are men, and this was a culture, that would not have been satisfied with 900 numbers, everybody know what those are? How do you know what those are [laughter]? ... 900 numbers, just, anybody here ever tempted to call those? A little story for you, one of the Calvary pastors in the area, he was going down to the second Harvest Crusade we had years ago, and his aunt Mary, he said, was kind of the off-scouring of the family, nobody got along with her, she was kind of crazy, and he said, you know, *‘I got convictions because I’m a Christian,’* and he said *‘Aunt Mary, you can come over for dinner if you go down to the Harvest Crusade,’* she said *‘OK, sure, I’ll go down with you.’* They took her down to the Harvest Crusade, she was 78 or 80 years old, and she went forward, she got saved. So he said we were kind of excited, we’re on the way back, going to take her back to the old folks home where she lives, and she said, *‘Well, I guess I gotta get a new job now.’* and he said, *‘What are you talking about?’* she said *‘We do 900 calls,’* he said *‘What?!’* *‘Ya, we got about seven or eight of us there, we get on the phone with all these young guys and talk dirty to them, and they think we’re some pretty young*

girl, they pay us so much an hour.' So any of you who are stupid enough to make that call, I want to plant that image in your mind, and I hope it never escapes, about how dumb you are, with Aunt Mary, 78 years old on the other end of the line there, and you deserve to pay for that. But in Antioch, they'd have never been content with internet porn or 900 calls, they had the real thing there, every day, acceptable in their culture, acceptable to their wives. And it was a place where you and I would never have dreamed of doing an outreach. Look, here's the interesting thing as we follow Paul. Paul doesn't go to the bush, he doesn't go to little villages, Paul goes to Antioch, to Lystra, to Derbe, to Colossi, to Philippi, to Ephesus, he's longing to get to Rome. Paul goes to the large metropolitan areas to plant churches there, knowing then that those churches will plant smaller churches out in the outlying districts. [And the Jews, being astute business and tradesmen would populate these metropolitan areas, because that is where the most trade took place, so that is where the most populated synagogues were to be found, and Paul hit each and every synagogue he could in these areas, drawing both Jews and *God-fearing Gentiles* who worshipped together with those Jews as part of their synagogues, drawing whoever God called amongst that group into the Body of Christ. Oskar Skarsaune in his exhaustive work *In The Shadow Of The Temple* has two pages opposite each other, which are two maps, one showing the location of the highest level of Jewish populations (which would have had synagogues in them) in Asia Minor, and the other, showing the location of the highest level of Christians who made up the early churches of God Paul, Barnabas and Timothy founded in Asia Minor (pp. 80-81). When the two pages are mentally superimposed, you can see how that many early churches were springing up, as documented, sometimes right next to the synagogue some of whose members had come out of and gone into the new Christian congregation.] His heart is to get to the largest concentration of corrupt, lost human beings he can possibly get to. And Antioch is the place on God's heart, Antioch is the place that will touch the Gentile world, Antioch will all its filth, all its uncleanness, is a place that God has his heart set on, and when they begin to share the good news of Jesus Christ there, it says "the hand of the Lord was with them." Listen, to this extent, in the 3rd century, a pastor takes over the church, 3rd, going into the 4th century, named John. He was such an incredible preacher they called him John Chrysostom, the Golden Voice or Gold Throat. John Chrysostom writes that in his day, when the church gathered, on Sunday in Antioch, 100,000

