

ACTS 9 concludes with this statement concerning Peter: ACTS 9:43 *And it came to pass, that he tarried many days in Joppa with one Simon a tanner.* While lodging with Simon the tanner a number of things happened to Peter, which we will read more about in ACTS 10, but make sure you realize also that Peter while there also was still a testimony to the resurrection power of the Lord Jesus Christ, and that is also why many believed in the Lord there in Joppa.

ACTS 10

As we continue chapter-by-chapter in ACTS examining what our brother in the Lord Luke wrote to us in scripture we come across in ACTS 10 another unique account that only Luke records in scripture. It was no doubt Peter who told Luke about going to the house of Cornelius in ACTS 10, where Peter for the first time preached a sermon unto Gentiles. When Jesus told Peter in LUKE 5:10 *...Fear not; from henceforth thou shalt catch men...* He didn't say thou shalt catch only Jewish men did He? So important was this event of preaching to the Gentiles at the house of Cornelius in ACTS 10, that it was told twice, once in ACTS 10, and the second time in ACTS 11:1-18. It is important to also note that at the house of Cornelius in ACTS 10 Peter preached his one and only recorded sermon to the Gentiles! In previous lessons in this study we briefly looked at Peter's sermon that he preached in the house of Cornelius, but the complete story is told for us in ACTS 10 & 11. And as we go through this examination of ACTS 10 & 11 concerning the events surround what took place at the house of Cornelius please keep in mind that this story lays the foundation for what will take place at the council in Jerusalem recorded in ACTS 15 a few years later, where the subject matter will end up being how during this yet present Church Age God is visiting the Gentiles to take out of them a people for His name. We find this in ACTS 15:14 where is stated: *Simeon hath declared how God at the first did visit the Gentiles, to take out of them a people for his name.* "A people for His name" can most simply be defined as Christians. Out of this "people for His name" comes also a rib portion of people who will be called "Mrs. Jesus," "The Bride of Christ," "The Lamb's wife." As for Peter before and after ACTS 10 his ministry continued to be unto the house of Israel; unto the Jews. Peter up to this time frame of ACTS 10 has followed Jesus instructions given the twelve in MATTHEW 10:5 & 6. MATTHEW 10:5 *These twelve Jesus sent forth, and commanded them, saying, Go not into the way of the Gentiles, and into any city of the Samaritans enter ye not: 6 But go rather to the lost sheep of the house of Israel.* Who did Peter address in his first sermon found in ACTS 2? ACTS 2:22 gives us the answer, stating: *Ye men of Israel, hear these words;... .* In Peter's second sermon found in ACTS 3 we read: ACTS 3:12 *And when Peter saw it, he answered unto the people, Ye men of Israel, why marvel ye at this?* In ACTS 4:10 as Peter addresses the Sanhedrin council like this: ACTS 4:10 *Be it known unto you all, and to all the people of Israel, that by the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, whom ye crucified, whom God raised from the dead, even by him doth this man stand here before you whole.* And this pattern of Peter addressing the people of Israel continued until this time frame of ACTS 10. Peter wasn't given the message about a Bride for Christ, but Paul was. It was the Apostle Paul who was given the Apostleship unto the Gentiles that he writes about in ROMANS 11:13 -- *For I speak to you Gentiles, inasmuch as I am the apostle of the Gentiles,... .* To Peter, Paul's gospel message contained *...some things hard to be understood...* according to 2 PETER 3:16, and the bridal message Paul preached was one of those things Peter didn't understand. Also remember the place that Peter was told would be his, and the other twelve Kingdom Apostles found in MATTHEW 19. MATTHEW 19:27 *Then answered Peter and said unto him, Behold, we have forsaken all, and followed thee; what shall we have therefore? 28 And Jesus said unto them, Verily I say unto you, That ye which have followed me, in the regeneration when the Son of man shall sit in the throne of his glory, ye also shall sit upon twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel.* The Bride of Christ as a joint-heir with Christ will reign with Jesus in His throne.

ACTS 10:1 *There was a certain man in Caesarea called Cornelius, a centurion of the band called the Italian band, 2 A devout man, and one that feared God with all his house, which gave much alms to the people, and prayed to God alway. 3 He saw in a vision evidently about the ninth*

hour of the day an angel of God coming in to him, and saying unto him, Cornelius. 4 And when he looked on him, he was afraid, and said, What is it, Lord? And he said unto him, Thy prayers and thine alms are come up for a memorial before God. 5 And now send men to Joppa, and call for one Simon, whose surname is Peter: 6 He lodgeth with one Simon a tanner, whose house is by the sea side: he shall tell thee what thou oughtest to do.

There are two main characters in this story recorded in ACTS 10, Cornelius, and Peter. Both men are given a vision in this chapter. The visions are given Cornelius, and Peter to prepare both of them for important lessons from God, and the power of the Holy Ghost that they will learn in this chapter. Cornelius didn't know who Peter was, and Peter didn't know who Cornelius was, but the Lord went to great lengths to bring these two men together. This was a monumental event in church history.

Before we move on herein ACTS 10 I think it is interesting to note some observations that our brother Luke has presented concerning visions especially in these last few chapters of ACTS. If we go back for a moment to ACTS 7:55 & 56 we find Stephen telling of a vision he was seeing at that moment in time. ACTS 7:55 *But he, being full of the Holy Ghost, looked up steadfastly into heaven, and saw the glory of God, and Jesus standing on the right hand of God, 56 And said, Behold, I see the heavens opened, and the Son of man standing on the right hand of God.* As Stephen looked up steadfastly into heaven, no doubt looking for heavenly help out the window in the top of his ark, he saw the glory of God, and Jesus standing on the right hand of God. Stephen was seeing his future in this vision. About twenty minutes later he was face-to-face with his Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ in heaven.

In ACTS 9 during the three days surrounding the conversion of Saul of Tarsus, both Saul of Tarsus, and Ananias of Damascus independently were given visions that led them to a face-to-face meeting. Saul of Tarsus according to ACTS 9:12 in a vision from the Lord saw a man named Ananias coming in and putting his hands on him that he might receive his sight. Ananias of Damascus in a vision from the Lord was told in specific detail where to find Saul of Tarsus, and to lay hands on him that he might receive his sight, and the Holy Ghost according to ACTS 9:17. After following the instructions from the visions they were both given, the two men met, and Ananias of Damascus became Saul of Tarsus first Christian friend as we noted previously. Without Ananias of Damascus following the instructions given him of the Lord in a vision we wouldn't have our Apostle Paul!

Here in ACTS 10 we find Cornelius given a vision where exactly to find Peter, and to invite him to come to his house in Caesarea. The next day around noon Peter was given a vision from the Lord, which purpose was to convince Peter to realize that any man, either Jew or Gentile, is not common or unclean, thus Peter was convinced to go to the house of Cornelius, and give testimony concerning Jesus Christ. Peter had perceived from his vision that God is no respecter of persons. The end result was for the first time at the house of Cornelius the gift of the Holy Ghost was poured out upon the Gentiles present at Cornelius house. The Apostle Peter, and Cornelius became friends, and Peter stayed at Cornelius house for a few days.

Moving forward we will find in ACTS 16:9 the Apostle Paul given a vision about a Macedonian man requesting help. Paul and company then went into Macedonia, and established churches at Philippi, and Thessalonica, to whom Paul later wrote three epistles. We wouldn't have 1 & 2 THESSALONIANS or PHILIPPIANS had Paul not followed the vision of ACTS 16:9. Later in ACTS 18:9 & 10 Paul in a vision was encouraged of the Lord to not be afraid to remain in Corinth, and hold nothing back in his preaching. Of course several were saved there, and Aquila and Pricilla were taught Paul's gospel message, and progressed to the point that they themselves could teach Paul's gospel message to the likes of Apollos, who himself went on to be one of the Church Apostles. The benefit to us is the two epistles of 1 & 2 CORINTHIANS, which we would not have had not Paul followed the instructions given him in the vision of ACTS 18:9 & 10.

In ACTS 27 Paul was given another vision on how to save from certain destruction the 276 men that were on his doomed storm-tossed ship. One of the passengers was Luke, without whom we would not have the book of LUKE, and the book of ACTS.

The point of going over these facts concerning visions from the Lord is to better appreciate the forward and upper looking eternal perspective of God the Father, and our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ in presenting these visions. Recall also from JOHN 16:13 that one of the functions of the Holy Ghost was to show us things to come, and sometimes visions are given to show specific future events, but the bottom line is that these future events have a far reaching eternal benefit for us. One last example we will look at is found in HEBREWS 12:2 where our Lord Jesus Christ while upon the cross is noted to have seen the joy that was set before him as He endured the cross. The joy that was set before Him was His future wife, the Bride of Christ. Are you looking unto Jesus the Author and Finisher of your faith to catch you away as His joint-heir wife?

Back to ACTS 10:1 where we are introduced to Cornelius, whom we are told was *...a centurion of the band called the Italian band*. We must note here that the governor appointed by Caesar for this region resided at Caesarea, and that the governor was appointed a loyal Roman regiment of the Roman army as his lifeguard. Cornelius was in charge of one hundred men, who no doubt were this lifeguard of the governor. Thus we find Cornelius to be a high ranking Roman centurion of a very loyal group of Roman soldiers called the Italian band. ACTS 10:2 gives an accounting of Cornelius character, stating that he was *...A devout man, and one that feared God with all his house, which gave much alms to the people, and prayed to God alway*. It seems that Cornelius may have been a convert to the Jewish faith, and believed in one God, the Creator of heaven and earth, and had taught his family to also fear God. Cornelius gave much alms to the people, meaning the Jews as he followed their religion. Cornelius is also noted to pray to God always.

