

30b What occurred at the meeting of Saul and his parents? We do not know but we cannot but wonder with a good deal of feeling. Whatever did occur it did not deter the apostle from evangelizing for we read that he "came into" the parts of both the provinces of Syria and Cilicia. From the future mention of disciples in these provinces we know he was preaching the Word.

THE WORK OF PETER

9:31 — 11:18

1. AT JERUSALEM. 9:31.

31 So the church throughout all Judea and Galilee and Samaria had peace, being edified; and, walking in the fear of the Lord and in the comfort of the Holy Spirit, was multiplied.

31 This is the intervening verse between the work of Saul and Peter. The historian gives us an insight into the state of the church in three provinces of Palestine. We have felt all the time that while we were following the labors of Philip, Peter and John, and Saul, that there were many others preaching the word and no doubt the events of their lives were just as interesting as were those of the men discussed. Luke here speaks of the church as one "ekklesia" called out body, located in the three above mentioned places. The coming of Saul, attended as it was by the intense persecution of the Jews, had interrupted the peace to some extent; now that he was gone the peace was restored. It is not to be concluded from this that the stirring caused by Saul was in any way harmful. Indeed it probably assisted in bringing peace, edification, and fear to the church. The "comfort of the Holy Spirit" spoken of in this verse is a subject worthy of some discussion.

2. IN LYDDA. 9:32-35.

32 And it came to pass, as Peter went throughout all parts, he came down also to the saints that dwelt at Lydda.

33 And there he found a certain man named Aeneas, who had kept his bed eight years; for he was palsied.

34 And Peter said unto him, Aeneas, Jesus Christ healeth thee: arise and make thy bed. And straightway he arose.

35 And all that dwelt at Lydda and in Sharon saw him, and they turned to the Lord.

32a The increase and health of the church in Canaan probably prompted Peter to attempt an evangelistic tour of this territory. For whatever reason we now are told that the apostle goes on a trip

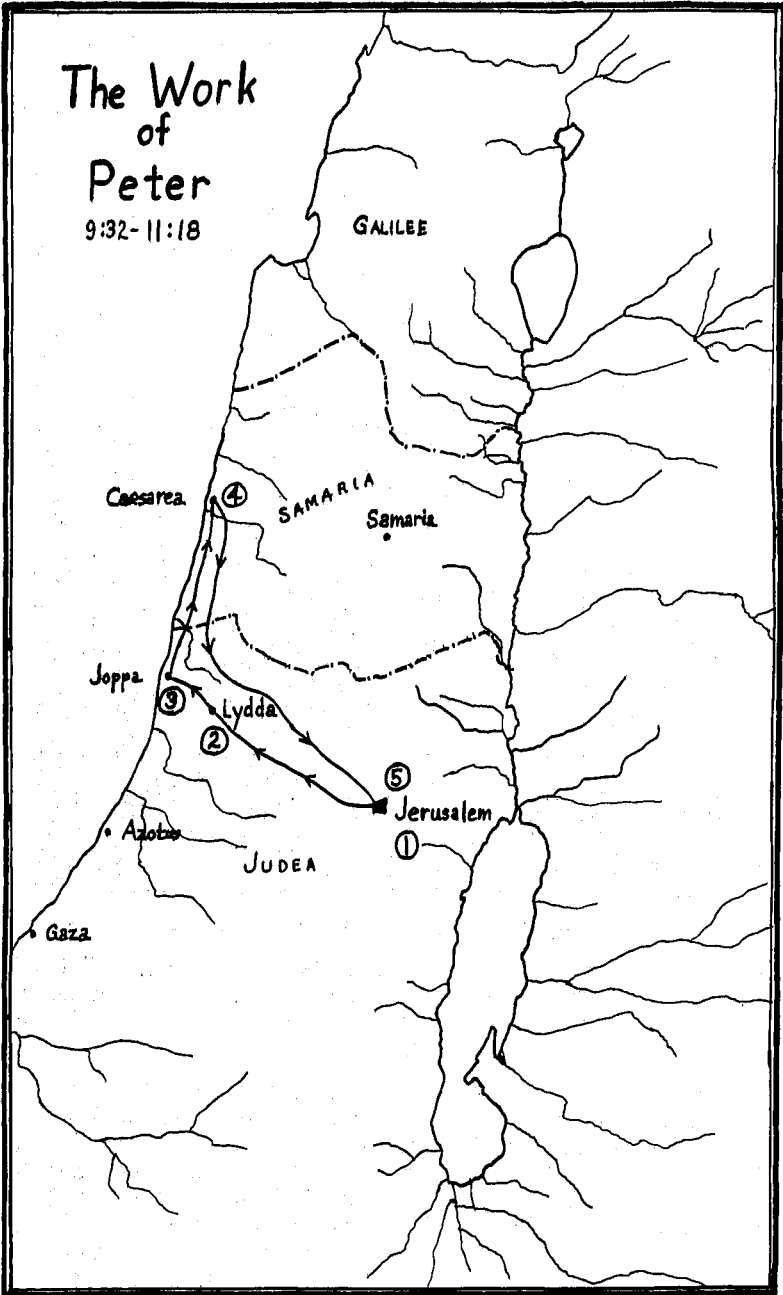
309. Who brought the gospel to Lydda before Peter arrived?

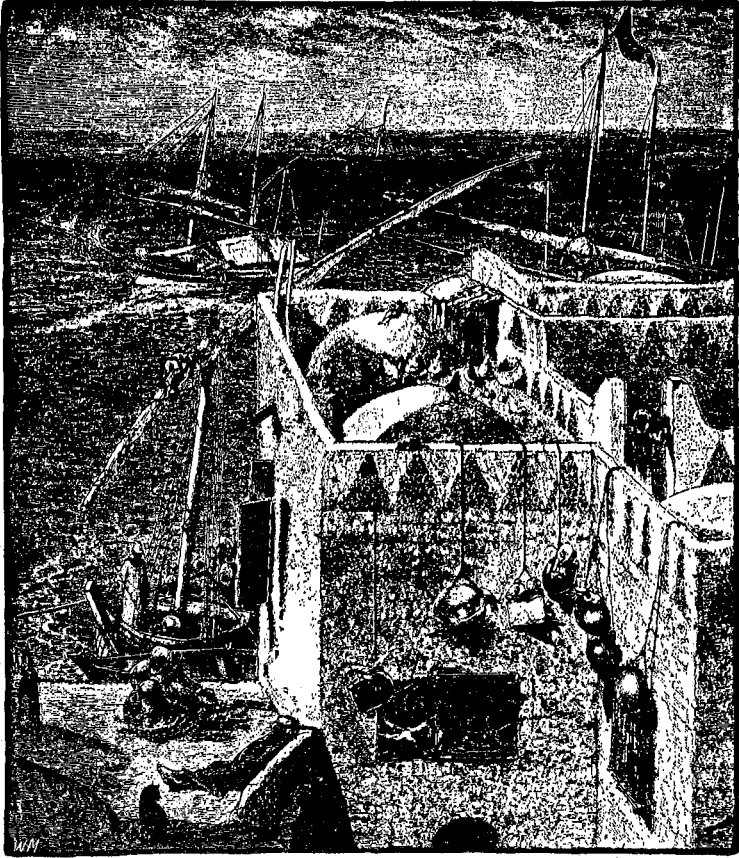
310. How do we know that Aeneas was well known in the town?