believers gathered together. The church in Antioch, the structure, the building, was larger than that of Saint Sophia in Istanbul. The church of Saint Sophia in Istanbul today is a mosque, people who go in there, I've seen pictures of it, they say '*You feel like you're outside,*' the size of it, the ceiling, the breadth of it. And the miracle, by the way, of those structures, the span, there's no steel. For us to make anything this day with spans that great, we have to use steel and engineers. Those were all stone spans, they don't know how some of them were made. But the church in Antioch is accorded as being larger than Saint Sophia's in Istanbul, to where 100,000 adults could gather in one building on Sunday. Imagine that. Again, we see 2,500, 2,600 hundred, if we did a Jenny Craig thing we could get 3,000 no doubt. But if we took all the seats out [there at ccphilly] and we had to stand, we could probably get 10,000 people packed in here standing. Imagine ten times that. Our Sunday school congregation is at least half of the population of the adults. If we had 100,000 adults attending, we'd have 50,000 kids in Sunday school. Image this church, the Great Church in Antioch, and how it flourished, and how God blessed it in the most unimaginable place. [John Chrysostom was a high ranking evangelist/pastor in the proto-Catholic church, which church has been known down through the ages to be great persecutors of both the Jews and Judeo-Christian churches of God dwelling in Antioch and Asia Minor. See https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/John_Chrysostom. The proto-Catholic church was taking over in the entire area of the Middle East, which was still part of the Roman Empire, and after 325AD when Constantine had forced all the churches to go over to Sunday worship or face forfeiture of their property, and later, face death, this proto-Catholic church was spreading far and wide throughout the Roman Empire, backed by the Roman Empire, and back into the Middle East into areas where Rome had wiped out the Jewish population almost down to nothing after 135AD and the Bar Kochba Revolt. John Chrysostom and the proto-Catholic church had moved into Antioch, the early Judeo-Christian church of God having been pushed out of the area. This church John Chrysostom pastored was nothing like the churches established in Antioch by Paul and Barnabas and Silas.] Look, you have friends that are caught up in all kinds of sin and difficulty, they're lost, and Jesus loves them. And sometimes the people, Saul of Tarsus was a raving lunatic, sometimes the people you think will never get saved are the very ones that God has his heart set upon. Sometimes the most vile

people that you know, in truth, when they lay their head down on the pillow at night, are the emptiest people that you know. So I would encourage you, this is an incredible picture here, they begin to speak to the Gentiles in Antioch. **“And it says the hand of the Lord was with them: and a great number believed, and turned unto the Lord.” (verse 21)**

The Jerusalem Church Gets Wind Of What’s Happening In Antioch

Now, **verse 22** says, **“Then tidings of these things came unto the ears of the church which was in Jerusalem: and they sent forth Barnabas, that he should go as far as Antioch.”** The church must have had big ears then. Isn’t it funny, no internet, no cell-phones, the church in Jerusalem is constantly hearing, the house of Cornelius in Caesarea, now this is 300 miles north of Jerusalem. In the church if you tell somebody *‘I’m going to tell you something, do you promise not to tell anybody?’* they promise not to tell anybody, that means they’ll only tell one person at a time, and make them promise not to tell anybody, and word travels extremely fast that way that’s not supposed to travel. And here’s the church in Jerusalem 300 miles away without modern communication, hearing what’s happening in Antioch, and it says **“they sent forth Barnabas, that he should go as far as Antioch.” (verse 22b)** Now it’s a good choice, he’s a Hellenist, he’s from Cyprus, he knows the area. They send him to go, and no doubt part of that is to confirm, so that they would know that what they were hearing was true, that things were in order, probably with a certain measure of skepticism. It says **“Who, when he came, and had seen the grace of God, was glad, and exhorted them all, that with purpose of heart they would cleave unto the Lord. For he was a good man, and full of the Holy Ghost and of faith: and much people was added unto the Lord.” (verses 23-24)** Wouldn’t you like the Lord to write that about you? he was a good man. You know God inspired this Book, that’s a great thing to have written about you. Of course what is written about us is that we’re his children, that’s a good thing too [also cf. Malachi 3:16-17], that we can say Abba, Father, by the Spirit, that we’re his sons and daughters, that’s a remarkable thing. He was a good man, look, one of the ways we know he was a good man is because he saw what was happening in Antioch. The church