Knowing this about Cornelius, we must ask the question: was Cornelius saved at this point in his life? We have clues in both ACTS 11 and 15 that indicate he was not yet saved, but by the time we get to ACTS 10:44 Cornelius, and his house were all filled with the Holy Ghost, thus they had all accepted Jesus Christ as their Saviour prior to ACTS 10:44. In ACTS 11:14 we find Peter explaining why the Lord in a vision had told him to go to the house of Cornelius, stating that Peter was sent to Cornelius to tell him *...words, whereby thou and all thy house shall be saved*. Years later in ACTS 15 Peter in verse 7 recalls his purpose to going to the house of Cornelius, stating: *...Men and brethren, ye know how that a good while ago God made choice among us, that the Gentiles by my mouth should hear the word of the gospel, and believe*. So we note that Peter here in ACTS 10, after much persuasion from the Lord, went to the Gentile house of Cornelius that Cornelius, and all his house should be saved.

The heart examiner, who is the Lord Jesus Christ according to REVELATION 2:23, already knew the facts we read of Cornelius in ACTS 10:2, how that Cornelius was *...A devout man, and one that feared God with all his house, which gave much alms to the people, and prayed to God alway*. Furthermore we read in 2 PETER 3:9 *The Lord is not slack concerning his promise, as some men count slackness; but is longsuffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance*. This is the mind set of our Lord and Saviour, who upon the cross gave Himself a ransom for all to redeem us from all iniquity, to deliver us from this present evil world, to purify unto Himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works. {Study GALATIANS 1:4; 1 TIMOTHY 2:6; and TITUS 2:14.} Obviously Cornelius was drawn unto God, and Jesus Himself stated in JOHN 6:44 *No man can come to me, except the Father which hath sent me draw him:...*. Furthermore we read in JAMES 4:8 *Draw nigh to God, and he will draw nigh to you*. Cornelius fit this bill as he prayed to God always. Brother Copley here writes: "The brief history of his devotion in verse two is truly interesting. Hungry hearts find the Lord, and the loving Lord finds folks who will take the truth. The different means employed by the Lord to make His will known, as recorded here is a profitable study." {End of Brother Copley quote.}

We read in ACTS 10:3 & 4 this concerning Cornelius: *He saw in a vision evidently about the ninth hour of the day an angel of God coming in to him, and saying unto him, Cornelius. 4 And when he looked on him, he was afraid, and said, What is it, Lord? And he said unto him, Thy prayers and thine alms are come up for a memorial before God.* We learned in ACTS 3:1 that the ninth hour was hour of prayer that many of the Jews observed, so apparently Cornelius followed this pattern, and ...*saw in a vision evidently about the ninth hour of the day an angel of God coming in to him.* The angel told Cornelius ...*Thy prayers and thine alms are come up for a memorial before God.* Peter also acknowledges this fact in ACTS 10:35 saying: *But in every nation he that feareth him, and worketh righteousness, is accepted with him.* Furthermore the angel in verse 5 & 6 told Cornelius: *And now send men to Joppa, and call for one Simon, whose surname is Peter: 6 He lodgeth with one Simon a tanner, whose house is by the sea side: he shall tell thee what thou oughtest to do.* The word "oughtest" come from the Greek word *dei* {die}, number 1163 in The Strong's Greek Concordance, meaning: must needs, it is necessary, there is need of, it behooves, and it is right and proper. Thus we find an immediate urgency in this matter for Cornelius to act upon the information given him in this vision. For a moment let's now go to ACTS 11:13 & 14 and read Peter's version of what Cornelius told him. ACTS 11:13 *And he shewed us how he had seen an angel in his house, which stood and said unto him, Send men to Joppa, and call for Simon, whose surname is Peter; 14 Who shall tell thee words, whereby thou and all thy house shall be saved.*

Before we move on here it is important to note that up to this point in time Cornelius, as devout a man as he was, knew nothing about Jesus! We don't read anything about Cornelius knowing Christ as his Saviour up to this point in the story, thus Cornelius didn't know what he oughtest to do in order to be saved. Again we also must note that Cornelius, up to this point in our study of ACTS 10, had no idea who Peter was, thus he didn't know that Peter was one of the twelve Apostles of the Lamb of God. But God knew Cornelius' heart, and knew that Cornelius was ...*A devout man, and one that feared God with all his house, which gave much alms to the people, and prayed to God always,...* . And Cornelius was also a devoted soldier who could follow orders, and an influential man whose household would follow his leading. This is why the angel of God was sent unto Cornelius to be a witness to us that God ...*is longsuffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance...* as we read earlier in 2 PETER 3:9. God went to great lengths here to see to it that Cornelius, and his household, heard the story of Jesus Christ, ...*that through his name whosoever believeth in him shall receive remission of sins...* ACTS 10:43.

We find next in ACTS 10:7 & 8 that Cornelius was a man of faith, who believed what the angel of God had told him in the vision, and acted on what he had been shown. ACTS 10:7 *And when the angel which spake unto Cornelius was departed, he called two of his household servants, and a devout soldier of them that waited on him continually; 8 And when he had declared all these things unto them, he sent them to Joppa.* So Cornelius sends three men to find Peter in Joppa.

Meanwhile the Lord needs to teach Peter another lesson that he will never forget, which story begins to be told in ACTS 10:9-22 about the vision Peter was given. ACTS 10:9 *On the morrow, as they went on their journey, and drew nigh unto the city, Peter went up upon the housetop to pray about the sixth hour: 10 And he became very hungry, and would have eaten: but while they made ready, he fell into a trance, 11 And saw heaven opened, and a certain vessel descending unto him, as it had been a great sheet knit at the four corners, and let down to the earth: 12 Wherein were all manner of fourfooted beasts of the earth, and wild beasts, and creeping things, and fowls of the air. 13 And there came a voice to him, Rise, Peter; kill, and eat. 14 But Peter said, Not so, Lord; for I have never eaten any thing that is common or unclean. 15 And the voice spake unto him again the second time, What God hath cleansed, that call not thou common. 16 This was done thrice: and the vessel was received up again into heaven. 17 Now while Peter doubted in himself what this vision which he had seen should mean, behold, the men which were sent from Cornelius had made enquiry for Simon's house, and stood before the gate, 18 And called, and asked whether Simon, which was surnamed Peter, were lodged there. 19 While Peter thought on the vision, the Spirit said unto him, Behold, three men seek thee. 20 Arise therefore, and get thee down, and go with them, doubting*

nothing: for I have sent them. 21 Then Peter went down to the men which were sent unto him from Cornelius; and said, Behold, I am he whom ye seek: what is the cause wherefore ye are come? 22 And they said, Cornelius the centurion, a just man, and one that feareth God, and of good report among all the nation of the Jews, was warned from God by an holy angel to send for thee into his house, and to hear words of thee.

The vision Peter received wasn't about his diet, but rather this vision was given Peter to show Peter that salvation was for the Gentiles also. And even though Peter was an Apostle sent unto the children of Israel, the Jews, God here was teaching Peter that the Gentiles were not common or unclean. Peter did not here know all the facts of what the Apostle Paul wrote in ROMANS 10:9-13. ROMANS 10:9 *That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved. 10 For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation. 11 For the scripture saith, Whosoever believeth on him shall not be ashamed. 12 For there is no difference between the Jew and the Greek: for the same Lord over all is rich unto all that call upon him. 13 For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved.* These words were not written to the Jews exclusively, for whosoever includes both Jew and Gentile. Peter didn't realize it until ACTS chapter 10 that he himself had already stated under the power of the Holy Ghost that salvation was for the Gentiles also. In his first sermon of ACTS 2 Peter had declared in verse 17 *And it shall come to pass in the last days, saith God, I will pour out of my Spirit upon all flesh:*... . Peter here was quoting by the power of the Holy Ghost JOEL 2:28-32. "All flesh" includes both Jew and Gentile. In ACTS 2:21 Peter quotes again from JOEL 2:32 stating: *And it shall come to pass, that whosoever shall call on the name of the Lord shall be saved.* Once more "whosoever" includes both Jew and Gentile.

Another thing about this vision Peter was given, notice how he was told three times ...*What God hath cleansed, that call not thou common...* in ACTS 10:15 & 16. We pointed out in previous lessons some of the "threes" associated with Peter. First of all Peter has three names in scripture: Simon (Simeon), Cephas, and Peter. Another point of three associated with Peter is found in MATTHEW 17:1-5 where we read of Jesus transfiguration witnessed by Peter, James and John. Note what is said in MATTHEW 17:4 & 5 -- *Then answered Peter, and said unto Jesus, Lord, it is good for us to be here: if thou wilt, let us make here three tabernacles; one for thee, and one for Moses, and one for Elias. 5 While he yet spake, behold, a bright cloud overshadowed them: and behold a voice out of the cloud, which said, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased; hear ye him.* Moses figured the law, Elias (Elijah) the prophets, and of course Jesus the Son of God was the Saviour, whose name is above all names, whom God here highlighted to Peter, James and John by saying ...*hear ye him.* Stated another way, God here was instructing them that the Law pointed to Christ, the Prophets pointed to Christ, and you are to follow Jesus Christ: ...*hear ye him.* Peter here learned this lesson, and later in ACTS 4:12 told the Sanhedrin council this about Christ Jesus: *Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved.* Also concerning the threes associated with Peter, all four-gospel records tell how Peter three times denied knowing Jesus on the night of His betrayal before the cock crowed. Peter himself could hardly believe he did such a thing even though the Lord Jesus had already told him that he would deny Him thrice, and Peter went out afterwards and wept bitterly. Recall also back in JOHN 21:15-17 Jesus told Peter three times to "feed my sheep." Jesus here wasn't just talking about Jewish sheep. It seems that sometimes Peter didn't get it until after the third time he was told something. While Peter was pondering in ACTS 10 ...*What God hath cleansed, that call not thou common...* the three men sent from Cornelius came looking for him.