311. We have said that whether faith was present or not healings could be performed. Prove it.

The Work of Peter

9:32-11:18





VIEW OF THE ROCK-ENCIRCLED HARBOUR AT JAFFA.

From the roof of the house of Simon the Tanner. The building in the foreground, with its domes and perforated parapets, is a characteristic example of native domestic architecture in towns and cities of Southern Palestine.

This port, known today by its modern name of Jaffa or Yaffa, though having no harbor, is the chief port of Palestine. It was at this place the timber from Lebanon for both the first and second temples was landed. From this port Jonah sailed; and here also Peter had his vision. (II Chron. 2:16; Ezra 3:7; Jonah 1:3). Simon Peter was looking at the same sea of the Mediterranean which we can view in this picture when God spoke to him and told him to call no man common or unclean. Many of us have not learned this lesson yet.

through "all parts." This reference has to do with the three provinces mentioned in this verse.

32b In this trip Luke selects the incident that occurred among the saints at Lydda as the one most pertinent to his purpose. Who brought the gospel to Lydda before Peter arrived? Two answers seem to be suggested by the book; either "they . . . that were scattered" formed this work or Philip as he preached the gospel in all cities in this district.

33-35 In this city of Lydda there was a man well known by all those of the entire district. "Aeneas, who had kept his bed eight years; for he was palsied." The fact that he was well known is borne out in the great effect the healing had on the people. Peter, upon understanding the circumstances and evidently knowing what a wonderful witness for the power of Christ the healing of this one would be, said: "Aeneas, Jesus Christ healeth thee. Arise and make thy bed." In this case as in all others the man to be healed did not hesitate a moment. Whether faith was present or not did not have any influence on the healings. Immediately at the command of the apostle in the name of Jesus the lame were healed and the palsied were made whole. (3:1-10). The intended result was achieved . . . "all that dwelt at Lydda and in Sharon saw him, and they turned to the Lord." Indeed the word spoken by the apostles was confirmed by this sign which followed. (Mark 16:20).

3. AT JOPPA. 9:36-43.

- 36 Now there was at Joppa a certain disciple named Tabitha, which by interpretation is called Dorcas: this woman was full of good works and almsdeeds which she did.
- 37 And it came to pass in those days, that she fell sick, and died: and when they had washed her, they laid her in an upper chamber.
- 38 And as Lydda was nigh unto Joppa, the disciples, hearing that Peter was there, sent two men unto him, entreating him, Delay not to come on unto us.
- 39 And Peter arose and went with them. And when he was come, they brought him into the upper chamber: and all the widows stood by him weeping, and showing the coats and garments which Dorcas made, while she was with them.
- 40 But Peter put them all forth, and kneeled down, and prayed; and turning to the body, he said, Tabitha, arise. And she opened her eyes; and when she saw Peter, she sat up.

312. How is Mark 16:20 explained in this healing?

- 41 And he gave her his hand, and raised her up; and calling the saints and widows, he presented her alive.
- 42 And it became known throughout all Joppa: and many believed on the Lord.
- 43 And it came to pass, that he abode many days in Joppa with one Simon a tanner.

36-38 While Peter was healing the infirm among the saints at Lydda there was one among the believers in the town of Joppa who was near the door of death. Yea, before Peter finished his work in Lydda she had departed this life. This woman was one of the true saints of Joppa. Luke gives us her name in two languages. In the Aramaic her name was Tabitha. In the Greek she was called Dorcas. Her name in English would be translated "Gazelle."

In her passing she had left the best memorial, the deeds of a Christian life. Luke very carefully describes the passing of Tabitha; he says she was sick before her death, and that after she died her body was washed and laid out in an upper chamber. The preparations for burial were made as quickly as they were because of the warm climate. The need for an immediate burial was the reason for the note of urgency in the message of the two men that were sent for Peter. After Dorcas had died why did the disciples of Joppa wish Peter to visit them? It was possibly a desire for his understanding sympathy: a feeling on their part that the man of God would have some word of comfort or inspiration for them. When the text says that Lydda was nigh unto Joppa we must understand this to mean about a three or four hours' walk or about fifteen miles.

39-43 When the two returned with Peter they had no idea what the apostle would say or do. But Peter knew. We are told of his unhesitating action upon arriving. Peter was guided by the messengers up into the upper room where lay the body of Dorcas. There in the room were a number of widows gathered around the deceased. These women were in great sorrow as were the rest, but the widows were, especially grief-stricken at the death of their beloved friend. Their actions tell why; we are told that they held up to Peter the "coats and garments" or the tunics and the mantles, which Dorcas had made for them. Evidently these women were too poor to secure garments in any other way and if it had not been for this unselfish soul they would have suffered. Peter gave direc-

313. Who was dying while Peter was healing?
314. Why the careful description of the death of this one?
315. Why the immediate preparations for burial?
316. Why did the saints of Joppa send for Peter?
317. How far from Lydda to Joppa?
318. Do you believe Peter knew what he was going to do when he arrived in Joppa? If so, why?
319. Why were the widows especially grief stricken at the death of Dorcas?

tions that all should leave the room, to leave him and the body of the departed alone. What a beautiful scene is portrayed for us. Peter first kneels down and prays the prayer of faith, and then turning to the body he spoke but two words "Tabitha, arise." Once again life flowed into the body, the eyes were opened. Seeing Peter in the room she sat up. Without a word Peter gave her his hand and she stood up. Then came the glad call for the saints and the widows. What unspeakable joy there must have been in that upper chamber on that memorable day.

Word of this incident, like the healing in Lydda, soon spread and wherever news of it was taken it helped to create faith in the word and work of the apostles. "And many believed on the Lord."

Because of the good results from the raising of Dorcas, Peter stayed some number of days in this place. While remaining here he lived with "one Simon a tanner" whose house was by the seaside.

4. IN CAESAREA. 10:1-48.

a. Cornelius and his vision. 1-8.

- 1 Now there was a certain man in Caesarea, Cornelius by name, a centurion of the band called the Italian band,
- 2 a devout man, and one that feared God with all his house, who gave much alms to the people, and prayed to God always.
- 3 He saw in a vision openly, as it were about the ninth hour of the day, an angel of God coming in unto him, and saying to him, Cornelius.
- 4 And he, fastening his eyes upon him, and being affrighted, said, What is it Lord? And he said unto him, Thy prayers and thine alms are gone up for a memorial before God.
- 5 And now send men to Joppa, and fetch one Simon, who is surnamed Peter:
- 6 he lodgeth with one Simon a tanner, whose house is by the sea side.
- 7 And when the angel that spake unto him was departed, he called two of his household-servants, and a devout soldier that waited on him continually;
- 8 and having rehearsed all things unto them, he sent them to Joppa.

1-2 Beginning with the tenth chapter we have the introduction of the incident that opened the door of the kingdom for the Gentiles. The recording of this incident was in the mind of the inspired writer

320. Give in your own words an accurate account of the raising of Dorcas.
321. What incident do you believe was in the mind of Luke when he first began to describe the work of Peter?



CAESAREA.