in Antioch may already have been outgrowing the church in Jerusalem, I'm sure it was growing faster, if it hadn't already outgrown in size, and it says when he got there he rejoiced when he saw what the Lord was doing. You know, some people in the church today, they're just jealous, they see something going on somewhere else, God blesses something somewhere else, they can't stand it. [I can't stand it that I'm not seeing it happen! Where is that promised restoration and revival? (see <https://unityinchrist.com/prophets/Zephaniah/RestorationAndRevival.htm>) Pray for it!] You know, so many churches are territorial, they couldn't stand to see God blessing somewhere else. This was a good man, and when he saw what God was doing, he saw the grace of God, he saw what was happening, and it says he rejoiced, **"when he had seen the grace of God, was glad"** and then it said he did three things, **1) one**, he exhorted them, present tense, he continually exhorted them. Now he's the son of exhortation, the son of comfort, Barnabas, we expect that from him. And look, again, exhortation has to do with the future. Exhortation is encouraging people to go onward, to finish well, to say *'ok, I want you to get up again, I want you to go forward, you fall and you've made a mistake, ok, you get up now, you move forward, you do your best,...you go on.'* This is Barnabas exhorting this church in regards to the future. I encourage you guys, you know, move forward. We're living in precarious times, we're living in interesting days [and it's ten time more precarious and interesting days now than when Pastor Joe gave this sermon, now in late 2019]. But it may yet be the greatest time for the Church in America. It may be a time of the greatest ingathering we have ever seen in the Church in America. Pray, seek the Lord, ask continually for a fresh filling of his Spirit, and move forward, who knows what he might have. Let's see. Let's see. And we know this, he's coming, and he's coming at an hour you think not, so if you locked your cars before you came in, you're not expecting him tonight, you're expecting to need them when you leave. He exhorted them, number one, and then he told them **2) "that with purpose of heart they would cleave unto the Lord."** Interesting exhortation, purpose, it's a word that's used 12 times in the New Testament. 8 times it's translated "purpose," to determine, to decide, to commit to do something. And look, it's purpose in your heart, not your intellect, the deepest part of your being [if it had been my intellect I would have quit doing this years ago]. The Bible says **'Guard your heart with all diligence, because from it flows the issues of life.'** He said **'purpose in your heart,'** 12 times it's used,

8 times it's "purpose," very interestingly 4 times it's translated "showbread." Because "showbread" is really the "bread of setting forth." If you look at the exact language that's how it's actually written, "the bread of setting forth." And in that sense he's saying **'set this forth in your heart, determine this, commit to this, decide this, set this one thing forth.'** And he continually exhorted them to do that, **'that they should cleave unto the Lord,'** not to Calvary Chapel, not to organized religion. Barnabas knew that better than anybody, he had been a Levite. **3) "cleave unto the Lord."** You are worth as much as you can be worth to the rest of us if you're cleaving to the Lord Jesus Christ. Now "cleave," the word is in 1st Timothy where Paul says "abide" in Ephesus, that's our word "cleave," to settle down, stay somewhere, to settle down, to stay in a place with the Lord. It's used in 1st Timothy 5, verse 5, where it talks about widows who are widows indeed, that don't have any means of support, completely dependent upon the Lord, where it says "they continue in prayer and supplication," it's the word "continue" there, the word "cleave" here, they just continue in the Lord's presence, that's our idea of our word "cleave" here. And also in chapter 18, verse 18, it says that Saul, Paul "tarried" in the city there, it was Corinth, and that's our word here. So, his exhortation, it's a continual exhortation. You don't exhort someone once, if you've raised children you know this, you don't tell them something once, you exhort your son to take out the trash one time, *'Son, you're becoming a man, this is your new job, from now until you move out, you'll take out the trash, ok?'* *'um hum,'* and you never have to say it again [loud laughter]. No, there's to be continual exhortation, continually say, and they continually exhorted the believers there, that they would set this forth in their heart, with purpose in their heart, and that is that they would settle down with Jesus and abide and continue with Jesus, they would tarry with Jesus, they would cleave to the Lord. Look, this early Church understood well everything we believe in, everything we do. And the other side again of the equation is a risen Saviour. What matters to me tomorrow is that I find his presence, when I rise up, I sit with my devotional, my Bible, and I experience his presence, that I meet with him. Charles Spurgeon said *"Let us arise early, climb the mount of communion, let us see the face of Jesus today before we see the face man."* And I just don't want religious profession, I want a living relationship with the Living Lord. And this Church understood that. He said he exhorted them with purpose of heart, that they would cleave unto Jesus, they had ahold of him. They've been delivered from all of

these things, that you should cleave unto the Lord. And then it says in **verse 24**, **“For he was a good man, and full of the Holy Ghost and of faith: and much people was added unto the Lord.”**