ACTS 10:17 *Now while Peter doubted in himself what this vision which he had seen should mean, behold, the men which were sent from Cornelius had made enquiry for Simon's house, and stood before the gate, 18 And called, and asked whether Simon, which was surnamed Peter, were lodged there. 19 While Peter thought on the vision, the Spirit said unto him, Behold, three men seek thee. 20 Arise therefore, and get thee down, and go with them, doubting nothing: for I have sent them.*

21 Then Peter went down to the men which were sent unto him from Cornelius; and said, Behold, I am he whom ye seek: what is the cause wherefore ye are come? 22 And they said, Cornelius the centurion, a just man, and one that feareth God, and of good report among all the nation of the Jews, was warned from God by an holy angel to send for thee into his house, and to hear words of thee. 23 Then called he them in, and lodged them. And on the morrow Peter went away with them, and certain brethren from Joppa accompanied him. We read in ACTS 11:12 that there were six brethren from Joppa who accompanied Peter, and we must note that they were all Jews.

ACTS 10:24 *And the morrow after they entered into Caesarea. And Cornelius waited for them, and had called together his kinsmen and near friends.* 25 *And as Peter was coming in, Cornelius met him, and fell down at his feet, and worshipped him.*

Let's discuss this for a minute. Did Cornelius fall down at Peter's feet to worship him, or was he rather showing Peter the greatest respect? A couple of different translations read that Cornelius was showing Peter here deep reverence, which indeed was the case. We read earlier in verse 2, and 22 that Cornelius feared God. Peter being a Jew wasn't used to meeting with Gentiles, and Cornelius here seemed to be overwhelmed by the fact that Peter had come to his house just as he was told in the vision. Cornelius here realizing that God had brought Peter to his house reacted in the manner we read herein ACTS 10:25 by throwing himself at Peter's feet with civil respect. We must realize that the writer of this chapter in ACTS was our brother Luke, who no doubt heard the story we are told in ACTS 10 from Peter. Peter not being used to such behavior took this action as being worshipped by Cornelius. By the time Peter began his sermon in ACTS 10 at the house of Cornelius, Peter realized the facts of his opening words of his sermon recorded in ACTS 10:34 & 35, which reads: ...*Of a truth I perceive that God is no respecter of persons: 35 But in every nation he that feareth him, and worketh righteousness, is accepted with him.*

Now let's read these verses again. ACTS 10:24 *And the morrow after they entered into Caesarea. And Cornelius waited for them, and had called together his kinsmen and near friends.* 25 *And as Peter was coming in, Cornelius met him, and fell down at his feet, and worshipped him.* 26 *But Peter took him up, saying, Stand up; I myself also am a man.* 27 *And as he talked with him, he went in, and found many that were come together.* As Peter talked with Cornelius he soon realized that Cornelius truly feared God, and his falling down before Peter was indeed an act of greatest respect for God sending Peter to his house.

Peter is now in the house of Gentile Cornelius, and explains to the people gathered there his side of the story of why he had come. ACTS 10:28 *And he said unto them, Ye know how that it is an unlawful thing for a man that is a Jew to keep company, or come unto one of another nation; but God hath shewed me that I should not call any man common or unclean.* 29 *Therefore came I unto you without gainsaying, (without raising any objection) as soon as I was sent for: I ask therefore for what intent ye have sent for me?*

Cornelius next gives his answer to Peter's question. ACTS 10:30 *And Cornelius said, Four days ago I was fasting until this hour; and at the ninth hour I prayed in my house, and, behold, a man stood before me in bright clothing,* 31 *And said, Cornelius, thy prayer is heard, and thine alms are had in remembrance in the sight of God.* 32 *Send therefore to Joppa, and call hither Simon, whose surname is Peter; he is lodged in the house of one Simon a tanner by the sea side: who, when he cometh, shall speak unto thee.* 33 *Immediately therefore I sent to thee; and thou hast well done that thou art come. Now therefore are we all here present before God, to hear all things that are commanded thee of God.* Cornelius being a military man is ready to receive orders from the Lord as presented by Peter, which is why he tells Peter in verse 33 ...*Now therefore are we all here present before God, to hear all things that are commanded thee of God.* This Gentile audience that Peter was about to address was ready, and willing to receive from Peter ...*all things that are commanded thee of God.* I doubt if Peter had ever preached to such an enthusiastic and receptive assembly.

ACTS 10:34 *Then Peter opened his mouth, and said, Of a truth I perceive that God is no respecter of persons: (whether Jew or Gentile)* 35 *But in every nation he that feareth him, and worketh righteousness, is accepted with him.* 36 *The word which God sent unto the children of Israel,*

peaching peace by Jesus Christ: (he is Lord of all:) 37 *That word, I say, ye know, which was published throughout all Judaea, and began from Galilee, after the baptism which John preached;* 38 *How God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Ghost and with power: who went about doing good, and healing all that were oppressed of the devil; for God was with him.* 39 *And we are witnesses of all things which he did both in the land of the Jews, and in Jerusalem; whom they slew and hanged on a tree:* 40 *Him God raised up the third day, and shewed him openly;* 41 *Not to all the people, but unto witnesses chosen before of God, even to us, who did eat and drink with him after he rose from the dead.* 42 *And he commanded us to preach unto the people, (the Jews) and to testify that it is he which was ordained of God to be the Judge of quick and dead.* 43 *To him give all the prophets witness, that through his name whosoever (Jew or Gentile) believeth in him shall receive remission of sins.*

Let's now examine this sermon in a little more depth. In ACTS 10:34 & 35 we find the Holy Ghost inspiring Peter to give a welcoming introductory statement that put the Gentile listeners at Cornelius house at ease. Peter here said: ACTS 10:34 *Then Peter opened his mouth, and said, Of a truth I perceive that God is no respecter of persons:* 35 *But in every nation he that feareth him, and worketh righteousness, is accepted with him.* We pointed out in ACTS 10:2 how Cornelius feared God with all his house, and gave much alms to the people, and here in ACTS 10:35 is telling them that ... *in every nation he that feareth him, and worketh righteousness, is accepted with him.* After this introductory statement that put the Gentile minds of Cornelius' household at ease, we find in ACTS 10:36 Peter introducing Jesus, who is The Word of God: *The word which God sent unto the children of Israel, preaching peace by Jesus Christ: (he is Lord of all:).* This is the first mention of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ in ACTS 10. In ACTS 10:37 Peter introduces John the Baptist by saying: *That word, I say, ye know, which was published throughout all Judaea, and began from Galilee, after the baptism which John preached.* Recall from JOHN 1 that Peter himself was at first a disciple of John the Baptist. In ACTS 10:38 we find the first mention of the Holy Ghost in ACTS 10, which introduced those in Cornelius house to the Holy Ghost. ACTS 10:38 *How God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Ghost and with power: who went about doing good, and healing all that were oppressed of the devil; for God was with him.* There was no reason for those in the house of Cornelius hearing this sermon to think any reason why they too could not also be anointed ...*with the Holy Ghost and with power.* In ACTS 10:39 Peter begins to tell what he was witness to: *And we are witnesses of all things which he did both in the land of the Jews, and in Jerusalem; whom they slew and hanged on a tree:* 40 *Him God raised up the third day, and shewed him openly;* 41 *Not to all the people, but unto witnesses chosen before of God, even to us, who did eat and drink with him after he rose from the dead.* 42 *And he commanded us to preach unto the people, (the Jews) and to testify that it is he which was ordained of God to be the Judge of quick and dead.*

After telling of the death and resurrection of Jesus, Peter then in verse 43 gave the invitation that all of the Gentiles in the house of Cornelius were primed, and ready to receive; ...*that through his name whosoever believeth in him (Jesus of Nazareth) shall receive remission of sins.* It is important to note here in verse 43 that all was required to receive salvation, and remission of sins was to believe in Jesus, just the same as Jesus taught in JOHN 3:16. JOHN 3:16 *For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.* There are no works of the flesh required here, only belief in Christ Jesus that He is the Saviour. By grace are you saved through faith ROMANS 2:8 tells us. The legal Jews of ACTS 15:1 were totally wrong in claiming ...*Except ye be circumcised after the manner of Moses, ye cannot be saved.* When Peter said in ACTS 10:43 *To him give all the prophets witness, that through his name whosoever believeth in him shall receive remission of sins,*... all of those Gentiles present in the house of Cornelius quickly acknowledged the Lord Jesus as their Saviour, and believed in their heart that God hath raised Him from the dead, and were saved. Later at Philippi the Philippian jailor asked Paul and Silas in ACTS 16:30 *Sirs, what must I do to be saved?* 31 *And they said, Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved, and thy house.* Here in ACTS 10 those present in the house of Cornelius believed on the Lord Jesus Christ and were saved.

After Peter spoke these words of ACTS 10:43 his sermon was basically over, for in ACTS 10:44 we read the pivotal turning point event that changed church history. ACTS 10:44 *While Peter yet spake these words, the Holy Ghost fell on all them which heard the word.* So we find that the Gentiles in Cornelius house had received remission of sins having believed in Jesus as their own personal Saviour, and immediately in this instance, ...*the Holy Ghost fell on all them which heard the word.*

ACTS 10:45 & 46 explains this surprising event just witnessed by Peter, and those six Jews with him. ACTS 10:45 *And they of the circumcision which believed were astonished, as many as came with Peter, because that on the Gentiles also was poured out the gift of the Holy Ghost.* 46 *For they heard them speak with tongues, and magnify God...* just the same as had happened on the day of Pentecost.

