

ACTS 11:1-19

A. Peter, at Jerusalem, rehearses his experience at Cornelius'.

Acts 11:1-17 - And the apostles and brethren that were in Judaea heard that the Gentiles had also received the word of God. Acts 11:2 And when Peter was come up to Jerusalem, they that were of the circumcision contended with him, Acts 11:3 Saying, Thou wentest in to men uncircumcised, and didst eat with them. Acts 11:4 But Peter rehearsed *the matter* from the beginning, and expounded *it* by order unto them, saying, Acts 11:5 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: Acts 11:6 Upon the which when I had fastened mine eyes, I considered, and saw four-footed beasts of the earth, and wild beasts, and creeping things, and fowls of the air. Acts 11:7 And I heard a voice saying unto me, Arise, Peter; slay and eat. Acts 11:8 But I said, Not so, Lord: for nothing common or unclean hath at any time entered into my mouth. Acts 11:9 But the voice answered me again from heaven, What God hath cleansed, *that* call not thou common. Acts 11:10 And this was done three times: and all were drawn up again into heaven. Acts 11:11 And, behold, immediately there were three men already come unto the house where I was, sent from Caesarea unto me. Acts 11:12 And the Spirit bade me go with them, nothing doubting. Moreover these six brethren accompanied me, and we entered into the man's house: 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; Acts 11:14 Who shall tell thee words, whereby thou and all thy house shall be saved. Acts 11:15 And as I began to speak, the Holy Ghost fell on them, as on us at the beginning. Acts 11:16 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. 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?

1. Those at Jerusalem did not understand why Peter had gone to a Gentile's home and eaten with them. The contention was **strong**, so Peter **recaps** each detail and how it all came about.
2. Peter tells the other leaders of the Jerusalem Kingdom-Messianic Church how his going to the household of Cornelius (Gentile) was all brought together and set up by **God** Himself.

*In verse 17, Peter said: [...what was I, that I could withstand God?]
3. Since Peter, at that time, was the first and only Jew to go to **uncircumcised** Gentiles (not counting Paul) it shows there were not any **uncircumcised** believers in Jerusalem at that time. If there were, there wouldn't be a reason to criticize Peter's actions. Acts 10 was something **new**.
4. Peter **rehearses** what had taken place almost word for word. Remember, up to this moment, **he had not** received **any** new revelation about the new **mystery** program. **Peter shares that it was God Himself Who had ordered this **departure** from the **normal** kingdom message (Acts 2:38; Mark 16:16-20; Acts 1:8; Matt. 28:18-20).

*Peter tells how he and his six Jewish brethren were **astonished** at what God did!

B. Peter's explanation is accepted by Jerusalem's leaders in the church.

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.

1. Upon hearing Peter's explanation, they were **satisfied** that Cornelius and his household had been saved. They glorified God that He had granted salvation to the Gentiles - but **still** under Israel's program.
2. Realizing this, it shows that salvation going to the Gentiles was **not** even in the Little Flock's thinking at this moment in time. Gentile salvation was **not** something that was an immediate thought or concern to them.

*Their **first** priority was Israel, the Jewish people, the Kingdom, and **then** to the Gentiles (Cornelius was out of order! Acts 1:8).

3. Also, remember how this division, or middle wall, between the Jews and Gentiles **divided** them.
 - a. Genesis 6:18, 7:18-19, 23 - And God said unto Noah, The end of all flesh is come before me; for the earth is filled with violence through them; and, behold, I will destroy them with the earth. Gen. 7:18 And the waters prevailed, and were increased greatly upon the earth; and the ark went upon the face of the waters. Gen. 7:19 And the waters prevailed exceedingly upon the earth; and all the high hills, that *were* under the whole heaven, were covered. Gen. 7:23 And every living substance was destroyed which was upon the face of the ground, both man, and cattle, and the creeping things, and the fowl of the heaven; and they were destroyed from the earth: and Noah only remained *alive*, and they that *were* with him in the ark.
 - b. Genesis 11:4, 7-8 - And they said, Go to, let us build us a city and a tower, whose top may reach unto heaven; and let us make us a name, lest we be scattered abroad upon the face of the whole earth. Gen. 11:7 Go to, let us go down, and there confound their language, that they may not understand one another's speech. Gen 11:8 So the LORD scattered them abroad from thence upon the face of all the earth: and they left off to build the city.

