

Acts 11:19—24**More Gentiles saved**

- Stephen was martyred some 14 years previous to this chapter. The first missionary journey will begin within 2 years. Corinthians will be written in about 10 years.
 - If the Church, the Body of Christ was formed in Acts 2, it would have had only Jews in it for these 14 years, even though it was suppose to be a joint body of Jews and Gentiles.
- Those who were scattered when Stephen was martyred went to Phoenicia (north of Jerusalem along the Mediterranean Sea) and Cyprus (Island, NE Mediterranean Sea) and Antioch (coast NE Mediterranean Sea).
 - These men would speak the gospel to the Jews only.
- It was after Cornelius was saved that some of these Jewish men (from Cyprus and northern Africa) began to spread the gospel to Gentiles located in Antioch.
- The Lord was with these Jews who were preaching to the Gentiles for many became believers.
- When the church in Jerusalem heard this (this church would have been a Hebrew church, not the Church, the Body of Christ), they sent Barnabas to check things out.
 - It was obvious that God was in this work. Barnabas couldn't help but to encourage them to continue in the Lord.

Acts 11:25—26**Ministry in Antioch**

- Barnabas went to Tarsus to bring him back to Antioch (perhaps about 100 miles by foot) to help with the training of the believers.
 - It's significant that he didn't go back to Jerusalem and get Peter. The 12 Apostles were still headquartered in Jerusalem while Paul is the minister to the Gentiles. The 12 were still trying to fulfill the Great Commission of evangelizing Jerusalem.
- Barnabas and Paul worked in Antioch for one year.
- It was in Antioch that the disciples were first called Christians. I believe this term could be used of Jews or Gentiles since they were both followers of Christ.
 - They did not give themselves that name, it was given to them by outsiders.

Acts 11:27—30**The poor saints in Judea**

- Agabus, a prophet from Jerusalem, traveled to Antioch and prophesized a great famine would occur all over the known world.
 - This famine happened during the rule of Claudius in 46 A.D.
 - Since scholars can pinpoint the date of this famine, these events can be pinpointed with some accuracy.
- These poor saints in Judea were not always destitute. (See **Acts 4:34**)
- These saints had sold everything they had and were living off of the proceeds, by having the church leaders doling out the money.
- This money was not mismanaged or squandered but simply ran out because it was designed to last approximately seven to eight years that would get them through the Tribulation period and into the Millennial Kingdom.
- When the Millennial Kingdom was delayed because of national Israel's response to the offer of the Kingdom, the money ran out and now approximately 14 years later and in the middle of the predicted famine, many in Judea were hurting financially.
- When Israel was cut off (approximately 32 A.D.) there was no chance for them to enter the Millennial Kingdom. Their supplies were designed to last until 40 A.D.

- God supplied their need through the giving by those in Antioch. Barnabas and Paul were put in charge of delivering the donation. We see them delivering the gift in Acts 12:25.
- This gift and other gifts from other believers was not necessary because the famine was greater in Judea than in other places, the famine was in all the known world. It was because of the selling of all their possessions in anticipation of the Millennial Kingdom. Seeing them in need shows the passing away of the Kingdom program.

Acts 12:1—5

Peter arrested

- Herod the king is King Agrippa I. He is the grandson of Herod the Great who killed all the babies when Jesus was young and nephew of Herod Antipas who beheaded John the Baptizer (Matthew 14:3—11) and tried Jesus (Luke 23:8—12).
- King Agrippa I killed James (the Apostle, brother of John) with a sword.
 - This action pleased the Jews that shows the condition of the heart of the Jews at that time.
- To get the Jews to be on his side, he arrested Peter and put him in prison to kill him after the feast of unleavened bread (a week-long feast ending with the Passover).
 - The church in Jerusalem was praying fervently for Peter. This was the Hebrew church.

Acts 12:6—19

Peter escapes

- In the early morning of his execution, God answers the prayers of those in the church.
- Peter is so groggy from sleep that he can't tell if this is for real.
- Those praying were at Mary's house—mother of John Mark and Aunt of Barnabas (Col 4:10).
 - Peter showed up on their doorstep while they were praying.
 - Rhoda, recognized his voice and ran and told everyone that Peter was outside the door.
 - They didn't believe her and worst, didn't believe God could answer their prayers.
 - Jesus predicted Peter would live into old age (John 21:18) so we knew he would have escaped death here. Whether those praying knew about this prediction is unknown.
- God saved Peter because he had further work for him. James died because God was finished with him.
 - Since God is love, these events were all done in love. James was in God's hands and it was time for him to see his Savior. Peter was also in God's hands and was released then later put to death. God is also in control of our lives and He will play it out in a manner that's best for Him. However, He is also watching out for our best also, even in our death.

Acts 12:20—24

Herod's death

- For some reason Herod was angry with the Jews in Tyre and Sidon. They sent an ambassador to make things right and apparently succeeded.
 - They couldn't afford to have the king angry at them because they needed food supplies from Galilee.
- They were paying homage to him as God and he was accepting it, reveling in the worship.
- God immediately struck him down and was eaten by worms.
 - Josephus said he was seized with violent pains, was carried out and died five days later.
- This episode shows how far the Jews have wandered away from God. This is also a chilling reminder of what will happen in the Tribulation period. **(See John 5:43)**

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