This was shocking to Peter, and those Jews with him, that the Gentiles in the house of Cornelius were filled with the Holy Ghost, and that it happened so quickly. However they couldn't argue with the fact that these Gentiles were filled with the Holy Ghost for ...*they heard them speak with tongues, and magnify God.* The suddenness of the Gentiles in the house of Cornelius being filled with the Holy Ghost so shortly after being saved highlighted how ready they were to receive the gift of the Holy Ghost God wanted them to have. They were then endued with the same power from on high that the Pentecostal Jews had been enjoying since the day of Pentecost. God allowed this to happen in this manner to highlight to Peter, and the six Jews with him that there is no difference between Jew and Gentile in God's eyes, and Peter even states this fact in ACTS 15:7-9. ACTS 15:7 *And when there had been much disputing, Peter rose up, and said unto them, Men and brethren, ye know how that a good while ago God made choice among us, that the Gentiles by my mouth should hear the word of the gospel, and believe.* 8 *And God, which knoweth the hearts, bare them witness, giving them the Holy Ghost, even as he did unto us;* 9 *And put no difference between us and them, purifying their hearts by faith.*

Everyone gathered here at the house of Cornelius were now experiencing a Holy Ghost high. Then Peter spoke up and said: ACTS 10:47 *Can any man forbid water, that these should not be baptized, which have received the Holy Ghost as well as we?* 48 *And he commanded them to be baptized in the name of the Lord.*

We better go over this point about being **baptized in the name of the Lord** again for this doctrine is not being followed by the majority of assemblies today. Jesus had said to his disciples in MATTHEW 28:19 *Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost.* {We have covered this point previously in this study, see pages 360-362 of these notes.}

The Kingdom Apostle's, Jesus closest followers did baptize, mostly Jews, and certainly they didn't baptize all nations, and when they baptized, they **baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus**. This started on the day of Pentecost mentioned first in ACTS 2. As you are aware Peter preached his first Holy Ghost inspired sermon on the day of Pentecost, and thousands of Jews from all over the world heard him. At the end of his sermon we read in ACTS 2:38 *Then Peter said unto them, Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost.* Three verses later we read in ACTS 2:41 *Then they that gladly received his word were baptized: and the same day there were added unto them about three thousand souls.* Next let's go to ACTS 8 and find what was happening at Samaria about seven years later. ACTS 8:14 *Now when the apostles which were at Jerusalem heard that Samaria had received the word of God, they sent unto them Peter and John:* 15 *Who, when they were come down, prayed for them, that they might receive the Holy Ghost:* 16 *(For as yet he was fallen upon none of them: only they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus.)* 17 *Then laid they their hands on them, and they received the Holy Ghost.* Here in ACTS 10 we find Peter going to the house of a Gentile named Cornelius, where Peter first learned that God is no respecter of persons, (ACTS 10:34), and Peter then preached them a sermon. This is the only time in scripture that we read of Peter preaching to the

Gentiles! We will pick up the story in ACTS 10:43 *To him give all the prophets witness, that through his name whosoever believeth in him shall receive remission of sins. 44 While Peter yet spake these words, the Holy Ghost fell on all them which heard the word. 45 And they of the circumcision which believed were astonished, as many as came with Peter, because that on the Gentiles also was poured out the gift of the Holy Ghost. 46 For they heard them speak with tongues, and magnify God. Then answered Peter, 47 Can any man forbid water, that these should not be baptized, which have received the Holy Ghost as well as we? 48 And he commanded them to be **baptized in the name of the Lord**.* The Apostle Paul in ACTS 19:5 baptized the dozen disciples he found upon his return to Ephesus, **baptizing them in the name of the Lord Jesus**. ACTS 19:5 *When they heard this, they were **baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus**.*

In all of these examples we find Jesus Apostles **baptizing in the name of the Lord Jesus**, not baptizing *...in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost...* as is found in MATTHEW 28:19. The reason that they didn't baptize *...in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost...* is because they understood it wasn't yet the Lord's ordained time for nations to get saved, it was the time for individuals to get saved. Jesus words of MATTHEW 28:19 will happen after the Church Age is over, then MATTHEW 28:19 will be fulfilled -- *Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost*. That will be in the Millennium, the Kingdom Age. If you study ACTS chapter 1:3-9 carefully, you will find Jesus instructing His disciples that the time of the Kingdom Age was in the hands of God the Father. ACTS 1:3 *To whom also he shewed himself alive after his passion by many infallible proofs, being seen of them forty days, and speaking of the things pertaining to the kingdom of God: 4 And, being assembled together with them, commanded them that they should not depart from Jerusalem, but wait for the promise of the Father, which, saith he, ye have heard of me. 5 For John truly baptized with water; but ye shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost not many days hence. 6 When they therefore were come together, they asked of him, saying, Lord, wilt thou at this time restore again the kingdom to Israel? 7 And he said unto them, It is not for you to know the times or the seasons, which the Father hath put in his own power. (God the Father knows when the time of the Kingdom Age will begin, and that will be after the Church Age is over.) 8 *But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judaea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth*. (No mention is made here to teaching all the nations is there? But they were to be witnesses to individuals unto the uttermost part of the earth.) So during this Church Age the pattern left for us concerning water baptism is to **baptize in the name of the Lord Jesus**, as did all of the Apostles.*

ACTS 10:48 *And he (Peter) commanded them (that were in the household of Cornelius) to be **baptized in the name of the Lord**. Then prayed they him to tarry certain days*. It was difficult for the Apostle Peter to come unto the Gentile house of Cornelius to begin with, which is why it took a vision from the Lord to convince him otherwise. When Peter got to the house of Cornelius not much time elapsed before he found himself speaking to the Gentile audience gathered there. And it seems his sermon was interrupted by all the Gentiles gathered at the house of Cornelius getting filled with the Holy Ghost. What a wonderful exciting day it was with holy anointing from the Lord. Obviously Cornelius, and the Gentiles gathered at his house, wanted to learn much more of the gospel from Peter, so we read here: *Then prayed they him to tarry certain days*. The Holy Ghost made Peter feel welcome here, so Peter stayed at the Gentile house of Cornelius certain days no doubt telling all about his time with Jesus, and answering all of their questions. This whole time with Cornelius was a testimony to Peter of the fact that truly God is no respecter of persons, and confirmed to Peter what he later wrote in 2 PETER 3:9 *The Lord is not slack concerning his promise, as some men count slackness; but is longsuffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance*.

ACTS 11

ACTS 11 is divided into three parts, each part advancing in chronological order the early history of the church. In verses 1-18 when Peter returns to Jerusalem he reviews the story of the Gentile house of Cornelius receiving the Holy Ghost. ACTS 11:19-26 introduces the importance of Antioch, Syria to the church, and how Barnabas and Paul were drawn there by the leading of the Holy Ghost. ACTS 11:27-30 expounds upon an important early missionary journey Paul and Barnabas made to Jerusalem.

ACTS 11:1 *And the apostles and brethren that were in Judaea heard that the Gentiles had also received the word of God. 2 And when Peter was come up to Jerusalem, they that were of the circumcision contended with him, 3 Saying, Thou wentest in to men uncircumcised, and didst eat with them.*

The news of the Gentiles receiving the Holy Ghost at the house of Cornelius in Caesarea reached Jerusalem before Peter returned there. These of the circumcision in verse 2 who disputed with Peter were law-keeping Jews. So were the other Kingdom Apostles, along with Peter, and so was Jesus for that matter. The mentality of these Jews from Jerusalem that contended with Peter was it is unlawful to eat non-kosher Gentile food. It had not yet been revealed unto this group of Jewish Saints in Jerusalem that *...the salvation of God is sent unto the Gentiles...* ACTS 28:28. However in a few short minutes Peter would enlighten them to the fact that indeed *...the salvation of God is sent unto the Gentiles.*

ACTS 11:4 *But Peter rehearsed the matter from the beginning, and expounded it by order unto them, saying, 5 I was in the city of Joppa praying: and in a trance I saw a vision, A certain vessel descend, as it had been a great sheet, let down from heaven by four corners; and it came even to me: 6 Upon the which when I had fastened mine eyes, I considered, and saw fourfooted beasts of the earth, and wild beasts, and creeping things, and fowls of the air. 7 And I heard a voice saying unto me, Arise, Peter; slay and eat. 8 But I said, Not so, Lord: for nothing common or unclean hath at any time entered into my mouth. 9 But the voice answered me again from heaven, What God hath cleansed, that call not thou common. 10 And this was done three times: and all were drawn up again into heaven. 11 And, behold, immediately there were three men already come unto the house where I was, sent from Caesarea unto me. 12 And the Spirit bade me go with them, nothing doubting. Moreover these six brethren accompanied me, and we entered into the man's house: 13 And he shewed us how he had seen an angel in his house, which stood and said unto him, Send men to Joppa, and call for Simon, whose surname is Peter; 14 Who shall tell thee words, whereby thou and all thy house shall be saved. 15 And as I began to speak, the Holy Ghost fell on them, as on us at the beginning. 16 Then remembered I the word of the Lord, how that he said, John indeed baptized with water; but ye shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost. 17 Forasmuch then as God gave them the like gift as he did unto us, who believed on the Lord Jesus Christ; what was I, that I could withstand God? 18 When they heard these things, they held their peace, and glorified God, saying, Then hath God also to the Gentiles granted repentance unto life.*

Salvation is truly a gracious gift from God, given to all who believe on His Son Jesus Christ irrespective of whether one is a Jew, or a Gentile. 1 JOHN 5:11 *And this is the record, that God hath given to us eternal life, and this life is in his Son. 12 He that hath the Son hath life; and he that hath not the Son of God hath not life. 13 These things have I written unto you that believe on the name of the Son of God; that ye may know that ye have eternal life, and that ye may believe on the name of the Son of God.* Peter here in ACTS 11 put the disputing minds of those who contended with him at rest by informing them in ACTS 11:17 *Forasmuch then as God gave them the like gift as he did unto us, who believed on the Lord Jesus Christ; what was I, that I could withstand God?* The like gift Peter was referencing was the Holy Ghost. This new information put at rest the argument presented by the Jews at Jerusalem. ACTS 11:18 *When they heard these things, they held their peace, and glorified God, saying, Then hath God also to the Gentiles granted repentance unto life.* This truly is an

important fact, yet it took some time, so many years down the road before the majority of the saved Jews truly believed this.

Was that the end of the story when they held their peace? The answer is two fold. First, they held their peace means they no longer contend with Peter as to why he visited the Gentile house of Cornelius, and were very much satisfied with his explanation. The second point that we need to realize here was that this was not the end of the story that *...God also to the Gentiles granted repentance unto life*. This must have been a talking point among the Jews, which news quickly spread among the Jewish believers far beyond Jerusalem. This is the point Luke is making in the second part of ACTS 11, how that *...God also to the Gentiles granted repentance unto life*. We will point this out in the next few verses.

ACTS 11:19 *Now they which were scattered abroad upon the persecution that arose about Stephen travelled as far as Phenice, (the margin of your Bible properly notes this to be the region of Phoenicia) and Cyprus, (where Barnabas was from) and Antioch, preaching the word to none but unto the Jews only.* Phoenicia is about 100 miles from Jerusalem, Cyprus 270 miles, and Antioch, Syria about 320 miles from Jerusalem. Initially after the stoning of Stephen those believers scattered were found in the regions of Judaea and Samaria according to ACTS 8:1, which are less than fifty miles from Jerusalem. So in ACTS 11:19 it has been eight to ten years after the stoning of Stephen, and we find that some those Jewish disciples scattered have now travelled hundreds of miles. Note also here in ACTS 11:19 that those scattered were only preaching to the Jews. They had not yet learned the lesson Peter was taught in ACTS 10 that God also has granted to the Gentiles eternal life, and has also poured out upon them the Holy Ghost! This is about to change for the news continued to spread that *...also to the Gentiles granted repentance unto life...* as is recorded in ACTS 11:18.

Before moving on in a verse-by-verse study here in ACTS it is important for us to come to a clear understanding here of the important place Antioch, Syria has in church history. I remember my mother distinctly pointing out to me when I was a teenager that there are two different Antioch's mentioned in scripture. The first one is Antioch, Syria, and the second Antioch is Antioch in Pisidia mentioned in ACTS 13 & 14, and also referenced in 2 TIMOTHY 3:11. It was in ACTS 13:14-43 at Antioch in Pisidia where we find the Apostles Paul's first sermon recorded by Luke. A noted historian, and scholar of the Bible named Eusebius, who lived in the 4th century, wrote that Antioch in Syria was Luke's native city. The Bible Cyclopedia by A. R. Fausset notes that "tradition connects Theophilus with Antioch," Syria. Luke wrote both his letters of LUKE, and ACTS to Theophilus as we noted in our introduction to this study. Stated another way, we wouldn't have the Gospel According to LUKE, and the book of THE ACTS, without those of Antioch, Syria preserving these records! Antioch, Syria, the home of Luke, truly was an important city in church history.

The first mention of Antioch, Syria in scripture was back in ACTS 6:5 where the names of the seven men chosen to help the Apostles is recorded. One of them was *...Nicolas a proselyte of Antioch*. Perhaps he has now in ACTS 11 returned to Antioch, Syria, but the scripture doesn't tell us one way or the other. Antioch, Syria was at the time of ACTS the third largest city of the Roman Empire with a population at that of 500,000. Two cities at the time of the Roman Empire had larger populations, Rome, Italy and Alexandria, Egypt. Antioch, Syria was a link between the trade routes of the Mediterranean, and the routes that lead east unto China. It was a sort of melting pot of cultures, as are most large cities. Antioch had everything that Roman wealth, Greek culture, and Oriental luxury could produce. Antioch was a very wealthy city. The citizens of Antioch were somewhat unique in that they were also given by the Roman Empire the privilege of worship in their own way without fear of repercussion or persecution. Antioch, Syria was called the "Queen of the East," and "Antioch the Beautiful," and was a fairly modern city at the time of ACTS. In ACTS 11 we find Luke making mention of Antioch six times as he introduces what went on in the church established there. True students of the Bible realize that the church at Antioch, Syria also became Paul's home assembly, and Paul's adopted home. The Apostle Paul began all of his missionary journeys from Antioch, Syria. The church at Antioch, Syria also sponsored all of Paul's missionary

journeys. It seems in total that Paul taught at Antioch, Syria as much or more than any other city he visited. It was Paul's intention to return to Antioch, Syria after his third missionary journey, but those plans got laid aside when Paul was arrested in Jerusalem in ACTS 21. Paul never made it back to Antioch, Syria. Perhaps that is why Luke wrote to Theophilus in the first place, to explain what happened to the Apostle Paul, and why he never made it back to Antioch, Syria after his third missionary journey.

Luke helps us connect the dots here in ACTS 11 concerning early church history, and makes this remarkable statement in ACTS 11:26 *...And the disciples were called Christians first in Antioch.* Antioch means: "driven against," which by itself doesn't seem to make much sense. After much research I found another interpretation of the word Antioch meaning: "speedy as a chariot." Putting the two meanings together you get the picture of a driven speedy chariot faster than any mode of transportation of that day. Elisha in 2 KINGS 2:11 & 12 witnessed the fastest transportation that anyone has ever witnessed: 2 KINGS 2:11 *And it came to pass, as they still went on, and talked, that, behold, there appeared a chariot of fire, and horses of fire, and parted them both asunder; and Elijah went up by a whirlwind into heaven. 12 And Elisha saw it, and he cried, My father, my father, the chariot of Israel, and the horsemen thereof. And he saw him no more: and he took hold of his own clothes, and rent them in two pieces.* This was the time when Elijah was translated, one of two translated in the Old Testament, Enoch being the other. The "driven speedy chariot" then becomes a symbol of translation. The Apostle Paul in his gospel teaches us about another soon coming translation in 1 THESSALONIANS 4:16-18: *For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first: 17 Then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord. 18 Wherefore comfort one another with these words.* The Apostle Paul was only with the Thessalonians a short period of time, not a whole year like he was at Antioch. Do you think in a whole year's time the Apostle Paul taught the church where they were first called Christians these very same facts that he taught the Thessalonians? The speed of translation is equated to *...the twinkling of an eye...* in 1 CORINTHIANS 15:52. The first company of New Testament believers to be translated in *...the twinkling of an eye...* will be the Bride of Christ. The church at Antioch, Syria was among the first to receive Paul's gospel message, and were taught about the Bride of Christ. Indeed there will be those from the church of Antioch, Syria in this Bridal company, perhaps even *...most excellent Theophilus...* and our brother Luke will be found to be a joint-heir with Christ! Luke certainly fought the good fight of faith as he followed Paul as Paul followed Christ, so no doubt Luke held fast that which he had apprehended of Christ until the day the Lord also took him home.

Now back to our verse-by-verse study of ACTS 11. ACTS 11:19 *Now they which were scattered abroad upon the persecution that arose about Stephen travelled as far as Phenice, and Cyprus, and Antioch, preaching the word to none but unto the Jews only.* ACTS 11:20 *And some of them were men of Cyprus {like Barnabas} and Cyrene {like Lucius of Cyrene mentioned in ACTS 13:1}, which, when they were come to Antioch, spake unto the Grecians, preaching the Lord Jesus.* Grecians in the Bible usually are Jews foreign from Palestine who speak Greek rather than Hebrew, however in this instance the door is opened also to mean the Greek speaking Gentiles. Other translations here use the word "Greeks" rather than "Grecians," and one translation even calls them pagans, a term not used of the Jews. So what we find being mentioned here is the fact that has spread from Cornelius' house, that God hath also to the Gentiles granted repentance unto eternal life as is stated in ACTS 11:18. So we find initially in ACTS 11:19 that those scattered at the stoning of Stephen preached unto the Jews only, but now after Peter had visited the house of Cornelius, and preached to the Gentiles, the door had been opened for the Gentiles everywhere too be preached the Lord Jesus, and receive remission of sins.

ACTS 11:21 *And the hand of the Lord was with them: and a great number believed, and turned unto the Lord.* The reference here was to what was happening currently at Antioch, Syria after

receiving word that *...God also to the Gentiles granted repentance unto life.* Let me read what Brother Copley here wrote: “...observe the founding of the assembly in Antioch - Chapter 11:19-21. Saul of Tarsus was the main actor in the persecution of the saints who were scattered from Jerusalem. One of the results of his persecution was the planting of a church in Antioch out of Jewish stock, for we read, “...*they preached the Word unto Jews only.*” God was planning a new order of affairs; hence, they preached to Grecians also, of whom “...*a great number believed and turned unto the Lord.*” A Jewish-Gentile assembly was the fitting foundation for this new scheme. How wonderful are the ways of God! Compare Ephesians 2:20-22.” {End of Brother Copley quote.} **EPHESIANS 2:20** *And are built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner stone; 21 In whom all the building fitly framed together groweth unto an holy temple in the Lord: 22 In whom ye also are builded together for an habitation of God through the Spirit.*

ACTS 11:22 *Then tidings of these things came unto the ears of the church which was in Jerusalem: and they sent forth Barnabas, that he should go as far as Antioch.* There is quite a bit of information conveyed in this verse. We are made aware here that Barnabas was in Jerusalem when news came from Antioch, Syria that the preaching of the Lord Jesus had also reached the ears of some Gentiles who lived there. Barnabas knew from the mouth of Peter that *...God also to the Gentiles granted repentance unto life...* **ACTS 11:18.** And we know from **ACTS 9:27** that Barnabas had already spent some time with Saul of Tarsus, and Ananias of Damascus also getting to know them, and their testimonies. Ananias of Damascus was told by the Lord in **ACTS 9:15** that Saul of Tarsus was a chosen vessel unto the Lord to bear the name of the Lord Jesus before the Gentiles, as well as kings, and the children of Israel. Since the Gentiles were being taught about the Lord Jesus in Antioch, Syria it was only natural for the church in Jerusalem to send someone of their own company to Antioch, Syria to see what was happening there. Barnabas was chosen because he knew Saul of Tarsus had the calling on him to preach unto the Gentiles as we saw in **ACTS 9:15.** Furthermore it is possible that Saul of Tarsus had already told Barnabas what we later find written in **ACTS 26:16-18,** which is the words spoken by the Lord Jesus Christ to Saul of Tarsus on the road to Damascus. **ACTS 26:16** *But rise, and stand upon thy feet: for I have appeared unto thee for this purpose, to make thee a minister and a witness both of these things which thou hast seen, and of those things in the which I will appear unto thee; 17 Delivering thee from the people, and from the Gentiles, unto whom now I send thee, 18 To open their eyes, and to turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins, and inheritance among them which are sanctified by faith that is in me.* We also see here in **ACTS 11:22** what the Apostles thought of Barnabas. They trusted him to encourage the Saints at Antioch, Syria by whatever means the Holy Ghost encouraged him to use.

ACTS 11:23 & 24 informs us how encouraged Barnabas was greatly encouraged in the Lord when he got to Antioch Syria. **ACTS 11:23** *Who, when he came, and had seen **the grace of God**, was glad, and exhorted them all, that with purpose of heart they would cleave unto the Lord. 24 For he was a good man, and full of the Holy Ghost and of faith: and much people was added unto the Lord.*

The phrase “**the grace of God**” is found in twenty verses of scripture, all of which were written by either Luke or Paul. Twenty is the number that points to REDEMPTION, and certainly the phrase “**the grace of God**” speaks to REDEMPTION, for our Apostle Paul wrote to Apostle Titus in **TITUS 2:11** *For **the grace of God** that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men,...* . “All men” means both Jew and Gentile. Interestingly there are also exactly twenty verses where the word REDEMPTION is found. **EPHESIANS 1:7** and **COLOSSIANS 1:14** both state the same thing concerning our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. **EPHESIANS 1:7** *In whom we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace.* The phrase “**the grace of God**” is Pauline teaching, and of course Luke being a follower of the Apostle Paul was quick to adopt this phrase having witnessed in his own life every day “**the grace of God,**” as we all also should acknowledge, and appreciate every day in our own lives. Saul of Tarsus goes on to become our Apostle Paul. The Apostle Paul becomes the first Church Apostle, and to him was given dispensation to preach not only of the kingdom of God, but also of “**the grace of God,**” and the high

calling of God in Christ Jesus, the heavenly calling, the holy calling, and that the Gentiles should be fellowheirs {sugkleronomos, number 4789 in The Strong's Greek Concordance} with Christ.

Let's again read about some of the gospel message Paul was given to preach concerning **"the grace of God."** EPHESIANS 3:1 *For this cause I Paul, the prisoner of Jesus Christ for you Gentiles, 2 If ye have heard of the dispensation of the grace of God which is given me to you-ward: 3 How that by revelation he made known unto me the mystery; (as I wrote afore in few words, 4 Whereby, when ye read, ye may understand my knowledge in the mystery of Christ) 5 Which in other ages was not made known unto the sons of men, as it is now revealed unto his holy apostles and prophets by the Spirit; 6 That the Gentiles should be fellowheirs, {sugkleronomos 4789} and of the same body, and partakers of his promise in Christ by the gospel: 7 Whereof I was made a minister, according to the gift of the grace of God given unto me by the effectual working of his power. 8 Unto me, who am less than the least of all saints, is this grace given, that I should preach among the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ; 9 And to make all men see what is the fellowship of the mystery, which from the beginning of the world hath been hid in God, who created all things by Jesus Christ: 10 To the intent that now unto the principalities and powers in heavenly places might be known by the church the manifold wisdom of God, 11 According to the eternal purpose which he purposed in Christ Jesus our Lord.*

After examining the above verses we see a theme that was found in both Paul, and Barnabas' preaching, and teaching, that being **"the grace of God."** With that in mind let's read again ACTS 11:23 *Who, when he (Barnabas) came, and had seen the grace of God, was glad, and exhorted them all, (at Antioch, Syria) that with purpose of heart they would cleave unto the Lord. 24 For he was a good man, and full of the Holy Ghost and of faith: and much people was added unto the Lord.* Barnabas encouraged them all, in other words made it clear to all of the Saints at Antioch, both Jew and Gentile, to remain loyal to the Lord with steady hearts of faith. ACTS 11:24 tells the character of Barnabas: *For he was a good man, and full of the Holy Ghost and of faith.* Being full of the Holy Ghost Barnabas could powerfully persuade both the Jew, and the Gentiles of Antioch, Syria to cleave unto the Lord, to continue in **"the grace of God."** Because of Barnabas' encouragement we read that *...much people was added unto the Lord...* here at Antioch, Syria! "Much People" here references both Jew and Gentile.

ACTS 11:25 & 26 *Then departed Barnabas to Tarsus, for to seek Saul: 26 And when he had found him, he brought him unto Antioch. And it came to pass, that a whole year they assembled themselves with the church, and taught much people. And the disciples were called Christians first in Antioch.*

More than a years worth of information is presented in the three sentences found in these two verses. We find here that Barnabas was very encouraged by what he found at the church in Antioch, Syria, how that a great number of both Jews, and Gentiles had believed and turned to the Lord. Barnabas felt led of the Lord to go to Tarsus, Saul of Tarsus' hometown, and bring him to Antioch, Syria because this was a growing assembly, who needed some pastors and teachers to further instruct them in **"the grace of God,"** which we have been discussing. Saul of Tarsus was a perfect candidate to teach at Antioch, Syria for several reasons. First, he had on the road to Damascus experienced first-hand **"the grace of God"** when Jesus appeared unto him, and saved him from his sinful past. Secondly, Saul of Tarsus, on the same road to Damascus, was anointed by our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ to be an Apostle as we read earlier in ACTS 26:16-18, and sent forth with orders from the Lord to the Gentiles as the Apostle unto the Gentiles. Barnabas knew this to be a fact, and had found at Antioch, Syria the perfect place for Saul of Tarsus to preach, and teach. The third reason Saul of Tarsus was a perfect candidate to teach **"the grace of God"** at Antioch, Syria, this melting pot of cultures, was because he was fluent in Hebrew, Greek, and Latin, all the languages spoken at Antioch, Syria. In other words Saul of Tarsus could teach and preach **"the grace of God"** in Hebrew, his native tongue; he could preach **"the grace of God"** in Greek, the language of Tarsus where he grew up; and he could fluently preach and teach **"the grace of God"** in Latin, the language of the Roman Empire. The fourth reason the Lord sent *...Barnabas to Tarsus, for to seek Saul...* was

because Saul of Tarsus, our Apostle Paul, was given a unique gospel message to preach in this yet present Church Age. Paul's gospel message is summarized in ACTS 20:32 *And now, brethren, I commend you to God, and to the word of his grace, which is able to build you up, and to give you an inheritance among all them which are sanctified*. This doctrine was first presented to Saul of Tarsus on the road to Damascus by the Lord Jesus Christ found in ACTS 26:16-18. ACTS 26:18 explains in Jesus own words why Saul of Tarsus, our Apostle Paul was to preach to the Gentiles: *To open their eyes, and to turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins, and inheritance among them which are sanctified by faith that is in me*.

Again let's read these three sentences found in ACTS 11:25 & 26. ACTS 11:25 & 26 *Then departed Barnabas to Tarsus, for to seek Saul: 26 And when he had found him, he brought him unto Antioch. And it came to pass, that a whole year they assembled themselves with the church, and taught much people. And the disciples were called Christians first in Antioch.*

Certainly it wasn't all that hard with the Lord's leading for Barnabas to find Saul in Tarsus. Recall that Barnabas had first met Saul of Tarsus in Damascus having heard him preach Christ in the synagogue there. Later when Saul of Tarsus returned after a three year absence to Jerusalem, it was Barnabas who introduced him to the Apostles in Jerusalem, mainly Peter, with whom Saul of Tarsus stayed for fifteen days according to GALATIANS 1:18. Barnabas had already learned from Saul of Tarsus himself his testimony, as we noted previously, how he was sent by the Lord Jesus Christ himself to preach unto the Gentiles, as well as the Jews, and to even kings! No doubt Barnabas located Saul of Tarsus in a synagogue of Tarsus. Their reunion gave them both inexpressible joy in finding one another again, and their renewed fellowship in the Lord must have given them both a strong bond to do the work of the Lord together. No doubt Barnabas expressed to Saul of Tarsus the excellent opportunity he had found at Antioch, Syria to preach "**the grace of God**" to the growing church already established there. Saul of Tarsus then went with Barnabas to Antioch, Syria, and as we noted earlier, Saul found a second home there.

We read in ACTS 11:26 this of Saul of Tarsus, and Barnabas: *a whole year they assembled themselves with the church, and taught much people*. We all know what a whole years is, and can look back at the number of things we have learned in the various meetings we attended during that time period either online, or in person. Back in Paul's day, he taught daily, as also did the Apostles in Jerusalem. So when Saul of Tarsus, and Barnabas *...assembled themselves with the church, and taught much people...* they did so on a daily basis. We read in ACTS 28:23 that Paul taught from morning until evening. Was this what it was like in Antioch, Syria? I think we could think of it kind of like a camp meeting that lasted a whole year, with morning meetings, afternoon meetings, and evening Bible studies. So we must realize that in a whole year Saul of Tarsus, our Apostle Paul taught his whole gospel message to much people, teaching them something from the scriptures everyday to the end that they grew in "**the grace of God**" daily, and were espoused to one husband as Paul later wrote in 2 CORINTHIANS 11:2. 2 CORINTHIANS 11:2 *For I am jealous over you with godly jealousy: for I have espoused you to one husband, that I may present you as a chaste virgin to Christ*. Part of Saul of Tarsus teaching during this *...whole year they assembled themselves with the church, and taught much people...* was the following doctrine: 1 CORINTHIANS 4:16 *Wherefore I beseech you, be ye followers of me*. 1 CORINTHIANS 11:1 *Be ye followers of me, even as I also am of Christ*. PHILIPPIANS 3:17 *Brethren, be followers together of me, and mark them which walk so as ye have us for an ensample*. These three verses encourage us to be followers of Paul as he followed Christ. The word "followers" is found eight times in scripture, and the number eight points us to the Bride of Christ. We are told above in PHILIPPIANS 3:17 to *...mark them which walk so as ye have us for an ensample*. Our Brother Luke was one who literally followed Paul as Paul followed Christ, which is another reason we have been studying what the Holy Ghost inspired Luke to write us in scripture. Perhaps Luke first heard Paul's teachings during this whole year that Saul of Tarsus, and Barnabas *...assembled themselves with the church, and taught much people...* ACTS 11:26.