Herod's kingdom embraced the whole land of Palestine on both sides of the Jordan. At his death it was divided among his three sons; to Archelaus, with the title of king, fell Idumaea, Judaea, and Samaria; (Matt. 2:22) to Herod Antipas, Galilee and the territory between the Yarmuk and the Arnon called Peaea; and to Philip, the territory on the north of the river Yarmuk, embracing the small districts Ituraea, Trachonitus, Auranitus, Gaulanatis, and Batanea. (Luke 3:1).

Archelaus had a troubled and inglorious reign of ten years, at the end of which on complaint of the Jews he was banished to Gaul. Judaea was then formed into a Roman province governed by a procurator. Procurators were for the most part appointed only in imperial provinces governed by a legate of the emperor. The duty of the procurator in such cases consisted of collecting the revenue and judging in causes appertaining to fiscal affairs. The procurator of Judaea, however, had a wider range of duties. There being no legate in the province he was charged with the general government and was invested with military and judicial authority. In some matters he was subordinate to the legate of Syria. He usually resided at Caesarea, but went to Jerusalem at the time of the feasts, taking with him a strong military force.

The taxes were of two kinds—the direct tax collected by imperial officers under the control of the procurator, and an impost tax which was farmed out to the highest bidder and again sold out to collectors. These collectors or publicans were of low social and moral standing and were looked upon with contempt. (Matt. 11:19; 21:31)

when he began to describe the work of Peter. Caesarea is the background setting for this incident. There lived in this town a certain man. This man was no ordinary person for he was to be the first Gentile in all the world to find forgiveness of his sins in the blood of Jesus. It would seem that Luke is trying to show us how religious a man could be and still be lost. Note a few facts about this Gentile:

- a. His name was Cornelius.
- b. He was an army captain or centurion.
- c. He was an Italian, as was the cohort over which he had authority.
- d. He was a devout man.
- e. He feared or worshiped God as did his house.
- f. He was very generous with his substance as he gave many gifts to the poor.

He evidently obtained his faith and devotion through close contact with the Jewish religion.

3-8 The devotion of Cornelius has been spoken of already; now see the result of this devotion. No devotion goes unrewarded that is given to Jehovah in complete sincerity.

While Cornelius was in the act of praying, God visited him. It is interesting to note that this was also true of the time He used in speaking to Peter, to Saul and many others. The vision of this devout Gentile was given to him "openly" at three o'clock in the afternoon. "He saw in a vision openly" suggests the idea that this angel "in bright apparel" was seen objectively by Cornelius. When such a heavenly visitor stood before this Roman officer he was quite naturally wide-eyed with fright. To him this man could be nothing short of God himself or a representative of deity. Hence, he cried out "What is it, Lord?" The angelic stranger let Cornelius know that his worship had not been in vain.

"Thy prayer is heard, and thine alms are had in remembrance in the sight of God" (10:31). "Thy prayers and thine alms are gone up for a memorial" (10:4).

In the mind of this Gentile there must have burned this question upon hearing these heartening words:

"If indeed my prayers have been heard what form will the answer take? I have prayed for acceptance and favor in the sight of

322. Give from memory four facts about Cornelius.

323. How did Cornelius obtain his faith?

324. What was the reward of the devotion of Cornelius and how does it apply today?

325. What is the meaning of the statement that the angel or vision appeared "openly?"

326. Do angels have bodies? If so, explain Heb. 1:14.

God. How can I find it? Can it be that I am already in the favor of Jehovah?"

The answer is forthcoming even while the question is forming. "And now, (i.e. because thy prayers have been heard) send men to Joppa and fetch one Simon who is surnamed Peter. He lodgeth with one Simon a tanner, whose house is by the sea side . . . who shall speak unto thee words, whereby thou shalt be saved, thou and all thy house" (cf. 11:14).

The prayer and devotion of Cornelius was all offered up by him that he might be saved. Now here is the opportunity for receiving God's answer to the petition. And so it is that God grants to all of a similar spirit a like opportunity.

The angel had no sooner vanished from his sight than Cornelius began immediately to obey the divine injunction. Two of his household servants and a devout soldier, these were some who were his personal attendants, were called in. These evidently made up a part of this man's house in whom he had instilled the fear of the Lord (2a). Even though the day was far spent these three were sent on their mission, after having been told in greatest detail of the vision that they might repeat it accurately to Peter. In the late afternoon the three started their walk to the seaport of Joppa.

b. Peter's vision. 9-16.

- 9 Now on the morrow, as they were 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 hungry, and desired to eat: but while they made ready, he fell into a trance;
 11 and he beholdeth the heaven opened, and a certain vessel descending, as it were a great sheet, let down by four corners upon the earth:
 12 wherein were all manner of fourfooted beasts and creeping things of the earth and birds of the heaven.
 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 anything that is common and unclean.
 15 And a voice came unto him again the second time, What God hath cleansed, make not thou common.
 16 And this was done thrice: and straightway the vessel was received up into heaven.

9 Since it is thirty miles from Caesarea to Joppa and from the fact that Luke states they arrived on the noon of the day following the vision in Caesarea, we might conclude these men walked all night.

327. What causes us to conclude that these men from Caesarea walked all night? Or, do you conclude this?

10-16 It would be delightfully refreshing if when we came to the homes of our friends we could know that at certain hours we would find them in prayer. It was so with the household of Simon.

While Peter awaited the preparations of the noon meal he retired to the housetop to observe the Jewish hour of prayer. While here his hunger reminded him that it was time to eat. As he waited and prayed God gave him some real "food for thought." The experience of Peter was somewhat different from that of Cornelius, for Peter's experience seems to be more subjective than objective. Before the mind of Peter there came a strange sight; he saw the expanse of heaven opened and a large receptacle let down through the opening. It seemed to be a great sheet suspended from the four corners. It came to rest directly before the astonished Peter. When Peter could view the content of this unusual vessel he saw upon it "all manner of four-footed beasts and creeping things of the earth and birds of the heaven." If Peter was astonished when the heaven-sent vessel began its descent, he must have been completely confounded when a voice spoke and calling him by name said:

"Arise, Peter; kill and eat."

At once Peter spoke the convictions of his heart in regard to the use of such animals. It would have been a two-fold sin, thought the apostle, the sin of sacrificing something unclean and the sin of eating something unclean. Both of these thoughts were repugnant to the Jewish mind, trained as it was in the law of Moses against such. Perhaps Peter thought the Lord was trying him; be that as it may, he impulsively replied:

"Not so, Lord; for I have never eaten anything that is common and unclean."

Again the voice of God; and this time it must have shaken the heart of Simon even as the same voice did melt the hearts of those on Sinai. Indeed this was the first and only revoking of the law of Sinai by the audible voice of Jehovah:

"What God hath cleansed, make not thou common."

This divine mandate was repeated three times and then the vessel was taken back to heaven out of the sight of the apostle.

c. The messengers arrive. God directs Peter. Messengers received. 17-23a.

17 Now while Peter was much perplexed in himself what the vision which he had seen might mean, behold,

328. What fine custom was observed in the house of Simon the tanner that we would do well to imitate?
329. What was the difference between the vision of Cornelius and that of Peter?
330. What two-fold sin would have been committed according to Peter if he were to have obeyed the divine injunction: "Arise, Peter, kill and eat?"
331. What was repeated three times?

