

Wednesday, July 19, 2023  
SHAKEN:  
PART 11: THE GENTILE CHURCH

Tonight, we continue on in our study of Acts by taking a look at chapter 11.

[Acts 11:1-18 \(NKJV\)](#)

Last time we were together discussing the book of Acts, a monumental event had occurred: the salvation of Gentiles witnessed by the outpouring of the Holy Spirit. The Jewish believers are struggling with God's plan. Since Moses, the Jews have served the Lord under the law. Now, the fulfillment of all that has been prophesied has caused them to ponder the place of the law in their relationship with God. Peter's return to Jerusalem gives them occasion to question what has happened. Peter recounts what happened in Joppa and Caesarea. He has six witnesses to the events present as he speaks. Peter reminds the Jewish believers of the words of the Lord Himself describing the fulfillment of salvation:

["John indeed baptized with water, but you shall be baptized with the Holy Spirit." \(Acts 11:16b\)](#)

Notice the use of the word "you." Peter explains that the same thing that happened to "you" happened to "them" making them one of "you." If God did this sovereignly, how could Peter argue against it. The realization comes to the Jewish believers: God has also granted to the Gentiles repentance to life. But, this realization does not stop their struggle. More on that later.

[Acts 11:19-21 \(NKJV\)](#)

A move of God begins in Gentile territory in the city of Antioch. Jews from Gentile territories begin to preach to Gentiles and God saves many.

[Acts 11:22-26 \(NKJV\)](#)

The church – knowing that Gentiles are being saved – send Barnabas to Antioch to establish the believers. What appears to be a small decision ends up being a great one. Barnabas goes to Tarsus to bring Saul, who has been home for 3 years to Antioch to assist him in ministering to the

Gentiles. Barnabas and Saul are in Antioch a year teaching the church. The name that we are called as believers – Christian – originated in Antioch.

### Acts 11:27-30 (NKJV)

One of the awesome things that these verses reveal is the operation of the five fold ministry gifts within the church. A man named Agabus – recognized by the Jerusalem church as a prophet – prophesies about a famine to come. The disciples in Antioch sent relief to the brethren in Judea. This reminds me of Paul's words in:

### Romans 15:26-27 (NKJV)

While the relief spoken of here occurs much later, the premise remains the same. Saul/Paul taught this honor of Jewish believers everywhere he ministered. The Jewish believers had all in common so famine would deplete resources. This famine occurred during the reign of Claudius Caesar:

He began his reign in 41 A.D., and he reigned for 13 years. He was at last poisoned by one of his wives, Agrippina, who wished to raise her son Nero to the throne. During his reign no less than four different famines are mentioned by ancient writers, one of which was particularly severe in Judea.

Today's Scriptures:

- Acts 11:1-30 (NKJV)
- Romans 15:26-27 (NKJV)