Recall from ACTS 11:23 that Barnabas had previously *...exhorted them all, that with purpose of heart they would cleave unto the Lord*. Apparently Barnabas realized the diversity of cultures, and

languages being present in this Antioch assembly, and the need for further clarity in their teaching was the reason Barnabas went to Tarsus to get Saul, and bring him back to Antioch. Saul of Tarsus could teach and preach fluently in three languages as we noted above. This many-sided community of Antioch consisted of Romans, Greeks, and Jews. Current politics didn't seem to influence those of the assembly at Antioch, Syria, as for a whole year they were taught by Saul and Barnabas about "**the grace of God,**" and the word of God, who is Jesus. Imagine what it would be like to hear Paul's gospel message for the first time, and have it taught to you on a daily basis for a whole year. Brother Hill noted in his teaching about those more noble Saints in Berea receiving the word of God with all readiness of mind in a short time span of six weeks, to three months, and ACTS 17:11 tells us that they *...searched the scriptures daily*. It seems those at Antioch, Syria, though diverse in languages, were just as eager to learn more about Jesus, and "**the grace of God.**" We must also note here that our brother in the Lord Luke, who was from Antioch, Syria, perhaps was one of the many Gentiles, who first learned Paul's gospel message during this years time mentioned in ACTS 11:26.

Those observers on the outside gave the disciples of the church at Antioch a new name, "Christians." ACTS 11:26 *And the disciples were called Christians first in Antioch*. To those unbelievers on the outside looking in, they found those diverse members of the church at Antioch to be followers of Christ who did not acknowledge the emperor of Rome as their head. They gave these disciples of Christ the nickname of "Christians," which to some unbelievers was a term of scorn much like the word "Nazarenes" that was given to the Jewish believers back in Judaea. Both "Christians" and "Nazarenes" were considered a sect, meaning a group of people with somewhat of a different religious belief than those of a larger group to which they belong. In Antioch, Syria the term "Nazarenes" wouldn't properly define the followers of Christ, since here the disciples were not only Jewish, but also Greeks and Romans, Gentiles in other words. The term "Christian" spread as time went on, and thus we find King Agrippa adopting this word in answering the Apostle Paul in ACTS 26:28 *Then Agrippa said unto Paul, Almost thou persuadest me to be a Christian*. To the believer, like you and me, the word "Christian" means one who has accepted Jesus Christ as his/her own personal Saviour. King Agrippa was an outside observer who acknowledged this definition. The word "Christian" found in ACTS 11:26 for the first time actually is defined in this verse noting that they were disciples, or followers of Christ. The term "Christian" thus was an honorable title. Brother Copley notes that Christians are "Anointed ones;" for "as He (Christ, our Head) is so are we in this world" ...1 JOHN 4:17. Brother Copley goes on to say "...those only, who actually receiving the anointing with the Spirit, and live in His power, are Christians truly in experience." {End of Brother Copley quote.} Many in our day call themselves "Christian," who have not accepted Christ as Saviour, their thinking being that if they belong to a church, or denomination they must be a "Christian." Simply put, to become a "Christian" one must be saved, and as recorded in ACTS 16:30 & 31 all that is required to be saved is to "*Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved.*" So this collective group of believers here at Antioch, Syria had grown in number to the point that the outside observers took note, and called them "Christians."

Peter himself in 1 PETER 4 uses the term "Christian" explaining the reproach, or disapproval often times connected with this word. 1 PETER 4:12 *Beloved, think it not strange concerning the fiery trial which is to try you, as though some strange thing happened unto you: 13 But rejoice, inasmuch as ye are partakers of Christ's sufferings; that, when his glory shall be revealed, ye may be glad also with exceeding joy. 14 If ye be reproached (denounced) for the name of Christ, happy are ye; for the spirit of glory and of God resteth upon you: on their part he is evil spoken of, but on your part he is glorified. 15 But let none of you suffer as a murderer, or as a thief, or as an evildoer, or as a busybody in other men's matters. 16 Yet if any man suffer as a Christian, let him not be ashamed; but let him glorify God on this behalf.*

May I suggest spending some time pondering these verses penned by Peter under the inspiration of the Holy Ghost. By the time Peter wrote this he had been a follower of Jesus Christ for the better part of four decades. On the night of Jesus arrest Peter had denied knowing Him three

times before the cock crowed early in the morning. On that night Peter was afraid to admit he was Christ's disciple; ashamed to admit he was a Christian even though the term "Christian" had not yet been invented. Now decades later Peter is writing under the inspiration of the Holy Ghost ...*Yet if any man suffer as a Christian, let him not be ashamed; but let him glorify God on this behalf.* We find the term "**glorify God**" seven times (SPIRITUAL PERFECTION, SPIRITUAL COMPLETION) in scripture. Three of these seven times are in association with Peter, and the remaining four times are part of Paul's gospel. Peter here in 1 PETER 4:12-16 is explaining how to "**glorify God**," which is by rejoicing in the fiery trials the Lord brings our way, realizing by doing so we are partakers of Christ's sufferings, knowing that it was God who counted us faithful. We find an example of this in Peter's life in ACTS 5 after he was beaten by the Sanhedrin council. ACTS 5:41 *And they departed from the presence of the council, rejoicing that they were counted worthy to suffer shame for his name. 42 And daily in the temple, and in every house, they ceased not to teach and preach Jesus Christ.*

The Apostle Paul addressed this same subject, and wrote in ROMANS 8:16-18 *The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God: 17 And if children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ; if so be that we suffer with him, that we may be also glorified together. 18 For I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us.* Paul wrote and taught such truth that was revealed to him because the Lord Jesus Christ wants us to grow up into Him in all things, to **glorify God** in all things, which is why He sent us the Holy Ghost to guide us into such SPIRITUAL PERFECTION. Again Paul wrote in 2 TIMOTHY 2:12 *If we suffer (with Him), we shall also reign with Him.*

Back to the night of Jesus' arrest when Peter denied even knowing Jesus before the cock crowed three times. In LUKE 22:31-34 we read: *And the Lord said, Simon, Simon, behold, Satan hath desired to have you, that he may sift you as wheat: 32 But I have prayed for thee, that thy faith fail not: and when thou art converted, (to turn around, to bring back, or to come back) strengthen thy brethren. 33 And he (Peter) said unto him, Lord, I am ready to go with thee, both into prison, and to death. 34 And he said, I tell thee, Peter, the cock shall not crow this day, before that thou shalt thrice deny that thou knowest me.* A few short weeks later after His resurrection Jesus had another discussion with Peter in JOHN 21 where He reminds him of this statement Peter made ...*I am ready to go with thee, both into prison, and to death.* Here is what the Lord Jesus instructed Peter: JOHN 21:18 *Verily, verily, I say unto thee, When thou wast young, thou girdedst thyself, and walkedst whither thou wouldst: but when thou shalt be old, thou shalt stretch forth thy hands, and another shall gird thee, and carry thee whither thou wouldst not. 19 This spake he, signifying by what death he should glorify God. And when he had spoken this, he saith unto him, Follow me.* The Lord is telling Peter here that he would die an unnatural death, that he will be carried, and forced to go where he does not want to go. The crucifixion of Peter is here foretold, and history records that at his death Peter requested to be crucified with his head down, saying that he who denied his Lord as he had done was not worthy to die as Christ did. The Lord here in JOHN 21:19 also informed Peter that by his death ...*he should glorify God.* In the end Peter's request of LUKE 22:33 was granted: ...*Lord, I am ready to go with thee, both into prison, and to death,*... and as he died he truly did **glorify God**. Thus in the end Peter did fulfill what he wrote in 1 PETER 4:16 *Yet if any man suffer as a Christian, let him not be ashamed; but let him glorify God on this behalf.*

One final thought on this last sentence found in ACTS 11:26 *And the disciples were called Christians first in Antioch.* Why weren't they called Christians first at Jerusalem? We partially answered this question above pointing out the diversity of cultures, languages, and people who composed this assembly in Antioch. The church in Jerusalem was almost exclusively Jewish. The church in Antioch, simply put, was composed both of Jews, and Gentiles, and GALATIANS 2 also clearly points this out. Brother Copley also answered this question in his ACTS study book noting that Antioch "...was the proper place for the disciples to be called Christians, because that was the

real Church center. Men give many vain interpretations of Holy Writ(ing), and rob the truth of its true meaning, and the blessed Holy Spirit of His glory. Jerusalem was the Kingdom center, which was national and local. Now, because the restoration of the Kingdom was to be postponed and the Jews were to be scattered, there had to be another center for the Church. That it (Antioch, Syria) was a new center, emphasized the facts, that the Church of Christ is not a local, nor a national body, but a worldwide and spiritual body.” {End of quoting Brother Copley.} What Brother Copley here was pointing out was the pattern for this Church Age, “...that the Church of Christ is not a local, nor a national body, but a worldwide and spiritual body,...” which has grown to an innumerable company these past two thousand years.

We now come to the last four verses of ACTS 11, which are both historic, and prophetic. ACTS 11:27 *And in these days came prophets from Jerusalem unto Antioch. 28 And there stood up one of them named Agabus, and signified by the Spirit that there should be great dearth throughout all the world: which came to pass in the days of Claudius Caesar. 29 Then the disciples, every man according to his ability, determined to send relief unto the brethren which dwelt in Judaea: 30 Which also they did, and sent it to the elders by the hands of Barnabas and Saul.*

One of the things that’s sometimes hard to determine in studying scripture is the time frame, the dates, when certain events occurred. However history records things like when Claudius Caesar reigned, which was 41-54 A.D. The events recorded in ACTS 11:27-30 reference a famine in Judaea that became severe in 45 A.D. So historically speaking the events recorded in ACTS 11:27-30 happened slightly prior 45 A.D. Conyebare and Howson in their notes on the Life and Epistles of St. Paul state: “...it would appear, that Barnabas and Saul went up to Jerusalem to relieve the sufferers by famine, soon after the death of Herod Agrippa I.” According to history this king Herod Agrippa I died in 44 A.D. We will discuss this further when we get to ACTS 12.

