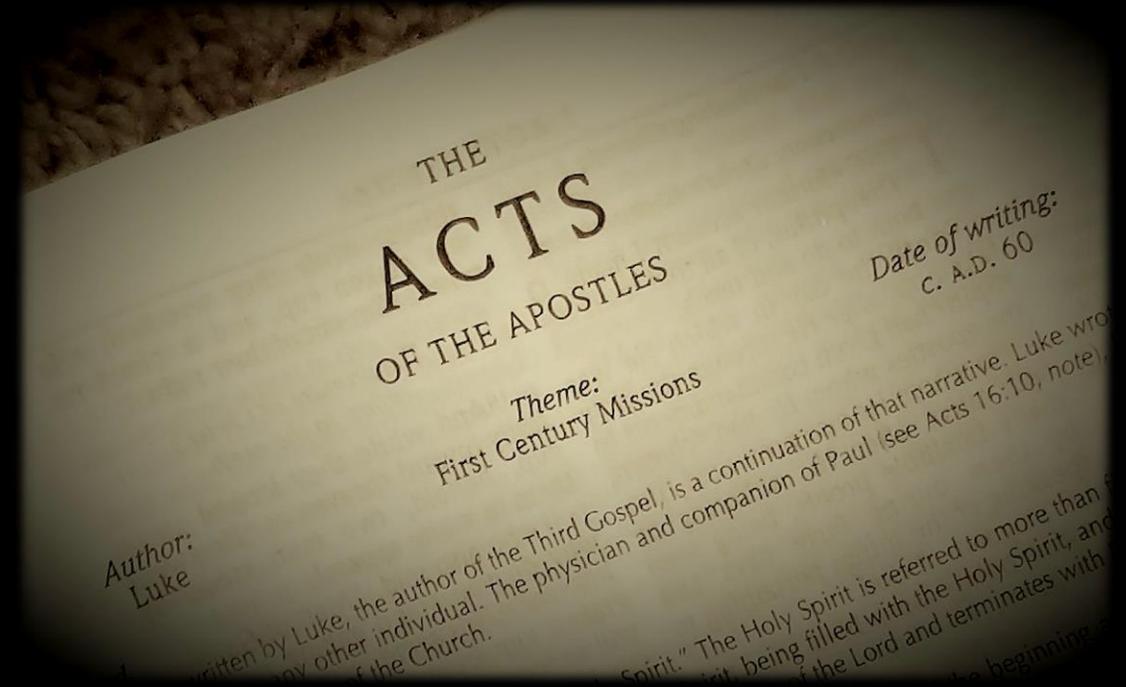


Verse by Verse

Acts 11



Previously in *Acts*

Previously in Acts

- In Acts 10, Peter was summoned to Caesarea, the headquarters of the Romans on Jewish soil.
- He was called there by Cornelius, a Roman centurion who had received a vision of an angel.
- Peter explained the gospel to Cornelius, his family and friends, who were promptly filled with the Holy Spirit.
- Peter then baptized these Gentiles who believed.

Acts 11 Introduction

Acts 11 Introduction

- In this chapter, Peter gets back to **Jerusalem**, where he is asked to report on his activities.
- His explanation will satisfy the Jewish believers.
- We will then see the continued expansion of the church, with even more non-Jews coming to Christ.
- This is particularly true in **Syrian Antioch**, where the ministry will be enhanced by **Barnabas** and **Saul**.

Acts 11 Key Verse

Acts 11 Key Verse

- Acts 11:18 (ESV)

When they heard these things they fell silent. And they glorified God, saying, “Then to the Gentiles also God has granted repentance that leads to life.”

Acts 11 Outline

Acts 11 Outline

1. Peter in Jerusalem 11:1-18
2. The Church in Antioch 11:19-26
3. Famine in Judea 11:27-30

1. Peter in Jerusalem 11:1-18

1. Peter in Jerusalem 11:1-18

- 11:1-3 Remember, the separation between Israel and the nations goes back to the law of Moses.
- The entire time they had been in the land – by now well over 1000 years – the law had been in effect.
- Breaking down these barriers was no easy thing.
- There will still be more on this throughout NT times.

1. Peter in Jerusalem 11:1-18

- **11:4-17** Peter retells the story we read last week from his own perspective.
- **11:12** He had the foresight to bring with him all six Jewish believers who were with him in Caesarea.