Barnabas Seeks Out Saul In Tarsus

“Then departed Barnabas to Tarsus, for to seek Saul:” (verse 25)

Now we haven't seen him since chapter 9, verse 15, there was trouble in Jerusalem, the disciples took him to Caesarea and sent him forth to Tarsus, and it said **‘Then the churches had rest, they were edified and so forth.’** We haven't seen him since chapter 9, and that's about 8 years earlier than this [30AD + 8 or 9 years = 38-39AD]. So Barnabas, looking at what's going on in Antioch, in the great Gentile Greek world, thinks *‘Who do I get here, Peter, John?’* Then he thinks *‘Saul, Saul would be the perfect one, he would be the man.’* So he goes to Tarsus and it says he seeks Saul. Now Luke who wrote this book, only gives us that word one other time, and that's in Luke chapter 2 there, when Mary and Joseph are returning from Jerusalem, they've gone there to the Feast, and Mary says to Joseph, *‘Joe, where's Josh, little Jesus?’* 12, 13 years old, and Joseph said what all husbands do, *‘What are you asking me for? you're supposed to know where he is,’* and she says *‘No, he was with you,’* and he says *‘No! he was with you!’* and they start to run around and ask all the friends and relatives...and they've lost the Messiah, and they head back to Jerusalem, and it says “the sought,” that's our word, “they sought for him there,” and they finally found him in the Temple, in one of the four buildings in the Court of Women, there dialoguing with the religious leaders. That's our word here. Barnabas goes to Tarsus, he hasn't seen Paul in 9 years, he doesn't know his address, and he has “to seek” for him in the city, asking questions, until he finally finds him. He sought for Saul, and he found him, and it says **“And when he had found him, he brought him unto Antioch. And it came to pass, that a whole year they assembled themselves with the church, and taught much people. And the disciples were called Christians first in Antioch.” (verse 26)** Now, what an amazing year that must have been, imagine an entire year with Paul and Barnabas, listening to the instruction, listening to them teach. You know, the Church growing, gathering, what fervor, what excitement there must have been. And it says that church that was there, was where believers

were first called Christians. They weren't called Christians by other believers, they were called Christians by the unbelievers. And look, some say that's a derogatory term, I don't believe that at all. In this culture, if you were part of Herod's family, or if you were in support of the Herod dynasty, you were called a Herodian, that suffix "ian" was put on there, it meant you had joined that party. Pompei, some of his soldiers were so loyal to him they were called Pompeians. Those who were loyal to Caesar, Caesarians. [Interesting, getting a Caesarian section, the term obviously meant how a Roman soldier would slice his sword across the belly of an enemy, making the same slice that is now made to assist a difficult birth.] And here, a very interesting thing takes place, you have "Christ" from the Greek, and the "ian" from the Latin, and the community in Antioch puts those two ideas together, and they say these are people that have joined themselves to Christ, or these are people who are Christ-followers, and they give them the nickname "Christians," half Greek and half Latin, they put one word together. And they looked at people who were being set free from every immoral, vile, drunken thing that you could imagine, their lives are being transformed, they were people then who were continually purposing in their heart to cleave to the Lord, their lives were transformed, it was a living community that was touching the city of Antioch. And those who were outside observers said, '*You know what? These are Christ-followers, that's what they are.*' And I wonder if people can look at us and say that? We have a very sad philosophy in the Church that you have to lower your standard, and you have to be carnal enough that unbelievers feel comfortable coming in, and they want to gather a mixt multitude into the Church. That was nothing but a headache for Moses when he had a mixt multitude. The Church is supposed to be the pillar and ground of truth in a community, and when folks come in here, there's supposed to be something so drastically different from what they're used to, that it talks out loud to them. And that happened in Antioch, they looked at them and they said '*These folks are Christ-followers, that's what they are.*' **Jesus said 'men will know you're my disciples by the love you have one for another,'** and no doubt that was happening here at Antioch. It's important for you to know where your nickname came from, from Antioch, they were first called Christians at Antioch.

