

CHAPTER ELEVEN

Acts 11

Expansion of the Gospel

Overview

1. Opposition to the Spreading of the Gospel: (Verses 1-18)

With the rapid spread of the gospel, Gentiles have now been born again and filled with the Holy Spirit. The elders of the church at Jerusalem dispute with Peter over the fact that he has gone into the home of “uncircumcised men” and eaten food forbidden by Jewish law. Peter describes the vision he received when God spoke to him regarding the Gentiles. This temporarily assuages the legalism that was trying to arise.

2. The Church at Antioch: (Verses 19-30)

A number of the Jews who were scattered in chapter eight have gone to Antioch to start a church. A revival began with such an impact, even the believers in Jerusalem heard about it three hundred miles from Antioch. Barnabas understood the grace of God and saw that grace in operation in the church at Antioch. He was instrumental in bringing Paul to Antioch to instruct the new converts in the Word of God.

Prophets from Jerusalem arrive in Antioch and Agabus prophesies about a famine coming to Jerusalem. The saints in Antioch take up an offering for the church at Jerusalem in response to this prophecy.

The Challenge of Chapter Eleven:

There is always a tendency for legalism to creep into the church. We were saved by grace through faith, not through any effort on our part; it is a gift from God (Ephesians 2:8). We cannot add anything to the gift of our salvation and must guard against becoming legalistic in our walk with the Lord and toward others. Our righteousnesses, achieved through human works, are as filthy rags (Isaiah 64:6) when compared to the righteousness of God we receive at salvation. Salvation is available to anyone who will receive it. We must ever strive to live in the grace of God in our daily lives before Him.

A. Opposition to the Spreading of the Gospel

The church is now expanding both geographically and racially. The gospel began in Jerusalem on the day of Pentecost. It has now spread and the elders of the Jerusalem church are becoming legalistic.

They do not want other races or cities to receive the gospel. They are trying to combine law and grace. The “little leaven” is destroying the “lump” at Jerusalem.