1. Peter in Jerusalem 11:1-18

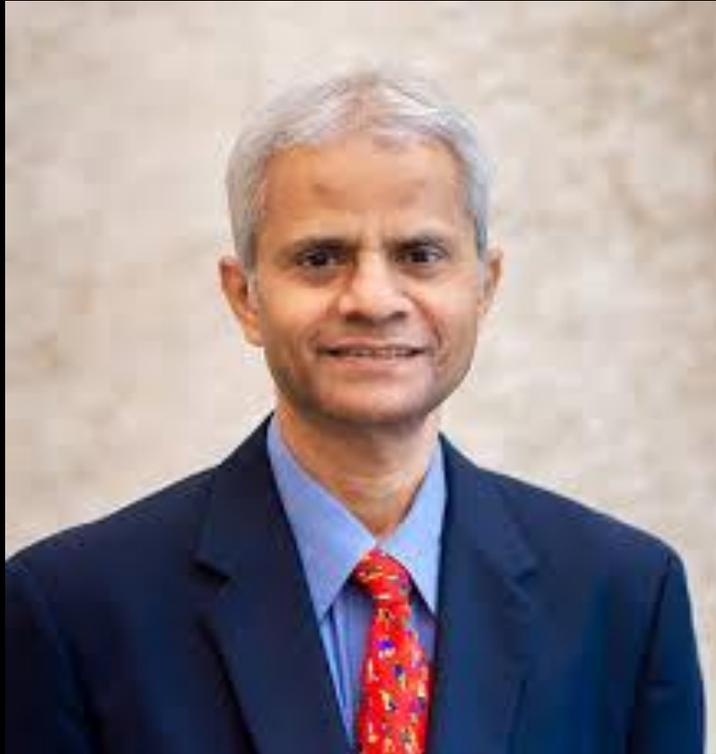
- 11:14 a message by which you will be saved
- Notice the clarity with which the Bible presents the gospel as God's saving message to us.
- Jesus Christ **is not** one religious figure among many.
- The Christian faith **is not** one among many equal and interchangeable expressions of religious truth.

1. Peter in Jerusalem 11:1-18

- 11:15-17 Peter recalled what Jesus said just before his ascension.
- Acts 1:4-5 (ESV)

⁴ And while staying with them he ordered them not to depart from Jerusalem, but to wait for the promise of the Father, which, he said, “you heard from me; ⁵ for John baptized with water, but you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit not many days from now.”

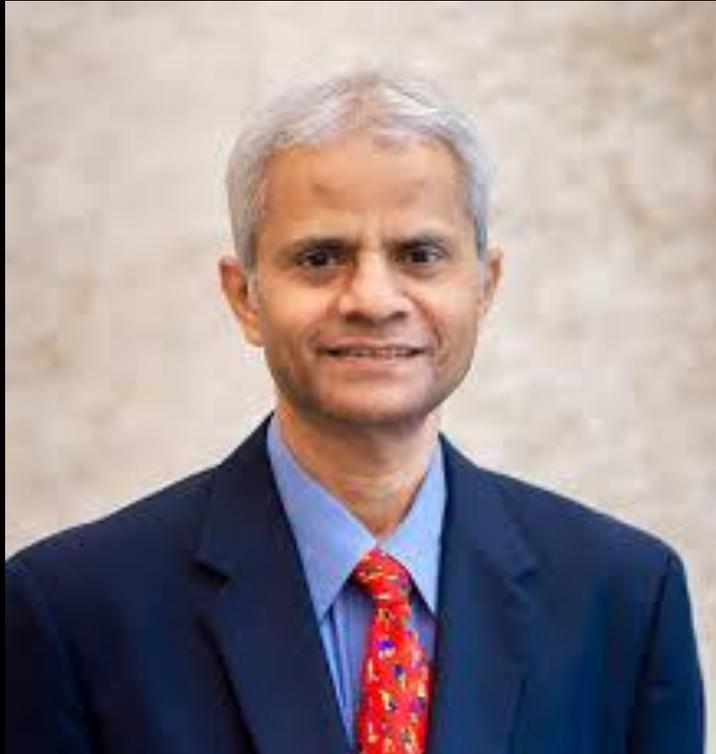
1. Peter in Jerusalem 11:1-18



The Holy Spirit is the ultimate destroyer of barriers. We saw this with the Samaritans in Acts 8 and now with the Gentiles in Acts 10. Peter's words in Acts 11 show that he was totally convinced ...

*– Babu Immanuel Venkataraman,
TCA College, Singapore*

1. Peter in Jerusalem 11:1-18



... that the meeting with Cornelius, the baptism of his household and the resultant acceptance of Gentile hospitality had all been orchestrated by God.

*– Babu Immanuel Venkataraman,
TCA College, Singapore*

2. The Church in Antioch 11:19-26

2. The Church in Antioch 11:19-26

Map from
worldatlas.com



2. The Church in Antioch 11:19-26

This is a crucial hinge in the Acts account. For the first time the church actively proselytized Gentiles. The Samaritans of chapter 8 were partly Jewish; the Ethiopian eunuch on his own was reading Isaiah 53 on his return from Jerusalem ...

*– Stanley D. Toussaint (1928 – 2017),
Dallas Theological Seminary*



2. The Church in Antioch 11:19-26

... and even Cornelius took the initiative in seeking the gospel from Peter's lips. But here the church took the first steps to take the message to uncircumcised Greeks.

*– Stanley D. Toussaint (1928 – 2017),
Dallas Theological Seminary*



2. The Church in Antioch 11:19-26

- 11:19 those who were scattered ... traveled ... speaking the word
- Luke does not name these believers – maybe he never knew who they were.
- And yet God accomplished this massive step in the history of the church through their ministry!
- You do not have to be famous to be used by God.

2. The Church in Antioch 11:19-26

- 11:22-26 Barnabas is a key figure in Acts. He first appears in Chapter 4.
- Acts 4:36-37 (ESV)

³⁶ Thus Joseph, who was also called by the apostles Barnabas (which means son of encouragement), a Levite, a native of Cyprus, ³⁷ sold a field that belonged to him and brought the money and laid it at the apostles' feet.

2. The Church in Antioch 11:19-26

- Acts 9:26-27 (ESV)

²⁶ And when [Saul] had come to Jerusalem, he attempted to join the disciples. And they were all afraid of him, for they did not believe that he was a disciple.

²⁷ But Barnabas took him and brought him to the apostles and declared to them how on the road he had seen the Lord, who spoke to him, and how at Damascus he had preached boldly in the name of Jesus.

2. The Church in Antioch 11:19-26

Barnabas an Encourager:

2. The Church in Antioch 11:19-26

Barnabas an Encourager:

1. The grace of God made him glad.

- Though clearly an older brother in the Lord, he was not set in his ways.
- When he saw God doing a new thing, he was happy to acknowledge it as good because God was doing it.
- He verified Saul and now verifies the Antioch church.

2. The Church in Antioch 11:19-26

Barnabas an Encourager:

2. He exhorted them to remain faithful and steadfast.

- Many times new works of God start with a lot of enthusiasm, but then quickly fizzle.
- Barnabas was mature enough in his faith to know this could happen in Antioch.

2. The Church in Antioch 11:19-26

Mature leaders are needed. They have weathered storms and are not surprised by problems. Because they have faith to handle crises, they can give stability to less experienced believers ...

*– Ajith Fernando,
Youth for Christ, Sri Lanka*



2. The Church in Antioch 11:19-26

... This is one reason why we should have mature Christians involved in a new work—to help people persevere.

*– Ajith Fernando,
Youth for Christ, Sri Lanka*



2. The Church in Antioch 11:19-26

Barnabas an Encourager:

3. Barnabas was a man of solid character.

- Verse 24 says that he was “a good man, full of the Holy Spirit and of faith.”
- The church can always use more people who can be described precisely like this.

2. The Church in Antioch 11:19-26

Barnabas an Encourager:

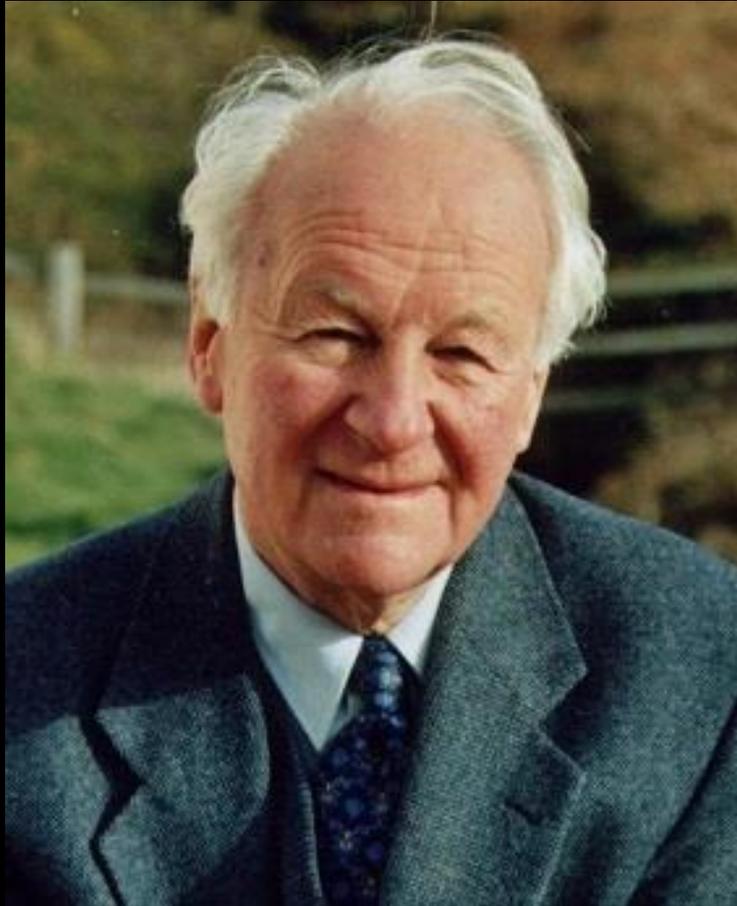
4. Barnabas was humble enough to recognize the abilities of others and want to work with them.

- It was more than ten years since Saul left to go back to Tarsus from Jerusalem.
- Barnabas sought him out in Tarsus to bring him to Antioch (a three hour drive away per Google Maps).
- He knew Saul would be a blessing in Antioch.

2. The Church in Antioch 11:19-26

- 11:26 And in Antioch the disciples were first called Christians.
- Make a note of this so you can impress your friends in your next game of Bible Trivia.

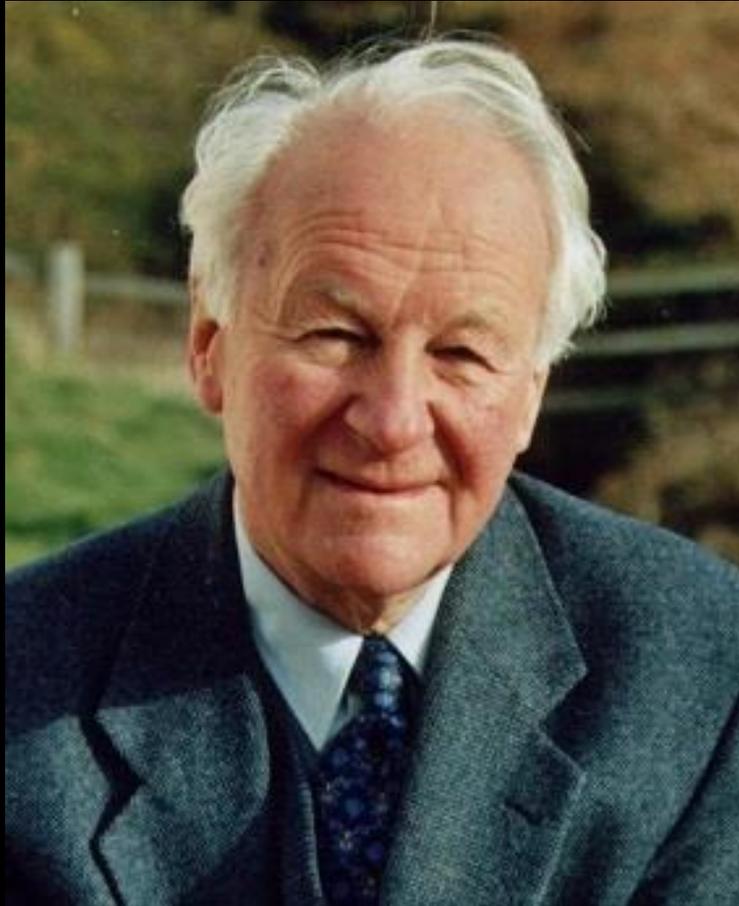
2. The Church in Antioch 11:19-26



Now it seems to have been the unbelieving public of Antioch, famed for their wit and nicknaming skill, who ... coined the epithet Christianoi ...

*– John Stott (1921 – 2011),
All Souls Church, London*

2. The Church in Antioch 11:19-26



... For the word's formation was parallel to Hērōdianoī (Herodians) and Kaisarianoī (Caesar's people); it marked out the disciples as being above all the people, the followers, the servants of Christ.

*– John Stott (1921 – 2011),
All Souls Church, London*

2. The Church in Antioch 11:19-26

- 11:26 You might think the word “Christian” would appear often in the Bible.
- It does not.
- Let’s fast-forward to read *both* occurrences outside of this present verse.

2. The Church in Antioch 11:19-26

- Acts 26:27-29 (ESV)

²⁷ King Agrippa, do you believe the prophets? I know that you believe.” ²⁸ And Agrippa said to Paul, “In a short time would you persuade me to be a Christian?”
²⁹ And Paul said, “Whether short or long, I would to God that not only you but also all who hear me this day might become such as I am—except for these chains.”

2. The Church in Antioch 11:19-26

- 1 Peter 4:15-16 (ESV)

¹⁵ But let none of you suffer as a murderer or a thief or an evildoer or as a meddler. ¹⁶ Yet if anyone suffers as a Christian, let him not be ashamed, but let him glorify God in that name.

3. Famine in Judea 11:27-30

3. Famine in Judea 11:27-30

- This visit to Jerusalem by Barnabas and Saul is likely the one (Saul) Paul records in **Galatians 2**.

Then after fourteen years I went up again to Jerusalem with Barnabas, taking Titus along with me. ² I went up because of a revelation ...

- The “revelation” would then be the prophecy of Agabus.

3. Famine in Judea 11:27-30

- It probably took some time for the full effects of the famine to be felt.
- That gave the church time to save up the relief money.
- Paul put this method into practice later, as he explains to the Corinthian church.

3. Famine in Judea 11:27-30

- 1 Corinthians 16:1-4 (ESV)

Now concerning the collection for the saints: as I directed the churches of Galatia, so you also are to do.
2 On the first day of every week, each of you is to put something aside and store it up, as he may prosper, so that there will be no collecting when I come ...

3. Famine in Judea 11:27-30

- 1 Corinthians 16:1-4 (ESV)

³ And when I arrive, I will send those whom you accredit by letter to carry your gift to Jerusalem. ⁴ If it seems advisable that I should go also, they will accompany me.

3. Famine in Judea 11:27-30

- The practice of believers helping believers in times of need goes back to the book of **Acts**.
- We can do this locally or internationally – as in the example in this chapter.
- After the 2011 tsunami in Japan, this church wired over \$1M to Christian relief work over the next year.

Acts 11 What We Just Read

Acts 11 What We Just Read

1. Peter in Jerusalem 11:1-18
2. The Church in Antioch 11:19-26
3. Famine in Judea 11:27-30

Acts 11 Key Verse

Acts 11 Key Verse

- Acts 11:18 (ESV)

When they heard these things they fell silent. And they glorified God, saying, “Then to the Gentiles also God has granted repentance that leads to life.”

Acts 11 Key Points

Acts 11 Key Points

1. The Holy Spirit likes to break down barriers such as the Jewish/Gentile divide in the early church.
2. Our ethnic or racial barriers are different but God is still eager to break them down.
3. We still need encouragers like Barnabas who will be glad to see God at work.
4. Encouragers urge others to persevere and find ways to share the responsibilities of ministry.

Acts 11 Key Points

5. Finally, let's not forget to be generous.

- The church in Antioch was willing to help the believers in Jerusalem.
- The Holy Spirit can show us similar ways to be a blessing to others.

Acts 11 A Prayer

Acts 11 A Prayer

- Heavenly Father,
- We thank you for the way you broke down the barriers that existed in the early church.
- We pray that your Holy Spirit would work in our hearts in a similar way, so that though we might be a church full of differences, we might yet be deeply united in you.

Acts 11 A Prayer

- Help us also to be a church full of encouragers, people who, like Barnabas, can be described as good, full of the Holy Spirit and of faith.
- And then help us also to be generous and willing to share, especially with our fellow Christians who are in need.
- In Christ,
- Amen

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