

## Acts 11-12

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- I. 11:1-18 Review of the Conversion of Cornelius

- Lessons:

- The importance of this event to the church
- The value of going over things repeatedly
- Check out Chapter 10 notes & mp3.

- II. 11:19-26 Greeks Believe in Antioch

- A. 11:26 **Christians** *Christianos* a follower of Christ – after the pattern of “Herodianos” or “Kaisarianos” referring to followers of Herod or Caesar.

- i. The lighthearted nickname was evidently given to them by pagan Gentiles in Antioch to distinguish them from Jews – also monotheistic with the same Scriptures – who did not believe in Jesus as Messiah. See also Acts 26:28 and 1 Peter 4:16.

- B. Three types of subject matter that need to be communicated:

- i. 11:20 **preaching** *euaggelizō* to announce good news, “evangelize”.

- a) This is to unbelievers. They really just need to hear the gospel.

- ii. 11:23 **encouragement** *parakalēō* to call alongside, exhort, admonish  
Related to *Paraklete*, a word used of the Holy Spirit.

- a) This is especially to new believers. They need to go beyond the Gospel itself and hear about commitment to Christ, growth and perseverance – so that they don't see trials and fall away. More mature believers also still need this from time to time.

- iii. 11:26 **teaching** *didaskō* (like “didactic”) to impart instruction, explain or expound a thing, instill doctrine. This is educating Christians about God and the Christian life, communicating all that God has revealed to us – from A to Z, Alpha to Omega, the whole Bible from Genesis to Revelation, the Contents to the Maps.

- a) This is what nourishes and matures a church. This is what is sorely needed in the church today. Many Christians are ignorant of the Scriptures and are therefore weak in their faith. (Romans 10:17)

### III. 11:27-30 A Prophecy of Famine

- A. Several historians record famines around this time: Tacitus (*Annals* XI.43), Josephus (*Antiquities* XX.ii.5), and Suetonius (*Claudius* 18).
- B. Apparently sharing all their earthly possessions with one another – as the Jerusalem church first did – wasn't a cure-all in a time of serious need.
- C. Application: The church in Antioch engaged in a little disaster relief – sending help by the hands of Barnabas and Saul. We still do this today, connecting with churches in hard hit areas. This is perhaps the church's oldest form of outreach.

### IV. 12:1-4 Herod Harasses the Church

- A. 12:2 James the son of Zebedee, brother of John, was the first apostle to die for his faith, but not the last. Only John died a natural death – after a long and difficult life.
- B. 12:3 Herod's approval rating went up, so he arrested Peter too.
- C. 12:4 **squad** = *tetrádion* = a group of four soldiers. Sixteen soldiers total, so they could alternate shifts and keep Peter constantly under guard. Peter and John escaped from prison with the help of an angel in Acts 5. That probably motivated Herod to keep Peter secure.

### V. 12:5-19 Peter's Release from Prison

- A. 12:5 Take note of this. **The church was praying.**
- B. 12:6 This describes the kind of security they gave Peter. Seems a little extreme if you ask me for a fisherman-preacher who was a poor swordsman at best. Remember the ear?
- C. 12:7-8 The angel wakes Peter up and hurries him out of there. Angels are not very patient if you ask me. Remember Lot and his wife and that whole thing in Sodom?
- D. 12:10 **The angel released Peter, but prayer brought the angel.**
- E. 12:12 **Further emphasis on the church praying.** The home is that of John Mark, writer of the Gospel, and his mother Mary. First mention of John Mark.
- F. 12:15 Do you think any of those prayers in 12:5 & 12 were for Peter's release?
  - i. There is a great lesson here on prayer and faith. Sometimes the mere fact that prayers are offered counts more than the faith behind them.
- G. 12:17 **James** is the Lord's brother, the actual son of Joseph and Mary. First mention in Acts, but now he will be an important leader in the church. He wrote the book of James.
- H. 12:19 The poor guards are executed for not stopping an angel. Tough job.

VI. 12:20-24 The Death of Herod Agrippa I

- A. 12:20 *food* Remember there is a famine going on right now. The coastal areas were more into trade and commercial enterprise while Judea had more agriculture.
- B. 12:23 Dr. Luke had to add that detail about the worms.
- i. The Greek word for worm is *skolex*. The only other place in the Bible it appears is in the mouth of Jesus in Mark 9 when Jesus is talking about hell as the place where:

*“Their worm [skolex] does not die  
And the fire is not quenched.”*

- C. Josephus the Jewish-Roman historian confirms this account by Luke:

*Agrippa had ruled for as king for three years under Claudius when he entered the huge amphitheater built by his grandfather, Herod the Great, at Caesarea. At daybreak of the second day of a great festival he came into the theater in a robe woven completely of silver. The rays of the early morning sun fell on the robe. Josephus says, “There the silver, illumined by the touch of the first rays of the sun, was wondrously radiant and by its glitter inspired fear and awe in those who gazed intently upon it. Straightway his flatterers raised voices from various directions ... addressing him as a god” (Ant. 19.344-45). He then adds, “The king did not rebuke them nor did he reject their flattery as impious” (19.346). ... Suddenly he felt pain in his heart and an intense ache in his stomach, and within five days he was dead! (19.346-50). As the pain struck him, he said to his friends, “I, a god in your eyes, am now bidden to lay down my life, for fate brings immediate refutation of the lying words lately addressed to me. I, who was called immortal by you, am now under sentence of death.” (19.347)*

– The Topical Josephus, Cleon L. Rogers, Jr.

- D. 12:24 Underline this verse. Herod began the chapter by killing James and imprisoning Peter. By the end of the chapter he's dead, but the word of God is growing and multiplying. God has a way of asserting His authority over those who chose to reject it.

*Isaiah 40:6-8 (NKJV) <sup>6</sup> The voice said, “Cry out!”  
And he said, “What shall I cry?”*

*“All flesh is grass,  
And all its loveliness is like the flower of the field.*

*<sup>7</sup> The grass withers, the flower fades,  
Because the breath of the LORD blows upon it;  
Surely the people are grass.*

*<sup>8</sup> The grass withers, the flower fades,  
But the word of our God stands forever.”*

VII. 12:25 Barnabas and Saul Return to Antioch

- A. John Mark goes with them back to Antioch. We'll see more of all three of these guys.