

Week of May 21 - 27

Chapter 10 Summary

Until now, the Gospel had only been preached to Jews (and to some Samaritans who had Jewish ancestors). With the conversion of Cornelius and his household, Gentiles were now offered repentance leading to eternal life. Because Moses' law forbids socializing with Gentiles, it took some miraculous events to help Jewish Christians realize that they shouldn't consider people from other nations as common or unclean.

Cornelius' Vision (Acts 10:1-8)

Cornelius was a Roman soldier in Caesarea who was extremely religious. God noticed his fervent prayers and charity to the poor, and in a vision, an angel of God instructed him to send men for Peter who would tell him what he needed to do.

Peter's Vision (Acts 10:9-23)

As Cornelius' men were on their way, Peter had a vision where the Lord told him to kill and eat unclean animals. When he refused, Peter was told what God has cleansed no one should call common or unclean. As Peter considered the vision, the Holy Spirit told him three men would seek him, and he should go with them without question. The men arrived and told Peter about Cornelius. The next day, Peter and some brethren from Joppa went with them back to Caesarea.

Peter at Cornelius' Home (Acts 10:24-33)

Peter found a waiting audience in Cornelius' home. Cornelius fell and worshipped at Peter's feet, but was rebuked for doing so. Peter explained how he has learned not to call any man common or unclean, and Cornelius related his vision to Peter. Now that Peter was there, Cornelius, along with his family and friends, were ready to hear the things Peter had been commanded by God to say.

Peter's Sermon to Cornelius (Acts 11:34-43)

Recognizing that God was no respecter of persons, but now accepts people from every nation who fear Him, Peter proclaimed the Gospel to the household. He explained Jesus' ministry in Judea, his crucifixion, his resurrection from the dead, and that he was seen by witnesses who ate and drank with him. God commanded these witnesses to preach that Jesus was ordained to be the Judge of the living and the dead and that the prophets bore witness that those who believed in Him would receive forgiveness of sins.

Gentiles Receive the Holy Spirit (Acts 10:44-48)

As Peter was speaking, the Holy Spirit fell those who heard the Word. The Jewish Christians accompanying Peter were astonished because the gift of the Holy Spirit had been poured out on Gentiles, as shown by their speaking in tongues. Peter saw what was happening and commanded them to be baptized in the name of the Lord.

Peter Explains His Actions (Acts 11:1-18)

The apostles and Jewish Christians in Judea heard about the Gentiles' conversion. When Peter returned to Jerusalem, Jewish Christians who were "of the circumcision" took issue with his

eating with uncircumcised men. Peter explained in detail what had happened, including the vision in Joppa and how the Holy Spirit fell the Gentiles as he began to speak to them. The baptism of the Holy Spirit on the Gentiles was understood to show that Gentiles were now allowed to hear the Words of salvation and that they could repent and have eternal life.

Barnabas and the Church at Antioch (Acts 11:19-30)

Dr. Luke next records how the Gospel spread from Jerusalem to Antioch. Those scattered after Stephen's death included men from Cyprus and Cyrene, who began preaching Jesus to the Hellenists (Greek Jews).

When a significant number believed in Antioch and turned to the Lord, the news was heard by those in the church at Jerusalem. Barnabas was sent to Antioch and rejoiced in what he saw. He spent some time there encouraging them but later went to Tarsus to find Saul. For one year, they worked together with the church in Antioch and taught many about Jesus Christ. The disciples were first called Christians in Antioch. Hearing from the prophet Agabus that there was going to be a famine, they began sending relief to the Christians in Jerusalem, each giving as much as he could. This they did, consigning it to Barnabas and Saul to take to the elders of the church in Jerusalem.

Chapter 12 Summary

This chapter records the efforts of King Herod to harass the church in Jerusalem. This Herod was Agrippa I, son of Herod Antipas (who beheaded John the Baptist, and grandson of Herod the Great (who killed the infants at Bethlehem).

Barnabas and the Church at Antioch (Acts 12:1-19)

Successfully killing James, the brother of John, with the sword, Herod had Peter arrested and imprisoned, intending to bring him before the people after the Passover. Herod's plans were prevented when an angel of the Lord freed Peter from prison. After meeting with the believers at the home of Mary, the mother of John Mark, Peter sent word to James and the believers, explaining his miraculous release. When the guards could not find Peter in prison, Herod had them examined and executed. Herod then went down to Caesarea.

Barnabas and the Church at Antioch (Acts 12:20-24)

While Herod was still at Caesarea, the people of Tyre and Sidon came to him to ask for peace because their countries were economically dependent on trade with Herod. When he made a speech to them, the people praised it as "the voice of a god and not of a man." Failing to give glory to God, an angel of the Lord struck Herod, and he died. The word of God, however, grew and multiplied. Barnabas and Saul, having completed their ministry to the saints in Judea, returned from Jerusalem to Antioch, accompanied by John Mark.

Barnabas and Paul Sent Off (Acts 13:1-3)

At this point in Acts, the focus turns from the ministry of Peter to the ministry of Paul. The beginning of Paul's first missionary journey started with the call by the Holy Spirit, who instructed the prophets and teachers at the church in Antioch to dedicate Barnabas and Saul for the work He has called them. With fasting, prayer, and the laying on of hands, the two men were sent out on their first journey.

Barnabas and Paul Sent Off (Acts 13:4-12)

Sailing from Seleucia, they arrived in Cyprus, the home of Barnabas. Assisting them was John Mark (Barnabas' cousin who had joined them earlier, and was later the companion of Peter and author of the Gospel of Mark). They began what Luke describes as Paul's custom, which was preaching in the synagogues of the Jews first.

Starting in Salamis, they made their way to Paphos, where they met a sorcerer called Bar-Jesus along with the governor Sergius Paulus. When Sergius wanted to hear the Word of God, Bar-Jesus tried to prevent Barnabas and Saul from speaking. But, filled with the Holy Spirit, Saul rebuked the sorcerer, and the sorcerer lost his eyesight. Astonished at the power of the teaching of the Lord, Sergius becomes a believer. From this point onward, Saul is called Paul and became the more valuable member of the missionary team.

Preaching in Perga and Antioch (Acts 13:13-41)

From Cyprus, they sailed to Perga in Pamphylia, where John Mark left them to return to Jerusalem (later causing contention between Paul and Barnabas). Arriving in Antioch of Pisidia, they attended the Jewish synagogue on the Sabbath. Invited to speak, Paul preached the Gospel of Jesus by first reviewing the history of Israel from the Exodus to the time of David. Noting God's promise about the seed of David, Paul summarized the ministry of John the Baptist and then introduced Jesus as the Savior who was crucified, buried, and raised from the dead, and seen by eyewitnesses. Offering more evidence of the resurrection from Old Testament prophecy, Paul proclaimed forgiveness of sins through Jesus.

Jewish Opposition and Gentiles Believe (Acts 13:42-52)

The response was positive, especially among the Gentiles., Paul and Barnabas were invited to speak the following Sabbath. When unbelieving Jews saw that the whole city came out to hear him, they were filled with envy and opposed the things he spoke. Declared themselves unworthy of eternal life, Paul turned his attention to the Gentiles, who were much more receptive. The Word of the Lord spread through the region, but eventually, Paul and Barnabas were forced to leave and went to Iconium. Their work in Antioch was not in vain because they left behind disciples filled with joy and the Holy Spirit.

Preaching at Iconium (Acts 14:1-6)

Luke continues his narration of events during Paul's first missionary journey. Upon arriving in Iconium, Paul and Barnabas again visited the local synagogue. Response to their message was positive among both Jews and Greeks, but soon opposition again came from unbelieving Jews. Even so, Paul and Barnabas stayed "a long time" in Iconium, speaking boldly and performing signs and wonders. Eventually, the opposition became violent, forcing Paul and Barnabas to flee to Lystra and Derbe.

Preaching at Lystra (Acts 14:7-21)

In Lystra, Paul healed a man crippled from birth. The people assumed that Paul and Barnabas must be gods and named them Zeus (Barnabas) and Hermes (Paul). When the priest of Zeus prepared to offer sacrifices, the apostles tore their clothes and barely restrained them by a persuasive speech. Not long after, Jews from Antioch of Pisidia and Iconium persuaded the

multitudes to stone Paul and drag him outside the city. Though assumed to be dead, Paul was able to return to the town and left the next day with Barnabas to go to Derbe, where they preached the Gospel and made many disciples.

Paul and Barnabas Return to Antioch in Syria (Acts 14:22-28)

From Derbe, Paul and Barnabas retraced their steps, strengthened the disciples in Lystra, Iconium, and Antioch of Pisidia, and appointed elders in every church with prayer and fasting. Passing through Pisidia, they came to Pamphylia, where they preached the Gospel in Perga. Then they went down to Attalia and sailed to Antioch in Syria, where their journey had begun. They reported to the church all that God had done with them. There they stayed for "a long time."