



I. Defending the Gentile Ministry (11:1 – 18)

Verse 1

[now] – scene change

The apostles

and the believers

throughout Judea

heard that the Gentiles also

had received (dechomai = accept/approve/embrace)

the word (logos = the scriptural truth) of God.

Rumors spread from Caesarea back to Jerusalem. Bad news travels fast and far. The establishment has a radar for anything that is radical or dangerous. The Christian movement has already become established in their norms and values and now this new revelation is causing a “paradigm shift” in the establishment.

Verse 2

So

when Peter went up to Jerusalem,

the circumcised believers [The old way]

criticized (diakrino = took him to court/disputed

with him strongly) him

Now we know why it was Peter who had to open the door to the Gentiles! He was the only leader who could handle the criticism and convince the Apostles to change their paradigm. We also understand why Peter took six other Jews as eye-witnesses to the events that occurred in Cornelius’ house.

Verse 3

and said,

“You went 1) into the house [associate]
of uncircumcised men

and 2) ate with them.” [fellowship as guests]

This is the old paradigm. People have to become Jews prior to believing in Christ and there is still a huge divide between Jews and Gentiles.

Verse 4

[but]

Starting from the beginning,

Peter told them (ektithemi = to lay out/expound)

the whole story: [as recorded in Acts 10:9 – 43]

Verse 5

“I was in the city of Joppa praying,
and in a trance (ekstasis)

I saw a vision. (horama)

I saw something like a large sheet

being let down from heaven [sky]

by its four corners,

and it came down to where I was.

Verse 6

I looked into it

and saw four-footed animals

of the earth,

wild beasts,

reptiles

and birds.

Verse 7

Then I heard a voice telling me,

‘Get up, Peter.

Kill

and eat.’

Verse 8

[but]

*“I replied, ‘Surely not, Lord!
Nothing impure or unclean
has ever entered my mouth.’*

Verse 9

[but]

*“The voice spoke from heaven
a second time,
‘Do not call anything impure
that God has made clean.’*

Verse 10

*This happened three times,
and then it was all pulled up
to heaven again.*

Verse 11

*“Right [behold!] then three men
who had been sent to me
from Caesarea
stopped at the house
where I was staying.*

Verse 12

*The Spirit told me
to have no hesitation (diakrino)
about going with them.
These six brothers also went with me,
and we entered the man’s house.*

Verse 13

*He told us how he had seen an angel
appear in his house
and say,
‘Send to Joppa for Simon
who is called Peter.*

Verse 14

*He will bring you a message
through which you
and all your household
will be saved.’ (sozo = To be made whole)*

Verse 15

*“As I began to speak,
the Holy Spirit came on them
as he had come on us
at the beginning.*

Verse 16

*Then I remembered
what the Lord had said (rhema) :
‘John baptized with water,
but you will be baptized
with the Holy Spirit.’*



Verse 17

*So [therefore]
if God gave them
the same gift he gave us
who believed in the Lord Jesus Christ,
who was I to think
that I could stand in God’s way?” (kolyo =
withhold/forbid/or deny – as in punish)*

Verse 18

*When they heard this,
they had no further objections (hesychazo = went silent/hold
your peace) [awkward realization]*

*We don’t know how long this silence continued – The doubt was
raised in the experience of God’s activities – this led to a crisis of
faith – which then leads to a breakthrough!*

and praised God, saying,

*“So then, [well then based on these new facts]
even to Gentiles God has granted repentance*

*(metanoia = turn from and turn to)
that leads to life.” (zoe = fullness of life now and in the
future)*

*The Holy Spirit led the Christian leaders to be conformed to
God’s will all along!*

II. Barnabas in Antioch (11:19 – 24)

Verse 19

Now [scene change]

those who had been scattered (diaspeiro)

by the persecution

that broke out

when Stephen was killed [Acts 8]

traveled as far as

1) Phoenicia, [a region]

2) Cyprus [an island]

3) and Antioch, [a city]

spreading the word (logos)

only among Jews.



Insight #1 – Suffering led to multiplication! We need to embrace God's use of persecution to move and multiply His will!

Verse 20

Some of them, however,

men from Cyprus

and Cyrene,

went to Antioch

and began to speak to Greeks [Hellenists] also,

telling them the good news (euaggelizo)

about the Lord Jesus.

Insight #3 - The first time where people specifically target Gentiles for evangelistic purposes! We need to go to the lost!

Insight #2 – It was not Apostles but ordinary men who started the church in Antioch!

Insight #4 – The power of the Gospel of Christ!



Verse 21

1) The Lord's hand was with them, [power]

2) and a great number of people believed

3) and turned (epistrepho = to turn oneself)

to the Lord.

Insight #5 – The hand of the Lord = supernatural power and special blessings from God. The work at Antioch was a work of God, not people! – It is possible to turn people without God, but it is impossible for them to become believers without God!

Verse 22

News of this reached the church

in Jerusalem, [once again rumors from the mission field]

and they sent Barnabas (name = “son of rest”/”encouragement)

to Antioch.

Insight #6 – The establishment sent a representative to confirm the validity (encourage) of the work of God without trying to take control of the work!

Barnabas was a giving Christian (Acts 4:36-37)

Barnabas was a forgiving Christian (Acts 9:26-28)

Barnabas was an encouraging Christian (based on his name)

Verse 23

When he arrived

and saw what the grace of God had done,

he was glad

and encouraged them all

to remain true (prothesis = stay to your purpose)

to the Lord

with all their hearts.

Insight #7 – Grace is visible and active and leads to joy!

Insight #8 – Barnabas used his encouragement to inspire the people of Antioch to be devoted completely to the Lord! (Eph. 4:11-16 – the purpose of the Spirit gifts explained)

Verse 24

[for] – logical argument

He was a

1) good man, (agathos = good in nature/heart)

2) full (pleres = filled to the top) of the Holy Spirit

3) and faith, (pistis = confidence in truth/truthful actions)

and a great number of people

were brought to the Lord.

Insight #9 – The make-up of a godly leader – good heart, full of the Spirit, and walking in faithful actions.

III. Barnabas and Saul in Antioch (11:25 – 30)

Verse 25

Then Barnabas
went to Tarsus
to look for Saul,

No angelic intervention! No voices from God! He recognized that the work in Antioch was in need of leadership, he took the initiative himself to involve a past relationship into the work of God.

Verse 26

and when he found him,
he brought him to Antioch.
So for a whole year

Barnabas and Saul

- 1) met with the church [relationships]
 - 2) and taught (didasko = to train) [mentoring]
- great numbers of people. [building up the church]

Insight #10 – The church is built upon radical relationships and leadership development! (Eusebius – Sanctus from Lyons, France – “I am a Christian”)

The disciples were called Christians (christianos = only used three times in the Bible = probably a negative at first used to mock = means “little Christ's”)
first at Antioch.

Verse 27

During this time
some prophets came down
from Jerusalem
to Antioch.

Verse 28

One of them, named Agabus, (name means “Locust”)
stood up
and through the Spirit
predicted that a severe famine
would spread over the entire Roman world.
(This happened during the reign of Claudius.)

Verse 29

The disciples,
as each one was able,
decided to provide help (diakonia = to serve/support)
for the brothers
and sisters living in Judea.

Insight #11 – The true Christian Church is demonstrated with sacrificial giving to the others outside of the local church.

This was not a request of the church in Judea – in fact, we don’t have any indication that the church in Judea even knew about this prophecy! The Church in Antioch, led by the Spirit, determined to be a sacrificial and proactive service organization.

There early DNA is to 1) sensitivity to the Spirit, and 2) active service to the needs OUTSIDE of the church.

Verse 30

This they did,
sending their gift
to the elders
by Barnabas
and Saul.

These two men now become the trusted ambassadors for the church at Antioch to take the relief funds to Judea and Jerusalem.