

Acts 11 “The Work of the Spirit Continued” 2024-07-21.

Intro & Review:

Chapter 11 is still in part two of the book of Acts. We will start part three in a couple of weeks with chapter 13. I’m pointing this out to highlight the idea that the beginning of the book was accounting for the how the Spirit of God brought the gospel to the Jews in Jerusalem first. Part two moves to Samaria (half Jews) and tells the story of the Jewish convert (Ethiopian eunuch) and a gentile God fearer attracted to Judaism (Cornelius). Now, the gospel has gone all the way to Phoenicia, Cyprus, and Antioch (v19).

Q: What are the two broad chapter divisions?

1-18 is Peter’s recounting of what happened in the previous chapter, namely the pouring out of the Spirit on Cornelius and his household.

19-30 The activity of the church in Antioch

There are really about seven things that I want to emphasize in our text.

- 1) Household (v14)
- 2) Repentance and faith being the same thing (v18 & 21).
- 3) Boldness in preaching the gospel (v20)
- 4) Physical growth of the church “large number; considerable crowd x2” (v21, 24, & 26)
- 5) Spiritual growth (v26) “one year”
- 6) Legacy of Barnabas “good man, full of the HS and of faith...”
- 7) Financial love for the brothers (v30).

1) v14 Household “oikos”. there are **five** major examples of household baptism in the New Testament: (1) Cornelius (Acts 10); (2) Lydia (Acts 16); (3) Philippian jailer (Acts 16); (4) Crispus (Acts 18); (5) Stephanus (I Corinthians 1). John 4:53 also demonstrates the act of the head of the household results. “And he himself believed, and all his household” (4:53). Note that the *father’s* recognition of the timing of Jesus’ miracle leads to his *household’s* conversion. This narrative provides further precedent for both the influence that the head of the household had over his family when he converted, as well as the New Testament tacking on the brief addition “and all his household”

I have 10 copies of a book on Baptism by Dr. Guy Richard coming from Ligonier. See also CR Wiley’s *The Household and the War for the Cosmos*. Perhaps at some point we will go through a study on Reformed Distinctives and why it’s Biblical (Covenantal Theology.)

2) Repentance and Faith:

Q: How is the response of the gentiles described in v18?

“(R)epentance... to life” the italicized “that leads” is an interpretive addition.

Look also at v 21 where the connection to “belief” is mentioned again. It says “Those who believed, turned to the Lord.” I’m not going to belabor the point and you can refer to the message from a couple of weeks ago in Acts 9:35 & 42 where the same concept is dealt with. Faith and repentance. Belief and repentance...The two are the same thing, not two different things. This confusion over this issue has been particularly problematic here in Texas with the popularity of the Ryrie study Bible and Zane Hodges both being from Texas and having promulgated this confusion to the detriment of many people. It’s created many a false convert and supplanted the obvious biblical doctrine of perseverance of the saints. Again, I’ll refer everyone back to that message for a more detailed account of these things but let it suffice for now that the New Testament as a whole, and the book of Acts in particular, use these concepts interchangeably. They are two sides of the same coin. They are not two different things. This is repeatedly demonstrated in Acts alone not to mention the rest of the NT.

How is the response of the people described in v21? What two elements are there?

Belief and repentance

3) Boldness and preaching the gospel (mentioned 5x in ch 8 alone)

What were the men from Cyprus and Cyrene doing in v20?

Preaching (proclaiming) the gospel. How many times have we seen this phrase in Acts already. It is the norm for these early believers. Wherever they go, the preach the gospel. We have seen example after example of this behavior. Again, we need to know the gospel. Memorize it and let it be on the tip of our tongue. Wherever you go, wherever you are... PREACH THE GOSPEL

4) Physical Growth: Evangelism

Luke points out three times in the passage the size of the crowds. (21, 24, & 26). The number of people being saved is not everything, but it is not nothing. The work is being attributed to the Spirit and we, likewise do the same. Acts 2:1, 4:4, 5:14, 6:1&7, 16:5, 17:4 This is evangelism.

5) Spiritual Growth: Discipleship

How long did Saul and Barnabas stay with the believers?

A full year (v26).

They were teaching. True spiritual growth takes time and they were invested.

Where were the disciples first called Christians?

V26, at Antioch

The growth was enough that the people were being called Christians or little Christs. It reminds us of Jesus' words "you will know them by their fruits." Christianity is not a dead religion but a living outworking of the Spirit to create new people. Remember Galatians 5 and the fruit of the Spirit, love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control.

6) Legacy of Barnabas

How is Barnabas described in v24?

"Good man, full of the Holy Spirit and of faith."

This is a man who lived out what we just got through talking about.

How would people describe us?

Grumpy, complaining, lethargic, excuse making, angry, immature, flighty, shallow, selfish or...

Good. Full of the HS. Full of faith.

7) Financial support for the brothers

What other act of grace do you see the church performing in v29?

Giving financially to help other believers in need. This will come up again later.

God loves a cheerful giver. Not a grumpy one. Some people squeeze the nickel so tight you can hear the buffalo grunt. Some people are so tight they squeak when they walk. While we should be good stewards of the resources we have and that includes making wise decisions about who and what to give money to, our hearts should be generous as God has been generous with us.

Paul says that if a man will not work, he shall not eat and he also says that whoever does not support his own family is worse than an infidel and has denied the faith. So, we are indeed

careful about who and what we give to. That being said, 2Cor 9:6-7 “God loves a cheerful giver.” We want to be people who see needs and meet them quickly and happily.

Conclusion:

What are four indicators from verses 19-30 that the Spirit was at work?

1. Proclaiming the gospel (v20).
2. People being saved (v21 & v24).
3. Education and encouragement in the word of God (v26). Paul and Barnabas stayed there an entire year.
4. Love for the brothers and financial commitment (v29).

These are but four of the many other examples of how the Spirit of God was moving. Likewise, we confess that unless the Lord build the house, the laborers labor in vain. We can do all kinds of things in the flesh as a church, but we are asking and praying for a move of the Spirit. Even now, we ask that the Lord Jesus be high and lifted up knowing that He will draw men to Himself. We pray, and I commend, that we continue to pray fervently for the salvation of souls and ministry of the brothers.

These seven things are simple observations from the text that God’s people want to embody. May the Lord increase our evidence of the work of the Spirit likewise.

Closing Prayer:

Oh Lord God, would you move by your Spirit in our midst? We want the attention to be on You and not us. We want you to be worshiped in Spirit and in truth. We want You to be exalted and magnified. Give us boldness with the gospel. Give us the heart and let us do the work of an evangelist, proclaiming the good news. Save people. Change men and women, and young people and children. Convert dads and moms. Change legacies and trajectories. Show Yourself faithful. Grant repentance and faith so many more will join the meal which we are about to partake of. Let them feast on Christ in the bread and wine. We ask that You do that for Your sake, in Jesus’ name. Amen

Questions:

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What are four indicators from verses 19-30 that the Spirit was at work?

What were the men from Cyprus and Cyrene doing in v20?

How is the response of the people described in v21? What two elements are there?

How is Barnabas described in v24?

How long did Saul and Barnabas stay with the believers?

Where were the disciples first called Christians?

What other act of grace do you see the church performing in v29?

Application:

What has the Spirit impressed on you because of today's message?

What needs to change? What previous commitment has been reinforced?