****Romans 1:21-26, 28** - Because that, when they knew God, they glorified *him* not as God, neither were thankful; but became vain in their imaginations, and their foolish heart was darkened. Rom. 1:22 Professing themselves to be wise, they became fools, Rom. 1:23 And changed the glory of the uncorruptible God into an image made like to corruptible man, and to birds, and fourfooted beasts, and creeping things. Rom. 1:24 Wherefore God also gave them up to uncleanness through the lusts of their own hearts, to dishonour their own bodies between themselves: Rom. 1:25 Who changed the truth of God into a lie, and worshipped and served the creature more than the Creator, who is blessed for ever. Amen. Rom. 1:26 For this cause God gave them up unto vile affections: for even their women did change the natural use into that which is against nature: Rom. 1:28 And even as they did not like to retain God in *their* knowledge, God gave them over to a reprobate mind, to do those things which are not convenient;

Acts 14:15-16 - And saying, Sirs, why do ye these things? We also are men of like passions with you, and preach unto you that ye should turn from these vanities unto the living God, which made heaven, and earth, and the sea, and all things that are therein: Acts 14:16 Who in times past suffered all nations to walk in their own ways.

*Gentiles went their **own** way!

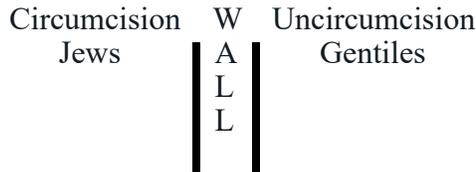
- c. Genesis 12:1-3 - Now the LORD had said unto Abram, Get thee out of thy country, and from thy kindred, and from thy father's house, unto a land that I will shew thee: Gen. 12:2 And I will make of thee a great nation, and I will bless thee, and make thy name great; and thou shalt be a blessing: Gen. 12:3 And I will bless them that bless thee, and curse him that curseth thee: and in thee shall all families of the earth be blessed.

God said He would create a new **n**ation, a new **p**eople who would love and follow Him. Through these people, He would bless the other nations (Gentiles). Israel became the true nation of God, while the Gentiles were judged and set aside. If they ever wanted a relationship with God, they would have to go through **Israel**.

*God promised to make Israel-people and Abraham great.

d. Then in Genesis 17, God covenanted with Abraham and his seed.

(1) God erected the wall with the covenant of circumcision.



(2) Here in Chapter 11, the leaders got on Peter for going into the **wrong** side of the partition-wall.

Genesis 17:4-5, 8-14 - As for me, behold, my covenant is with thee, and thou shalt be a father of many nations. Gen. 17:5 Neither shall thy name any more be called Abram, but thy name shall be Abraham; for a father of many nations have I made thee. Gen. 17:8 And I will give unto thee, and to thy seed after thee, the land wherein thou art a stranger, all the land of Canaan, for an everlasting possession; and I will be their God. Gen. 17:9 And God said unto Abraham, Thou shalt keep my covenant therefore, thou, and thy seed after thee in their generations. Gen. 17:10 This is my covenant, which ye shall keep, between me and you and thy seed after thee; Every man child among you shall be circumcised. Gen. 17:11 And ye shall circumcise the flesh of your foreskin; and it shall be a token of the covenant betwixt me and you. Gen. 17:12 And he that is eight days old shall be circumcised among you, every man child in your generations, he that is born in the house, or bought with money of any stranger, which is not of thy seed. Gen. 17:13 He that is born in thy house, and he that is bought with thy money, must needs be circumcised: and my covenant shall be in your flesh for an everlasting covenant. Gen. 17:14 And the uncircumcised man child whose flesh of his foreskin is not circumcised, that soul shall be cut off from his people; he hath broken my covenant.

*This was a spiritual and **r**eligious ceremony done in a special way and on a special day. This was God **s**eparating that one nation from the rest of the world.

(3) Paul says: Ephesians 2:11-12 - Wherefore remember, that ye being in time past Gentiles in the flesh, who are called Uncircumcision by that which is called the Circumcision in the flesh made by hands; Eph. 2:12 That at that time ye were without Christ, being aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers from the covenants of promise, having no hope, and without God in the world:

* God had erected this middle wall of partition between the circumcision and the uncircum-
 * cision. If you were on the **r**ight side of the wall, you got the blessing. If on the wrong
 * side- Eph. 2:12 [That at that time ye were without Christ, being aliens from the common-
 * wealth of Israel, and strangers from the covenants of promise, having no hope, and without
 * God in the world:]

- (4) Later on, God added the Law.
Galatians 3:19 - [Wherefore then *serveth* the law? It was added because of transgressions, till the seed should come to whom the promise was made; *and it was* ordained by angels in the hand of a mediator.]