ACTS 11:27-30 is also prophetic. ACTS 11:27 *And in these days came prophets from Jerusalem unto Antioch.* True Godly prophets are moved by the Spirit of God and solemnly declare to men what they have received by inspiration of the Holy Ghost, especially concerning certain future events, and in particular such as relate to the cause and kingdom of God and to human salvation. In ACTS 11 we first note a strong connection being developed between the church at Jerusalem, and the church at Antioch, Syria even though the distance between the two places was around 320 miles. There seemed to be constant communication back and forth between Jerusalem and Antioch. There probably was a dual purpose for these prophets from Jerusalem being sent to Antioch in ACTS 11:27; the first purpose being to see how things were going there in the assembly where they were first called Christians, and the second purpose is revealed in ACTS 11:28-30. ACTS 11:28 *And there stood up one of them named Agabus, and signified by the Spirit that there should be great dearth throughout all the world: which came to pass in the days of Claudius Caesar. 29 Then the disciples, every man according to his ability, determined to send relief unto the brethren which dwelt in Judaea: 30 Which also they did, and sent it to the elders by the hands of Barnabas and Saul.*

We find here that one of the prophets from Jerusalem was Agabus, whose name will come up again in ACTS 21:10. A prophet by definition proclaimed the message given him by God as inspired by the Holy Ghost, which is also told us here in ACTS 11:28 concerning Agabus, who ...*signified by the Spirit that there should be great dearth throughout all the world.* Our brother in the Lord, Luke here noted when this famine happened, that being in the days of Claudius Caesar as we also noted above. Brother Copley also brought out some typical teaching concerning this prophecy given by Agabus, writing: “This great famine was due to the fact that Israel, as a nation, had rejected the Son of God and the Gift of the Holy Spirit. The phrase, “all the world,” means all the inhabited earth. That, too, was typical of the sore trial, world-wide, from which the full overcomers shall be delivered at the close of this age (REVELATION 3:10). Thank God! After Jesus comes and Israel receive Him, there will be no more dearth, but abounding plenty. See JOEL 2:19-27.” {End of quoting Brother Copley.}

ACTS 11:29 & 30 informs us of the action then taken by the assembly in Antioch, Syria. ACTS 11:29 *Then the disciples, every man according to his ability, determined to send relief unto the*

brethren which dwelt in Judaea: 30 Which also they did, and sent it to the elders by the hands of Barnabas and Saul. History records that the intensity of this famine that started in Judaea in 45 A.D. resulted in great distress, and many deaths, and it is noted that this particular famine lasted for a three-year period. What kind of relief was sent? It would be hard for Barnabas and Saul to carry a bunch of clothes and food 320 miles back to Jerusalem, and if they were experiencing famine, what good would clothes do? So the kind of relief that was sent was in the form of money. This contribution was an expression of the love of God that these Saints at Antioch, Syria had for the Saints of Judaea. Recall that before the stoning of Stephen in Jerusalem, before the Jerusalem Christian Jews were scattered abroad, they had all things common according to ACTS 2:44 and 4:32. At that time according to ACTS 4:34 & 35 the believing Saints at Jerusalem lacked nothing after the Apostles made distribution. However that kind of relief ceased after the stoning of Stephen when the disciples were scattered abroad. Once others scattered, those believing Jews left at Jerusalem, after a time, ceased to have the community of goods that they did before the stoning of Stephen. They certainly had a need for some relief, especially now that a great famine was present in Judaea. We read here in ACTS 11:29 *Then the disciples, every man according to his ability, determined to send relief unto the brethren which dwelt in Judaea...* . Some of the Jewish disciples now at Antioch, Syria were formerly beneficiaries of the all things common distribution that was made back in the days when they lived in Jerusalem, and they were well aware of the need Agabus had made them mindful of in Jerusalem. Here in Antioch, Syria the assembly of Christian believers now had a large number of Gentile believers, who had come to the knowledge of their Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ in a large part because of some Jews who were scattered after the stoning of Stephen coming to Antioch, and preaching and teaching the word of God. Barnabas years earlier was one who had participated in the relief back in Jerusalem in ACTS 4:36 & 37. It was the Saints at the church in Jerusalem who sent Barnabas up to Antioch, Syria, and it was Barnabas who had now brought Saul of Tarsus to Antioch to assist in preaching unto the Gentiles. The recently converted Gentiles at Antioch were receiving and enjoying many spiritual blessings they wouldn't have otherwise had if it weren't for some scattered Jews from Jerusalem coming to Antioch in the first place, so they were more than willing to show the love of God, and their appreciation of receiving the gospel message, by sending aid to the Saints at Jerusalem. ACTS 11:30 explains to us the relief from Antioch, Syria was sent by the hands of Barnabas and Saul. Thus we get a clearer picture of the important place both Barnabas and Saul had with this assembly of Christians at Antioch. Both Barnabas and Saul of Tarsus were accepted as devout Christian leaders, and were entrusted with a great deal of money to be given unto those of Jerusalem. Furthermore the Saints of Antioch prayed for this good will to be accepted from the hands of both Barnabas and Saul by the elders of Jerusalem. The money that was sent was used to obtain food from abroad, such as buying grain from Egypt, and dried figs from Cyprus as a couple of examples.

The need for relief, continued for years as is again mentioned by Peter, James (the Lord's brother), and John in GALATIANS 2:9 and 10 where Paul was told to remember the poor Saints of Jerusalem. As we progress in this study we will find that on his second and third missionary journey Paul took up a collection everywhere he went for the poor Saints at Jerusalem, and delivered it to Jerusalem at the conclusion of his journeys. This is an important point to keep in mind as you study both what Luke wrote, and what the Apostle Paul wrote in his epistles. For example in ROMANS 15:25 & 26 Paul writes: *But now I go unto Jerusalem to minister unto the saints. 26 For it hath pleased them of Macedonia and Achaia to make a certain contribution for the poor saints which are at Jerusalem.* 2 CORINTHIANS 8 and 9 further explain how this collection for the poor saints at Jerusalem took place, which you can read and study on your own. Again in 1 CORINTHIANS 16:1-3 we read: *Now concerning the collection for the saints, as I have given order to the churches of Galatia, even so do ye. 2 Upon the first day of the week let every one of you lay by him in store, as God hath prospered him, that there be no gatherings when I come. 3 And when I come, whomsoever ye shall approve by your letters, them will I send to bring your liberality unto Jerusalem.*

One thing that isn't mentioned in scripture is the route travelled from Jerusalem to Antioch, Syria, or visa versa. If the route taken was overland, which to me was most likely the case, then the journey would have been around 320 miles, about the same distance from Denver, CO to Caspar WY. How long would it take to walk this distance? Almost two weeks if one could average about 25 miles a day. It may have taken longer. If one was to travel by sea, let's say sailing from Caesarea (the sea port nearest Jerusalem) to Seleucia (the sea port nearest Antioch, Syria), how long would that take? We must keep in mind if that route was taken the journey would be dependent upon finding a ship going up or down the eastern Mediterranean coast. They didn't have scheduled shipping service like that back in Paul's day, so the journey would have taken at least as long or longer than by walking. The point being here is that it would take two or three weeks to travel from Antioch, Syria to Jerusalem at the time period we are discussing.

As we conclude what is revealed in ACTS 11 we find both Barnabas, and Saul of Tarsus back in Jerusalem. This was the second time Saul of Tarsus would be back in Jerusalem after his conversion some eight to ten years earlier. The first time ended after the shortest of visits in ACTS 9:28-30. This second visit was different however. First of all several years had passed since Saul of Tarsus was last seen at Jerusalem. Those of Jerusalem had forgotten some of the terror that the old Saul of Tarsus had caused them, and no doubt there were many new believers in the church at Jerusalem who never knew Saul of Tarsus before he got saved. Secondly, during this second visit of Saul's time at Jerusalem there was another source of terror known as Herod the king. Any damage that old Saul of Tarsus had done was now a subdued memory. Furthermore Barnabas, the man of consolation and encouragement, had convinced the Apostles in Jerusalem that Saul of Tarsus was an asset to Christianity after being saved. They have now had years to digest this fact. So we read of no further trouble for Saul of Tarsus on this his second visit to Jerusalem after being saved. Besides Saul was here a part of this mission of love, and mercy, and financial aid, so why would not the elders of Jerusalem accept his part of this missionary journey? Obviously they did. But the biggest part of the reason the Apostles and elders accepted Saul into their midst here was his association with Barnabas. Again recall that Barnabas name means: the son of consolation, that is son of exhortation, which also means son of encouragement. Some translations refer to Barnabas as the son of comfort, the man of encouragement, and even one translation refers to Barnabas as the preacher. All of these titles are fitting of Barnabas.

We also note here that several years have passed since the time frame of ACTS 9 when Saul of Tarsus had first returned to Jerusalem after being saved, and tried to join himself to the disciples at Jerusalem. What Barnabas had tried to do in ACTS 9 was now accomplished these several years later in ACTS 11. In ACTS 9 we read: ACTS 9:27 *But Barnabas took him, and brought him to the apostles, and declared unto them how he had seen the Lord in the way, and that he had spoken to him, and how he had preached boldly at Damascus in the name of Jesus. 28 And he was with them coming in and going out at Jerusalem.* That only lasted 15 days according to GALATIANS 1:18. Here in ACTS 11:30 we find Barnabas again with Saul of Tarsus in Jerusalem, and Saul this time *...was with them coming in and going out at Jerusalem...* probably for more than a couple of weeks, and they may even have stayed there several months, but the scripture doesn't tell us this one way or the other.