- the men that were sent by Cornelius, having made inquiry for Simon's house, stood before the gate,
- 18 and called and asked whether Simon, who was surnamed Peter, were lodging there.
- 19 And while Peter thought on the vision, the Spirit said unto him, Behold, three men seek thee.
- 20 But arise, and get thee down, and go with them, nothing doubting: for I have sent them.
- 21 And Peter went down to the men, and said, Behold, I am he whom ye seek: what is the cause wherefore ye are come?
- 22 And they said, Cornelius a centurion, a righteous man and one that feareth God, and well reported of by all the nation of the Jews, was warned of God by a holy angel to send for thee into his house, and to hear words from thee.
- 23 So he called them in and lodged them.

17-20 The perplexity of Peter can be more clearly understood when we consider his Jewish background. "Why was it that God had revoked the law of clean and unclean animals?" To Peter this must have been the whole import of the vision. He may have wondered if the rest of the Mosaic law had been abrogated as well.

But even while he thought on these things there were men standing before the gate of the house who could give to him God's answer. The three messengers from Cornelius had inquired diligently for the house of Simon the tanner; now having found it they stood at the outer gate of the house and called to those inside in an inquiry as to whether Simon Peter lodged there. The Lord had synchronized perfectly the movements and thoughts of both Peter and the three.

Now it was time to bring them together; but they could not meet as God wanted without a word of divine introduction. Hence, the spirit introduced Peter to his visitors before he saw them.

"The Spirit said unto him, Behold, three men seek thee. But arise, and get thee down, and go with them, nothing doubting, for I have sent them."

Peter did not even wait for Simon the tanner to call him, but immediately arose and descending the stairs came into the presence of the three.

While on his way down, what type of men do you suppose Peter expected to see? He probably expected something unusual, but he

332. What import do you suppose Peter put upon the vision?
333. Show how the Lord had perfectly synchronized the movements and thoughts of Peter and the three.
334. What were the divine words of introduction Peter was given?
335. Show how all of this incident must have appeared strange to Peter.

would have hardly been prepared to find three **Gentiles**. But, obedient to the heavenly vision, he introduced himself and asked the question that was clamoring for an answer in his heart. It was in essence:

"God has sent these men, I am to go with them, but to where? And for what?"

21-23a Strange indeed were the workings and messages of God. First a strange vision; next a stranger command; now the strangest of all, Peter is called to speak to an uncircumcised Gentile. Such must have been something of the feelings of the apostle on this matter.

The embassaries of Cornelius made the mission as attractive to the Jewish mind as possible. Peter was to come to speak words to a Gentile named Cornelius, a righteous man, one that feared God and had a fine reputation among the Jews for his devotion. None the less he was a Gentile. But Cornelius had been commanded by "a holy angel" to send and bring Peter. The three were invited into the house of Simon. As Peter thought on these things, he must have surely tied together the events with the truth God wanted him to receive. There yet remained the inherent hesitancy which was to be entirely removed when he arrived at his destination.

d. The trip and arrival at Caesarea. 23b-27.

23b And on the morrow he arose and went forth with them, and certain of the brethren from Joppa accompanied him.

24 And on the morrow they entered into Caesarea. And Cornelius was waiting for them, having called together his kinsmen and his near friends.

25 And when it came to pass that Peter entered, Cornelius met him, and fell down at his feet, and worshipped him.

26 But Peter raised him up, saying, Stand up; I myself also am a man.

27 And as he talked with him, he went in, and findeth many come together:

23b-27 The trip was started in the morning, probably because Peter felt that the thirty mile walk could best be made in two days. By starting in the morning they could time their arrival on the next day at an appropriate time for the work to be done. Six brethren from Joppa were taken on the journey to be witnesses of this unusual circumstance (11:12). On the morrow following their departure they entered, as planned, into the city of Caesarea.

336. Show how the servants of Cornelius made their request as attractive to the Jewish mind as possible.

337. Why start the journey on the morning after the arrival of the three men? Who was taken along?

Cornelius with his customary military efficiency had prepared carefully for their arrival. When Peter stepped into the house of Cornelius he had a waiting audience; this was made up of the friends and relatives of Cornelius. It would seem from the wording of the text that Cornelius was either waiting on the outside of the house or saw Peter coming, and left the house to meet him. There somewhere outside the house in the court of Cornelius there met for the first time a Jew and Gentile for the avowed purpose of worshipping God as one (although at this time Peter was not thoroughly convinced that it should be so).

Cornelius fell at the feet of Peter and paid homage to him as to one whom God had sent. The word "worshipped" indicates a type of reverence paid to those of superior rank. Peter did not know the mind of Cornelius and so imagined that he was worshipping him as deity, even as so many of the Gentiles were wont to do with great men. Hence, Peter reached down and lifted Cornelius to his feet with the words "Stand up. I myself also am a man."

From the court or patio surrounding Cornelius' house the two walked together into the house; as they did they talked. Perchance Cornelius explained the reason for his kneeling at Peter's feet and Peter made it evident to Cornelius that there was no distinction between them. There was nothing in God's will that would exalt Peter as divine.

e. Cornelius explains. 28-33.

28 and he said unto them, Ye yourselves know how it is an unlawful thing for a man that is a Jew to join himself or come unto one of another nation; and yet unto me hath God showed that I should not call any man common or unclean:

29 wherefore also I came without gainsaying, when I was sent for. I ask therefore with what intent ye sent for me.

30 And Cornelius said, Four days ago, until this hour, I was keeping the ninth hour of prayer in my house; and behold, a man stood before me in bright apparel,

31 and saith, Cornelius, thy prayer is heard, and thine alms are had in remembrance in the sight of God.

32 Send therefore to Joppa, and call unto thee Simon, who is surnamed Peter: he lodgeth in the house of Simon a tanner, by the sea side.

338. What preparations had Cornelius made for Peter's arrival? Where was Cornelius while awaiting Peter?

339. What is meant when Luke states that Cornelius "fell down at his feet and worshipped him?"

340. What construction did Peter put upon this worship?

341. What could have been the content of the conversation between Peter and Cornelius as they walked from the patio into the house?

- 33 Forthwith therefore I sent to thee; and thou hast well done that thou art come. Now therefore we are all here present in the sight of God, to hear all things that have been commanded thee of the Lord.

28-33 Upon coming into the room where all were assembled Peter addressed his remarks to the whole group. He came right to the point. Naturally the first question in the minds of all assembled was: "How is it that this Jew has been sent to us Gentiles?"

Peter removes this query by speaking of the divine hand in breaking down "the middle wall of partition." In the statements made by Peter we can see that God's efforts had not been in vain, but that Peter had drawn the conclusion the Lord wanted him to draw: "God hath shown me that I should not call any man common or unclean." He said in essence:

"You want to know why I am here? It is because God broke down my prejudice and sent me to you."

Peter had heard from the messengers that he was to come and speak but now he wanted to know if there were any more particulars to this mission. He wanted to hear from Cornelius himself. Perhaps there was something more he should know concerning his words that he was to speak. Cornelius immediately came forward to answer for all; after all he was the "main-spring" in this whole circumstance. In the recital of Cornelius to Peter there are a number of points that we have not before considered that should be here mentioned:

1. Cornelius stated that it was four days to the very hour since he had seen the angel. Since the Jewish way of reckoning time was to count a part of a day as a whole day this would be true.
2. When Peter reiterated the message of Cornelius to him he said that the angel asked Cornelius to send for him that he might speak unto Cornelius things whereby he and his house might be saved.
3. Cornelius also informed Peter that they were gathered together "to hear all things that have been commanded him (thee) of the Lord."

f. Peter's sermon. 34-43.

34 And 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 acceptable to him.

342. What was the natural question in the mind of all the Gentiles assembled?
How answered?
343. Why did Peter ask the question, "I ask therefore with what intent you sent for me?"

- 36 The word which he sent unto the children of Israel, preaching good tidings of peace by Jesus Christ (he is Lord of all)—
- 37 that saying ye yourselves know, which was published throughout all Judaea, beginning from Galilee, after the baptism which John preached;
- 38 even Jesus of Nazareth, how God anointed him with the Holy Spirit 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 country of the Jews, and in Jerusalem; whom also they slew, hanging him on a tree.
- 40 Him God raised up the third day, and gave him to be made manifest,
- 41 not to all the people, but unto witnesses that were chosen before of God, even to us, who ate and drank with him after he rose from the dead.
- 42 And he charged us to preach unto the people, and to testify that this is he who is ordained of God to be the Judge of the living and the dead.
- 43 To him bear all the prophets witness, that through his name every one that believeth on him shall receive remission of sins.

34-35 With this request before the apostle there was only one message he could bring. Neither the details of the Jewish law nor the rite of circumcision were the need of these Gentiles.

God through the angel had asked Peter to tell these persons what to do to obtain salvation, to speak to them those things the Lord had commanded him. There was only one word for this occasion, the message of Jesus Christ.

Peter prefaced his sermon with a bold statement of the fact that he was now fully persuaded that "God is no respecter of persons"; i.e. God does not consider the fact that a man is a Jew or a Gentile has any part in His acceptance of him. "In every nation" the emphasis is upon "nation" not on "he that feareth him, and worketh righteousness." Those in any nation who were going to be acceptable to God would have to fear Him under His Son and work righteousness through Him. This is a discussion of man's equality on a national or racial standing and not on a spiritual standing.

36-37 Now follows the body of the apostle's discourse. If salvation were the request, if the things commanded him of the Father were to be heard, he could only tell of Jesus and His glad tidings. It

344. What does Peter mean by the statement in verses 34-35? What is meant by "acceptable?"

was in Jesus that salvation was to be found; it was Jesus who had commanded and empowered him to preach.

But then, these Gentiles knew something of the events of this beautiful life. God had sent His word to Israel that through Jesus Christ there was peace. Peter here injects a statement concerning this One in whom we have peace: "He is Lord of all" . . . that is, He not only offers reconciliation to God but is to be held as the Lord of our lives as well. Luke gives us a challenging historical word here, for he states that the word concerning the life and works of Jesus was common knowledge to many persons in that day. The household of Cornelius evidently had not only heard of Jesus but had also a deep respect for Him as a servant of God.

38-42 Of what these Gentiles were yet ignorant was how this message of peace applied to them. Incidentally, they were also told that Peter and his Jewish friends were witnesses of all these things of which they had heard. The meaning and power of the death of Christ was not yet known to them, to say nothing of His resurrection. Of these facts Peter now speaks; he tells of the humiliating death and then of the glorious resurrection and of His appearances to "witnesses that were chosen before of God." The witnesses were of course the apostles, who, as Peter said, "ate and drank with Him after He rose from the dead."

These men were not the only ones to whom Jesus appeared. The record speaks of others to whom He showed Himself alive after His passion. (Cf. Mark 16:9; Matt. 28:8-10; Luke 24:13-31; I Cor. 15:6). The eleven were to be His special witnesses of this fact . . . they were chosen before His death for this very purpose. What joy must have flooded the hearts of these Gentiles as they heard for the first time the glad news of the death of Christ for the sins of the world. Yea, and that they were included in this covering for sins. Peter's next and closing word was that after Jesus had suffered and arose He commissioned the eleven to preach the Lordship and judicial position of Christ. Jesus had said that "salvation is from the Jews" (John 4:22), of a truth the household of Cornelius could witness to this fact.

43 The last word spoken by Peter before the Holy Spirit fell upon these persons was that all the Jewish prophets testified or looked forward to one great promise in the coming Messiah: "the remission of sins." Peter could now say with real meaning that "through His name everyone that believeth on Him shall receive remission of sins."

345. What was the need to be met by Peter's sermon?

346. Give a brief outline of Peter's sermon to the household of Cornelius.

347. How did the words of the prophets come to have new meaning for Peter on this occasion?

g. The baptism in the Holy Spirit. 44-46.

44 While Peter yet spake these words, the Holy Spirit fell on all them that heard the word.

45 And they of the circumcision that believed were amazed, as many as came with Peter, because that on the Gentiles also was poured out the gift of the Holy Spirit.

46 For they heard them speak with tongues, and magnify God. Then answered Peter,

44-46 Here as previously on Solomon's porch Peter never finished his discourse (cf. 4:1-2), but for a vastly different reason. In the previous instance man intervened, but in this case God himself steps in. The purpose of the Holy Spirit baptism as given here is being discussed in our notes on the Holy Spirit. The special manifestations of the Holy Spirit are sometimes spoken of as the "falling" of the Holy Spirit; note 8:16; 11:15 and in 19:6 "came upon." We like the pointed remarks of J. W. McGarvey on verses 45-46. He says:

"The ground of amazement to the Jewish brethren was not the mere fact that these Gentiles received the Holy Spirit; for if Peter had finished his discourse, promising them the Holy Spirit on the terms which he had laid down on Pentecost, and had then baptized them, these brethren would have taken it as a matter of course that they received the Spirit. And if, after this, he had laid hands on them and imparted the miraculous gift of the Spirit as in the case of the Samaritans, they would not have been so greatly surprised. The considerations which caused the amazement were, first, that the Holy Spirit was 'poured out' upon them directly from God, as it had never been before on any but the apostles; and second, that this unusual gift was bestowed on Gentiles." (Page 213.)

h. Baptism in water. 47, 48.

47 Can any man forbid the water, that these should not be baptized, who have received the Holy Spirit as well as we?

48 And he commanded them to be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ. Then prayed they him to tarry certain days.

47-48 In verse 47a we have a glimpse of the thinking of Peter on the whole incident. The question of this verse is evidently directed to the six Jewish brethren. "Can any man forbid the water that these should not be baptized . . . ? It would seem that up to this point they were going to object to their baptism but now the direct

348. Show how the circumstances here are alike and unlike those that occurred on Solomon's porch.

349. What was the ground of the amazement of the Jewish brethren?

350. To whom were the words "can any man forbid water that these should not be baptized—" directed?

action of God in the case overrules any such hesitancy. Peter had commanded the first Jews to be baptized, and that "in the name of Jesus Christ." Here he commands the first Gentiles to do the same thing. In the command to the Jews he had told them what preceded baptism as well as the purpose of it (cf. 2:38). Here the same man commands the same thing. We are persuaded that in the message of Peter (which is only briefly outlined) he included the same prerequisites since this gospel was to be preached unto "all the nations, beginning from Jerusalem" (Luke 24:47).

5. AT JERUSALEM. 11:1-18.

a. News reaches Jerusalem; objection. 1-3.

- 1 Now the apostles and the brethren that were in Judaea heard that the Gentiles also had 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.

1-3 The news of Peter's work in Caesarea traveled faster than the apostle. The word of the preaching to the Gentiles had spread throughout the entire assembly by the time Peter arrived. Not only the apostles of Jerusalem heard, but also "the brethren that were in Judea."

The report of Peter's work was that "the Gentiles also had received the Word of God." But when Peter arrived, the point at issue was not the reception of the Word of God but rather the propriety of eating with the uncircumcised.

b. The answer of Peter. 4-18.

- 4 But Peter began, and expounded the matter unto them in order, saying,
- 5 I was in the city of Joppa praying: and in a trance I saw a vision, a certain vessel descending, as it were a great sheet let down from heaven by four corners; and it came even unto me:
- 6 upon which when I had fastened mine eyes, I considered, and saw the four-footed beasts of the earth, and wild beasts and creeping things and birds of the heaven.

351. What is familiar about the command of Peter that these be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ?
352. Name the two groups in Jerusalem that heard of Peter's work in Caesarea.
353. What was the point of issue when Peter returned to Jerusalem?

- 7 And I heard also a voice saying unto me, Rise, Peter; kill and eat.
- 8 But I said, Not so, Lord: for nothing common or unclean hath ever entered into my mouth.
- 9 But a voice answered the second time out of heaven, What God hath cleansed, make not thou common.
- 10 And this was done thrice: and all were drawn up again into heaven.
- 11 And behold, forthwith three men stood before the house in which we were, having been sent from Caesarea unto me.
- 12 And the Spirit bade me go with them, making no distinction. And these six brethren also accompanied me; and we entered into the man's house:
- 13 and he told us how he had seen the angel standing in his house, and saying, Send to Joppa, and fetch Simon, whose surname is Peter;
- 14 who shall speak unto thee words, whereby thou shalt be saved, thou and all thy house.
- 15 And as I began to speak, the Holy Spirit fell on them, even as on us at the beginning.
- 16 And I remembered the word of the Lord, how he said, John indeed baptized with water; but ye shall be baptized in the Holy Spirit.
- 17 If then God gave unto them the like gift as he did also unto us, when we believed on the Lord Jesus Christ, who was I, that I could withstand God?
- 18 And when they heard these things, they held their peace, and glorified God, saying, Then to the Gentiles also hath God granted repentance unto life.

4-17 There was no delay in raising the issue, probably because of the previous close association of Peter and these brethren. "They of the circumcision" gave voice to the objection. The terminology would seem to indicate these were the ones among the Jewish brethren who were special sticklers for the rite of circumcision. We are persuaded it came from some among "the brethren that were in Judea." The apostles all being Galileans and coming from the more humble walks of life would not be so ready to take up such an exclusive position. Especially would this be true in light of the fact that the apostles had been baptized with the Holy Spirit and thus would have a more complete knowledge of the will of the Lord.

What the brethren in Judea and Jerusalem wanted was an answer to their question and charge. Peter did not disappoint them. Peter

354. Who do you suppose voiced the objection?

was just as hesitant as were these other Jews to admit the Gentiles into the full favor of God. Peter thought that what convinced him and the other six Jewish brethren should convince his objectors. Hence, he rehearsed "in order" all that had happened to him beginning with his vision on the house-top of Simon the tanner and concluding with the baptism in the Holy Spirit of the household of Cornelius. The only word to be added to the account as it has already been given is the statement of Peter in verses fifteen to seventeen where we find the words of Jesus respecting John's baptism and the Holy Spirit baptism which lends emphasis to the Holy Spirit's work with the household of Cornelius. Peter says the Holy Spirit "fell on them, even as on us at the beginning." That is, God himself placed His stamp of acceptance upon these persons; and that, totally apart from any effort of Peter. This happened unto them even as it had happened to the apostles in the beginning or "creation" of the church. Then the words of Jesus immediately came to the mind of the apostle; those words which he had thought had exclusive application to him and the eleven. But now for some strange reason (he was not long in seeing) the same gift, "the baptism in the Holy Spirit," was given to these Gentiles as was given to the apostles.

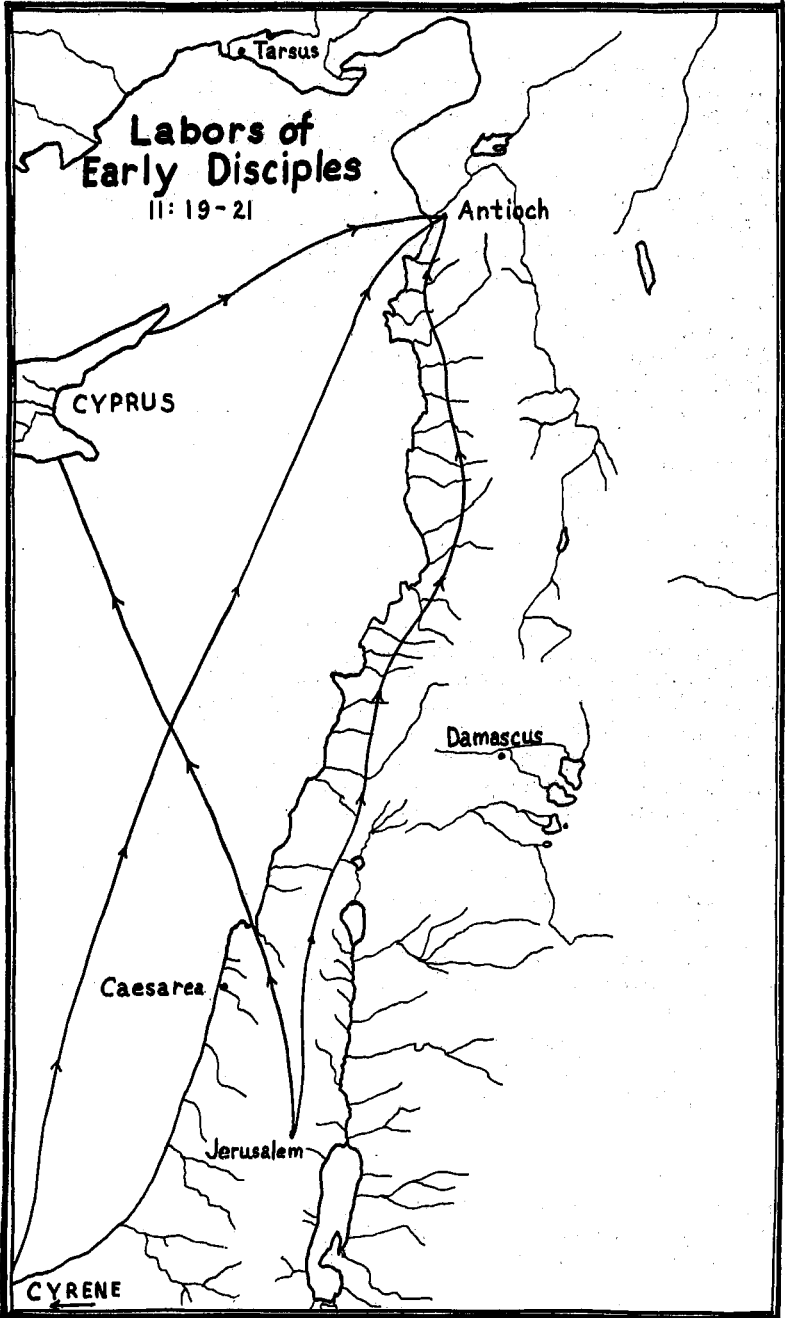
18 Peter had been given two or three divinely directed reasons for bringing the gospel to the Gentiles; now he could see that the Lord intended that he hold no barriers at all but accept these persons into the full fellowship of the body of Christ. Peter felt that to do anything else would be resisting and refusing the will of God. The response of these Jewish brethren is wonderful. It is a beautiful pattern for all of us. When we have disagreed with a brother or sister over any matter of God's will and that person presents the will of God from His word, let us follow their example. Note:

1. When God speaks we are to keep quiet. "They held their peace." They were not stubborn and willful but ready to concede.
2. Then we are to thank God for new truth or light ("and they glorified God") rather than grudgingly admitting our inability to object.
3. Admit into full and unrestricted fellowship those you had once cut off. "Then to the Gentiles also hath God granted repentance unto life."

355. What method did Peter use in convincing the apostles and brethren of Judea?

356. What is the meaning of the term "beginning" as it appears in verse 15?

357. Why can we say that the response of these Jewish brethren was wonderful? How does it offer an example for today?



THE ESTABLISHMENT OF THE CHURCH IN ANTIOCH.

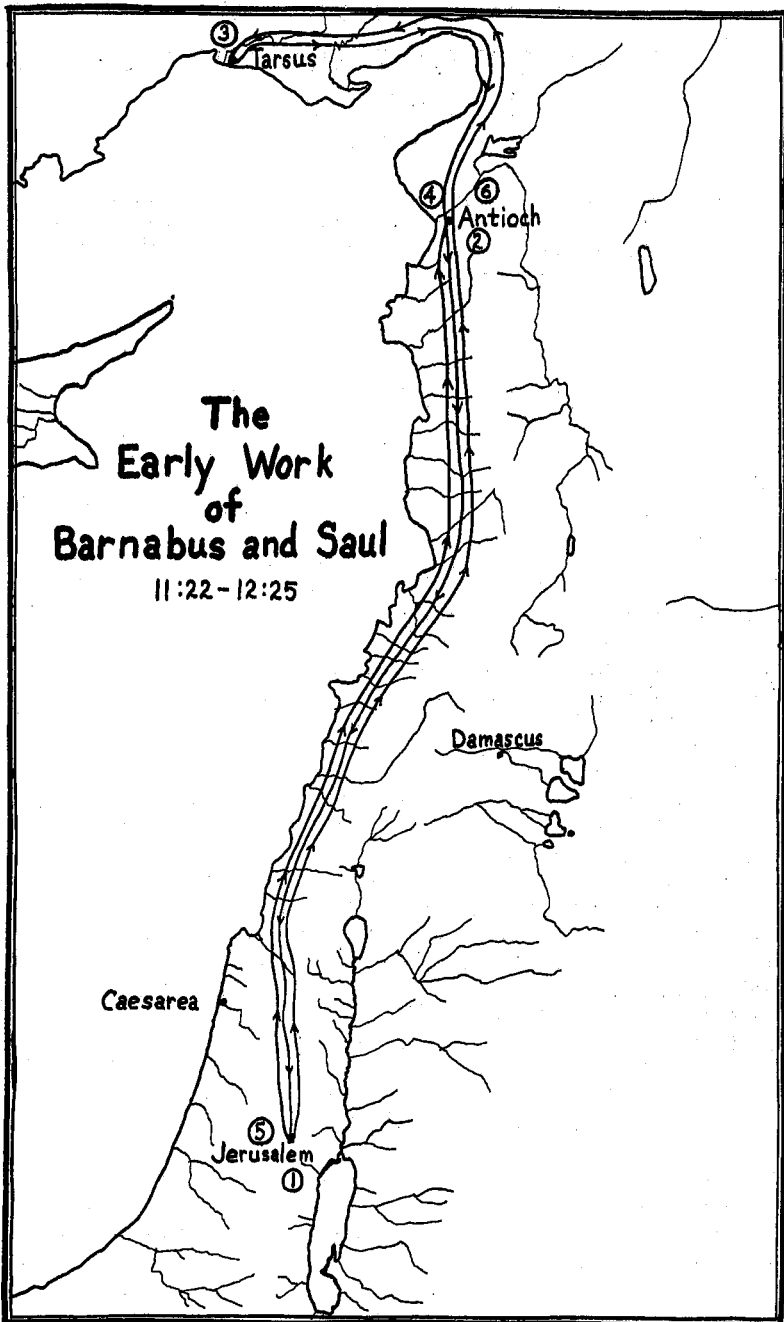
11:19-21

- 19 They therefore that were scattered abroad upon the tribulation that arose about Stephen travelled as far as Phoenicia, and Cyprus, and Antioch, speaking the word to none save only to Jews.
- 20 But there were some of them, men of Cyprus and Cyrene, who, when they were come to Antioch, spake unto the Greeks also, preaching the Lord Jesus.
- 21 And the hand of the Lord was with them: and a great number that believed turned unto the Lord.

19-21 The work has begun. The line has been crossed. The household of the faith has been immeasurably enlarged. What then would be more natural for the historian Luke to record than the continuance of this work among the Gentiles?

The next step in the spread of the Word to "the Greeks also," as the Gentiles were so often called, was not carried out by way of the apostles but rather by "men from Cyprus and Cyrene." If the reader will grant us the privilege we will tell in our own words the way in which this came to pass. The story starts at the time of the stoning of Stephen. As all know, a great tribulation or persecution arose against the whole church at this time. Some of those who were scattered went not only into "Judea and Samaria," as Luke previously stated (8:1), but also into the country of Phoenicia, to the isle of Cyprus and to the metropolis of Antioch. To these places they brought the word of life but they were careful to preach only to the Jews. Then a change takes place. The men from Cyprus and Cyrene came to Antioch and preached the Lord Jesus unto "Greeks also." What prompted these Jews to do this? Could it not have been that the word of the work of Peter among the Gentiles reached these places and when this report came to them, they, in their zeal for the Lord, did not hesitate to take the gospel to the great Gentile center of Antioch? The preaching of Christ attracted much interest, many listened, many believed, and many of those who did believe "turned unto the Lord," i.e. were baptized (cf. McGarvey I pp. 224-225). Truly "the hand of the Lord was with them." Thus, was the first church established among the Gentiles.

358. Show how the persecution of the church by Saul started the work of Christ in Antioch.
359. What change takes place in the preaching of those that were scattered following the conversion of Cornelius?



THE EARLY LABORS OF BARNABAS AND SAUL.

11:22 — 12:25

1. IN JERUSALEM. 11:22.

22 And the report concerning them came to the ears of the church which was in Jerusalem: and they sent forth Barnabas as far as Antioch:

22 News of persons who are attempting to carry forth the same type of work you are is always of great interest. Especially must this have been true in the early years of the church when there were but few Christians, and these were as foreigners in the midst of a strange and hostile country. The report of the work among those of Antioch must have been received with the greatest of interest since it was concerning not only "their common work" but it was carried out among the Gentiles.

The choice of Barnabas as the man to visit the work in Antioch was surely a happy one; Barnabas "the son of exhortation." Barnabas the one who had the faith and courage to believe in and defend one for whom others had only suspicion and unbelief. Barnabas "was a good man and full of the Holy Spirit and faith."

2. AT ANTIOCH. 11:23, 24.

23 who, when he was come, and had seen the grace of God, was glad; and he 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 Spirit and of faith: and much people was added unto the Lord.