The Prophet Agabus And The Great Famine Of Claudius

Verse 27 says this, **“And in those days came prophets from Jerusalem unto Antioch.”** First time we have the mention of prophets in the Church. What are prophets in the Church? Good question, we’re told in Luke chapter 16, in regards to the Old Testament prophets, Jesus said, **‘You should know the law and the prophets were until John, John the Baptist, since that time the Kingdom of Heaven is preached, and every man presses into it.’** Jesus says the succession of prophets ended with John. **‘The testimony of Jesus, Revelation 19:10, is the spirit of prophecy.’** So even Old Testament prophets that prophesied about the nation of Israel and wars, was always in context ultimately of the Messiah and the Kingdom. So, the line of Old Testament prophets ended with John the Baptist. But in the New Testament Church there were prophets, men who had the gift of prophecy. Most of the time, the gift of prophecy was in regards to edifying the Church. Paul says **‘I pray that you all speak in tongues, but rather that you would prophesy,’** because it’s greater to edify the Church, it’s a greater gift. So speaking forth the things of Christ in authority, the gift of prophecy in the Church. There were instances where the prophet exercised this gift foretelling, and those were rare, and we have it here with Agabus. We don’t know much about him. He predicts now there’s going to be a famine. In chapter 21, verses 10 and 11, he’ll take Paul’s girdle and bind it around him and say the man who owns this is going to go bound to [or from] Jerusalem, and he foretells there also, and then he’s gone. He’s a very interesting man. He comes from Jerusalem, no doubt the Holy Spirit telling him to go with some others to Antioch, **“And there stood up one of them named Agabus, and signified by the Spirit that there should be great dearth throughout the world: which came to pass in the days of Claudius Caesar.” (verse 28)** Luke says it took place in the days of Claudius Caesar, between 35 and 47AD in different parts of the Roman Empire, Josephus writes in depth about it, Suetonius, another Roman historian writes about it, it was severe in Rome for a number of years, where there were riots because the majority of their grain came from Egypt, and there was a great drought there, probably the Nile was low and the crops were not brought in. [Comment: The Nile depends on the rains that occur in central Africa, below the Sudan, all the way to Lake Leopold, that swampy region where it rains a lot, depicted in that Katherine Hepburn/Humphrey Bogart movie *African Queen*. If that region gets insufficient rain, the Nile water levels go way low, the Nile fails to

flood, and Egyptians' agriculture goes into famine stage. 8 years from Saul's conversion to verse 25 when Barnabas goes to Tarsus to find Saul, plus 1 year in Antioch, this famine of Claudius must have been around 39AD.] It was particularly severe, Josephus tells us, in Jerusalem. And because the church were Jews who had come to Christ, they had been ostracized to a degree, they were not receiving some of the relief that came. There was a Mesopotamian queen who converted to Judaism, Josephus writes a lot about her, that she came, and she imported tons of figs from Cyprus, and paid exorbitant prices for grain from Egypt and brought it to the Jews that were in Jerusalem, and her son then finding out it didn't go as far as it should, I forget his name, he then gave another huge sum of money. But the relief to the church in Jerusalem came from the Gentile churches that were starting to grow. So we have this interesting sequence of events. We have the Church, largely a Jewish institution, beginning in Jerusalem. We have God breaking down the wall of partition between Jew and Gentile. Phillip lived in Caesarea, he could have done that, but God wanted it to be Peter, because his testimony in Jerusalem weighed so much. Peter was the one who saw a Gentile Pentecost. Were there 50 people at the house of Cornelius, were there 100? He was a wealthy man. A centurion's a wealthy man, again. A centurion's base salary was sixteen times that of an enlisted man, and it only went up from there, centurions were all from part of the aristocracy, in an area he no doubt had a large home, and it says all of his friends and family were gathered, could have been easily 80, 100 people there [and they all received the Holy Spirit], and on the Gentiles, it was a Gentile Pentecost, the Holy Spirit fell there, and things began to break into the Gentile world. Now God is going to use Agabus, this drought, and he's going to bind together the Jewish and Gentile church, because the Jewish church in Jerusalem is going to receive great relief from their brethren in the Gentile churches around the world, a very interesting picture that's being raised here. And listen, imagine all of this, this is when God tells Paul to go to Antioch [through Barnabas fetching him from Tarsus, verse 25], as he gets there they end up in this famine also, there's a great struggle there. Listen, at the same time, if you read history, there was a revolt against the Jews in Alexandria, and 20,000 Jews are slaughtered because they wouldn't, Caligula had been part of that, and then gave orders that other Jews would be slaughtered, but before one of the other proconsul's carried it out, Caligula died, he was assassinated, which calmed that down. But you had Jews being slaughtered

there, you had Jews being slaughtered in Rome, and you had a great uprising in Antioch against the Jews, and in the middle of all of that, the church is there. Paul's there with Barnabas, and they're teaching in the midst of all of this insanity, and evidently the church is left alone. It's during a drought, we look at God's blessing, we look at God's hand, we look at a church that's exploding, and bringing in the city around them, and it's a time of financial difficulty, it's a time when there's rioting and anger. Who knows what we might see [in our day], and how wonderfully God may gather his people enmass to his Son Jesus Christ. Who knows. But this dearth, this great famine took place, he says in the days of Claudius Caesar, notice, **"Then the disciples, every man according to his ability, determined to send relief unto the brethren which dwelt in Judea:" (verse 29)** there was no haranguing them for money, as they were willing they gave, **"determined to send relief unto the brethren which dwelt in Judea:"** Of course, the interesting thing is, today, in most mission endeavors, money flows from the mother church to the mission field. In the early Church, money was flowing from the mission field to the mother church, interesting picture here. And they were supporting the church there, they sent their support to those in Judea, **"which also they did, and sent it to the elders by the hands of Barnabas and Saul." (verse 30)** Now interesting, it says at this point they sent it to the elders in Jerusalem. Early in chapter 4 and chapter 6 we hear them laying things at the apostles' feet. Evidently at this time they're starting to be a bit more structured in the church, in Jerusalem, and there's a group now of elders, no doubt many of the apostles fulfilled those rolls, but they're recognizing that there were God ordained leaders in the Church as the Church was born and growing. So they send it now to the elders, and that, it says **"by the hands of Barnabas and Saul."** This is most likely, if you read Galatians chapter 1 and 2, a lot of that visit, there were things that took place when Paul was saved in Damascus and went to Arabia, he came back to Damascus, then they let him over the wall, while he ends up in Jerusalem in those days he makes reference to that. But there were other things that took place, no doubt, during this visit, which seems to predate when we get to chapter 15, the Church Council there in Jerusalem. So you read the end of chapter 11, and if you read on your own Galatians, some of those things dovetail there, we get an idea of some of the other things that were taking place. And then Peter, somewhere later in the process, ends up at Antioch. Peter's having a great time in Antioch with the believers, he's eating pork role and