*Law was added to the Promise and added to the seal of circumcision. The Law fortified the middle wall of partition to the Jews, who were on the correct side.

- (5) The Law was given to Israel to make her distinct and different from other people, and to set her apart from other nations. It made her special for God before the Gentiles.

*The Law was not given to the Gentiles.

Romans 2:14 - [For when the Gentiles, which have not the law, do by nature the things contained in the law, these, having not the law, are a law unto themselves:]

- (6) John 4:22 - Ye worship ye know not what: we know what we worship: for salvation is of the Jews.

*For a Gentile to cross over that wall, they had to convert to Judaism and be circumcised. They had to go through the Jews because [salvation is of the Jews].

Note:

Esther 8:17 - And in every province, and in every city, whithersoever the king's commandment and his decree came, the Jews had joy and gladness, a feast and a good day. And many of the people of the land became Jews; for the fear of the Jews fell upon them.

Acts 2:10 - Phrygia, and Pamphylia, in Egypt, and in the parts of Libya about Cyrene, and strangers of Rome, Jews and proselytes,

4. The reason there was heated conversation was that they believed Peter had gone in with some one who was uncircumcised (in chapter 11). This friction was caused because they believed the middle wall of partition was still up. "Pete, you weren't supposed to be over yonder."

*Remember Paul? To the Jews, the middle wall was sacred!

Acts 21:27-31 - And when the seven days were almost ended, the Jews which were of Asia, when they saw him in the temple, stirred up all the people, and laid hands on him, Acts 21:28 Crying out, Men of Israel, help: This is the man, that teacheth all men every where against the people, and the law, and this place: and further brought Greeks also into the temple, and hath polluted this holy place.

Acts 21:29 (For they had seen before with him in the city Trophimus an Ephesian, whom they supposed that Paul had brought into the temple.) Acts 21:30 And all the city was moved, and the people ran together: and they took Paul, and drew him out of the temple: and forthwith the doors were shut.

Acts 21:31 And as they went about to kill him, tidings came unto the chief captain of the band, that all Jerusalem was in an uproar.

C. The middle wall affected all believing Jews - A flashback!

1. In this verse, it shows that the middle wall of partition stood in the hearts of the Jews and in their thinking. Those who had been scattered because of the stoning of Stephen and the persecution from Saul, from Acts 8 on only went to their own people (Jews). This was 10 years until 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.

2. Because of their covenants, their prophecies, and the "Great Commission", Israel needed to be **first** to believe in Messiah before salvation (kingdom salvation) and blessings could **flow** to the Gentiles.

Mark 7:27 - But Jesus said unto her, Let the children first be filled: for it is not meet to take the children's bread, and to cast *it* unto the dogs.

Luke 24:47 - And that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his name among all nations, beginning at Jerusalem.

Acts 3:25-26 - Ye are the children of the prophets, and of the covenant which God made with our fathers, saying unto Abraham, And in thy seed shall all the kindreds of the earth be blessed. Acts 3:26 Unto you first God, having raised up his Son Jesus, sent him to bless you, in turning away every one of you from his iniquities.

Acts 13:46 - Then Paul and Barnabas waxed bold, and said, It was necessary that the word of God should first have been spoken to you: but seeing ye put it from you, and judge yourselves unworthy of everlasting life, lo, we turn to the Gentiles.

Romans 15:8-9 - Now I say that Jesus Christ was a minister of the circumcision for the truth of God, to confirm the promises *made* unto the fathers: Rom. 15:9 And that the Gentiles might glorify God for *his* mercy; as it is written, For this cause I will confess to thee among the Gentiles, and sing unto thy name.

3. Again, this shows that the Body of Christ could not have started in Matthew 1 or at Pentecost! It began with Paul in Acts 9, and in Acts 10-11 the transition was **beginning**!

Ephesians 2:13 - But now in Christ Jesus ye who sometimes were far off are made nigh by the blood of Christ.

*No longer are there two kinds of people (cir. vs uncir.). God has **leveled** the distinction. Why?

Ephesians 2:15-16 - Having abolished in his flesh the enmity, even the law of commandments *contained* in ordinances; for to make in himself of twain one new man, so making peace; Eph. 2:16 And that he might reconcile both unto God in one body by the cross, having slain the enmity thereby: