

THE DIVINE NAME

Acts 11

The tenth chapter of Acts is a general statement by the historian Luke relative to the conversion of Cornelius and his house, but the eleventh chapter is a statement by Peter in the order of the several occurrences. The eleventh chapter is, therefore, an explanation of the general statements of the tenth chapter. The tenth chapter must be understood in light of the eleventh chapter.

I. Peter Held in Question (11:1-3)

A. Gentiles received the word.

1. News of the conversion of Cornelius spread like wild fire.
2. It caused a great stir among the Jewish Christians.
3. Not that he had taught and baptized Cornelius, but that they had not been required to be circumcised first.
4. The Gentiles who had become proselytes submitted to circumcision.
5. Some believe that these opponents of Peter are the ones who eventually developed into the extreme Judaizing party which so bitterly opposed Paul's ministry among the Gentiles, as recorded in Acts 15 and elsewhere.
6. Contended with him.
 - a. They disputed with him.
 - b. Charged him with being at fault.
 - c. Continuous or repeated argument.
 - d. Remember, they had not had the privilege of the vision that Peter had (10:9-18).

II. Peter's Answer (11:4-18).

A. Peter gives a detailed, orderly account of what happened.

1. Verses 5-10 tell about the vision.
2. Three men arrive (v.11).
3. Spirit bade me go with them (v.12).
4. Six brethren went with me (v.12)
5. Who shall tell thee words (11:14)
 - a. Cornelius and his household were to be saved by words spoken by Peter.
 - b. Acts 15:7
 - c. Gospel is the power of God (Rom. 1:16).
6. As he began to speak, Holy Spirit fell on them.
 - a. It is strongly implied that there has been no common reception of the baptism with Holy Spirit since Pentecost, for if it were something that all Christians were expected to and did receive, Peter could have simply pointed to the numerous other incidents and not have had to go back to Pentecost for an example.
 - b. Inference can also be drawn that the "baptism of Holy Spirit" was not the thing that converted people, for Peter could have shown that the conversion of Cornelius was like the case of any other person who came to Christ to prove his point.
 - c. The Holy Spirit fell on Cornelius and his house as a means of convincing Peter and entire Jewish church that the gospel should be preached to Gentiles and that without the burden of circumcision.
7. I remembered (v.16).
 - a. Acts 1:5
 - b. We learn for certain that what happened at Cornelius' house was the baptism with the Holy Spirit just as at Pentecost, and not some other measure of the Spirit.
 - c. Who was I???

(1) Question carried it's own answer.

(2) Peter would have been in direct rebellion to God's will had he refused to baptize those Gentiles.

8. Jewish Christians held their peace (v.18).

III. Church at Antioch (11:19-26)

- A. A new and important portion of the history of the church began with this section of verses.
 - 1. Conversion of Cornelius opened up the doors to the Gentile world for gospel preaching.
 - 2. From this point on, we will see great effort to reach Gentiles with the gospel.
- B. Church was scattered in Acts 8:1ff
- C. Disciples made their way to Antioch.
 - 1. Antioch was the third largest city in Roman Empire.
 - 2. Destined to become the great center for Gentile evangelism.
- D. Hand of the Lord.
 - 1. He was blessing their earnest evangelistic efforts.
 - 2. Believed and turned (3:19; 2:38).
- E. Barnabas goes to Antioch.
 - 1. Church in Jerusalem sent Barnabas.
 - a. Acts 4:36,37—ability to exhort.
 - b. Barnabas came to exhort them to remain steadfast to the Lord.
 - 2. What he saw? (V.23).
 - a. With purpose of heart—resoluteness in heart, a fixed and settled determination.
 - b. Make it your purpose in life to keep on remaining loyal to the Lord.
 - c. Christian must constantly make it his aim in life to stick close to Christ.
 - 3. Church grew (v.24) “added unto the Lord” . . . No “joining.”
 - 4. Barnabas brings Saul to Antioch.
 - a. Barnabas was familiar with Saul. Knew he was just the man to help.
 - b. Probably knew Saul's future work was with Gentiles.
 - 5. Met with the church for a year.
- F. Disciples called Christians first at Antioch (v.26)
 - 1. Divine name.
 - 2. It seems from context that Paul and Barnabas are the ones who named the disciples Christians by inspiration.
 - 3. Acts 26:28; I Pet. 4:16 [Believe Isaiah 62:2 ties in with this.]

IV. Judean famine and Relief (11:27-30)

- A. Prophets from Jerusalem.
 - 1. A man who preached by inspiration is a prophet (I Cor. 12:10; Eph. 4:11,12)
 - 2. Agabus told of a famine. Dearth is a famine, a shortage of food.
 - 3. Claudius reigned from A.D. 41 to A.D. 54. (Son, Nero followed..)
 - 4. Christians in Antioch volunteered to help church in Judea.
 - a. They planned...they performed.
 - b. According to his ability.
 - 5. Sent to elders by hands of Barnabas and Saul.
 - 6. First mention of elders in the church.

Con: Peter was wise enough to taken six witnesses with him to Cornelius. He had an answer and others to verify what he said. The church in Antioch was the beginning of the expansion into the Gentile world. The church grew, people were added to the Lord, and we hear the name Christian. Are you a Christian? Have you been added to the Lord? You can by obeying the gospel.