Italian sausage [now considering current discoveries, such as written about in Oskar Skarsaune's *In The Shadow Of The Temple*, I highly doubt that last statement], and it says certain brethren then come from James, and it says when Peter saw that, he began to draw back, and it's very interesting, Paul uses a nautical term, [Peter] "trimmed his sails," and he started to cause division, because he ate freely with the Gentiles until these more legalistic representatives came from James and Jerusalem, and when Peter saw them he started going back to the dietary law again, and it says so great was that persuasion, that Barnabas started to follow it also, and Paul has to stand up and reprove Peter in front of the church at Antioch. He says *'Our fathers were never justified by keeping the law, eat pork roll, say grace and eat, what's wrong with you man?'* He says ***'You're not walking straightfootedly, orthopodao, according to the gospel, you're limping, you're out of sync here, your walk is being crippled by this measure of legalism that's creeping back in,'*** and Paul took a tremendous stand there at Antioch to make sure those Gentile believers were not brought under the law in any sense, and that the Jewish believers there understood clearly what happened. Of course, they're not enemies, there was a great measure there of brutal honesty, but as for the case for the cause of Christ they were walking in the light with one another, so there's great things there in Galatians that helps us reflect back on some of these times. [Comment: I personally, based on Oskar Skarsaune's work, believe what occurred was that there were two dinner tables set up, one for Gentiles and one for Jews, because especially in Judea and Jerusalem, the Jews placed a huge amount of prejudice with not eating with Gentiles, regardless of what was being served. They believed that what was eaten in common at the table became part of you, and to partake of food that a Gentile ate, even if it was kosher, made you a brother or sister of everyone who was at that table eating that same food. You saw the criticism that the Jerusalem brethren tossed at Peter, because he ate with Cornelius, and even went into the house of a Gentile, it had nothing to do with kosher or unclean food. The Pharisees and scribes, along this same line, criticized Jesus Christ because he was eating with tax collectors and sinners, which they considered was a method of making himself one with them by the sharing of food, which was digested by everyone at the table. Taking this prejudice into consideration, Peter in reality was probably eating at the Gentile table, and then when James and his representatives walked into the room, Peter beat feet back to the Jewish table. The actual kosher

laws in the Torah found in Leviticus 11 are now being discovered as being health laws. For example, all shellfish have been discovered to have elevated levels of dioxin, compared to that of other fish. Dioxin was the chief ingredient of Agent Orange, the defoliant used during the Vietnam War, which has caused so many cases of cancer in our Vietnam vets.] So look, if the Lord tarries, read ahead, next Sunday evening we will not be here, it's Easter, we're moving Sunday evening service up, so it will be here next Sunday, 6, 8 10 and 12, and we'll have the evening off for your family. If the Lord tarries for the week after that, then we will go into this 12th chapter, it is fascinating, it is humorous, it is incredibly human, and Peter kind of passes out of sight in that chapter. So you have to read chapter 12 to believe it, it's just one of my favorite chapters in the Book of Acts, because I'm so human, it makes me feel so much better about myself [seeing God enforce Genesis 12:3]. Ah, read ahead, my exhortation to you this evening would be two-fold, the friends of yours that you think are the most corrupt and most vile, the most in trouble, God loves them, his heart is broken for them, they're like people in Antioch [or Corinth, that was a duzy of a church], you get to them, you share the good news with them, you tell them about God's love and who knows what he might do. Secondly, for you yourself, be Christ-followers, and for that to happen, daily you have to remind yourself to purpose in your hearts that there's one thing you're going to set forth at the beginning of every day, it should be this, to cleave to, to continue with, to abide with, to tarry with the Lord, not Calvary Chapel, not religious organizations, not playing church, but with the risen living Saviour, meet with him every morning. Meet with him every night for that matter before you go to bed. And for all intent purposes, and for the rest of us, meet with him in traffic, I try to do that. But the idea is, purpose in your heart to cleave to him, to take hold of him, and not to let go of him, and you'll be so valuable to the church, you'll be so valuable to the church...[transcript of a connective expository sermon on Acts 11:1-30, given by Pastor Joe Focht, Calvary Chapel of Philadelphia, 13500 Philmont Avenue, Philadelphia, PA 19116]

related links:

Audio version: <http://resources.ccp Philly.org/SPM607>

To read about Paul's evangelism from a historic Messianic Jewish perspective, see <https://unityinchrist.com/history2/index3.htm>

We need that one final Revival, pray for it! see <https://unityinchrist.com/prophets/Zephaniah/RestorationAndRevival.htm>

John Chrysostom, who was he? See https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/John_Chrysostom

Maps of the apostle Paul's journeys: (very good) https://bible-history.com/maps/pauls_journeys.html