

Acts 11:19-12:25

When we left off, Peter had traveled to Lydda, Joppa, and then Caesarea (Cornelius and the first Gentile converts). He had then traveled back Jerusalem to give an account to the brethren and apostles.

Acts 11:19 picks up from Acts 8:4 and now takes us on a quick trip up to Antioch which is much further north (about 300 miles north of Caesarea). There is no leading character, but the story revolves around those who had been scattered because of the persecution following the stoning of Stephen. Because of this, it **appears** as though this story takes place concurrently with Peter's experience with Cornelius.

Read Acts 11:19-30

- Antioch is the capital city of the Roman province of Syria. It is the third largest city in the Empire (after Rome and Alexandria). Because of its proximity to Daphne (5 miles away) and the temples and worship of goddesses (including ritual prostitution), Antioch is a very metropolitan scene.
- Why did God choose Antioch? Perhaps it was because this was such a metropolitan area. The Jews here seem to be more inclined to accept Gentiles into their close association because of the diversity of their city. This surely seems like a small thing in comparison to other experiences throughout the city.
- What took Divine Intervention for Peter to accept seems to happen very naturally in this situation.
- Sending Barnabas as the delegate from Jerusalem is significant. He is the only man described by Luke as "good" and is equated in spiritual gifts with Stephen. There is clearly confidence placed in him to determine the situation in Antioch and how the church should respond.
- It is also significant that it is here that the church is first called "Christianos." The use of the word shows that Christ was becoming increasingly used as the proper name of Jesus instead of as a title. It is also very likely that the name contained an element of ridicule (Marshall 203). But the church of Antioch wears it as a badge of honor.
- Why is this story here when we've already seen a story of the Gospel extending to the Gentiles? Because of the large scale. This isn't a man's family and friends. This is a whole community in the third largest city in the world!

As we read this passage together, each table group is going to have an assignment. I want you to listen to the story with a specific point of view in mind. What was your character thinking, feeling, seeing, etc.? We will share after the passage is read.

Read Acts 12:1-19

Herod:

Peter:

Christian Community:

- This story tells what is happening in Jerusalem while Paul and Barnabas are off to Antioch.
- The days of the Unleavened Bread... hmm, where have I heard that before?
- The guard on Peter was intricate. Two guards at the cell door and two inside to which Peter was chained. These guards were switched out on a regular basis.
- Also, Peter had to pass through three gates. It can be assumed that all three were locked and well-guarded to get in or out of the prison.

Read Acts 12:20-25

- We don't know the reason for Herod's disagreement with Tyre and Sidon.
- Clearly Herod is killed for assuming the glory that was due to God.
- It is possible that the whole situation with Peter was also sent by God to Herod to remind Herod who was truly in control. How quickly we forget!