23-24 When this man came to Antioch and was introduced to converted men and women of this city, he looked upon them as a manifestation of "the grace of God." His heart was glad, and true to his name and reputation, "he exhorted them all, that with purpose of heart they would cleave unto the Lord."

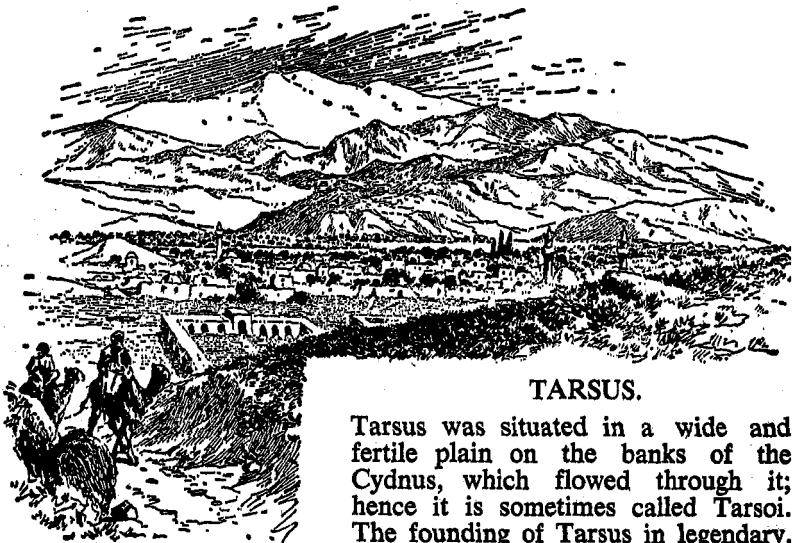
What better word could the preacher give them? This thought is so much neglected today; it is not enough that "a great number turn to the Lord," it is just as important that "they with purpose of heart cleave unto the Lord."

Because of the actions of Barnabas on this occasion, Luke could say of him "for he was a good man, and full of the Holy Spirit and faith." Barnabas was not content only to rejoice in the work of others but to cast himself also into the effort. Through his preaching and

360. Why was the word of the work in Antioch of special interest to those in Jerusalem?

361. Why was the choice of Barnabas a happy one?

362. Why could Luke say of Barnabas "he was a good man, and full of the Holy Spirit?"



TARSUS.

Tarsus was situated in a wide and fertile plain on the banks of the Cydnus, which flowed through it; hence it is sometimes called Tarsoi. The founding of Tarsus in legendary.

The Assyrians entered Cilicia in 850 B.C. and Shalmaneser III's Black Obelisk mentions the taking of the city. It appears in history in Xenophon's time, when it was a city of considerable importance. It was occupied by Cyrus and his troops for twenty days, and given over to plunder.

After Alexander's conquests had swept this way, and the Seleucid kingdom was established at Antioch, Tarsus usually belonged to that kingdom, though for a time it was under the Ptolemies. In the civil wars of Rome it took Caesar's side, and on the occasion of a visit from him had its name changed to Juliopolis. Augustus made it a "free city". It was renowned as a place of education under the early Roman emperors. Strabo compares it in this respect to Athens and Alexandria. Tarsus was also a place of much commerce. Both land and sea highways made Tarsus a famed ancient emporium. The famous Cilician Gates, one of antiquity's most famous mountain passes, is not far distant, and access by water to the Mediterranean made Tarsus a famous trading center. (*Unger's Bible Dictionary* p. 1071.) This was the town where Saul was born; think of his background with its advantages and disadvantages.

exhortation "much people were added unto the Lord." This terminology as we have said elsewhere refers to being added to the body of Christ which is His church, Eph. 1:22, 23 and Acts 5:14.

3. AT TARSUS. 11:25-26a.

- 25 And he went forth to Tarsus to seek for Saul;
 26 and when he had found him, he brought him unto Antioch. And it came to pass, that even for a whole year they were gathered together with the church, and taught much people;

25 It would seem that the number turning to the Lord grew to such proportions that Barnabas needed a helper to assist him in the work of an evangelist. Who would be better qualified to do this work than Saul of Tarsus? Tarsus was but a few miles from Antioch. So it happened that one day Barnabas said goodbye to those of the church in Antioch and traveled as far as Seleucia and sailed across the short span of the Mediterranean to Tarsus. To say what Saul had been doing since he arrived from Jerusalem would be pure speculation, but it does seem highly probable since he was in "the regions of Syria and Cilicia" (Gal. 1:21b), and since churches were established about this time in these parts (Acts 15:41) that he was preaching the Word.

26a Luke suggests that Barnabas encountered a little difficulty in finding Saul. But when he did find him what a meeting there must have been. Saul looked upon the request of Barnabas for help as the will of God. He hence returned with Barnabas to Antioch. The work was increasing so rapidly that Saul and Barnabas continued for a whole year unabated in their work in the church. The efforts of these two men were to teach the people (cf. 13:1). There is a real word of meaning in the work of Barnabas and Saul for the ministers of today.

4. IN ANTIOCH. 11:26b-30.

- 26b and that the disciples were called Christians first in Antioch.
 27 Now in these days there came down prophets from Jerusalem unto Antioch.
 28 And there stood up one of them named Agabus, and signified by the Spirit that there should be a great famine over all the world: which came to pass in the days of Claudius.
 29 And the disciples, every man according to his ability,

363. What was Saul doing in Tarsus?

364. Why was Saul willing to leave Tarsus and go with Barnabas?

365. What was the effort of these two men as they labored for a year in Antioch? (cp. 13:1)

determined to send relief unto the brethren that dwelt in Judaea:

30 which also they did, sending it to the elders by the hand of Barnabas and Saul.

a. The labors of Saul and Barnabas. 26b.

The name "Christian" is here used for the first time. The manner of giving the name has been a subject of no little comment. It is our contention that the use of the Greek word for "called" as used here carries something of the thought of being "divinely called." That is, God Himself selected this new name (Isa. 62:2) and here called the disciples by their new name "Christians." It was especially appropriate at this time for now both Jews and Gentiles made up the church and a name could be given by which all of them could be known.

b. The coming and message of the prophets from Jerusalem. 27-28.

27-28 Following the year's fruitful work in Antioch the brethren were visited by prophets from Jerusalem. They no doubt were glad to receive them but wanted to know the intent of their visit. The Spirit did not delay long in speaking through these men. As they gathered in a group there stood up one of the prophets named Agabus, who, speaking under the impulse of the Holy Spirit, foretold a great famine that was to affect the whole inhabited earth. Luke upon recording this scene sometime later states that this promised famine did occur in the days of Claudius, the emperor of that time.

c. The free will offering taken and sent. 29-30.

29-30 Immediately the brethren in the church in Antioch thought of others. How would they fare? How would others be affected? Always the first to suffer in a famine were "those of Judea." The ground of the province of Judea was not productive enough to supply all the needs of the many who lived within its borders. This was true in natural times; what then would be their condition in a famine? Since the time for the celebration of the feast of the Passover was near many of Judea would be in Jerusalem. They took up a free will offering for the brethren of Judea and sent it by the hands of Barnabas and Saul to the elders of the Jerusalem church. This is the first mention of elders in the church.

366. Who gave the name "Christian" to the disciples? Why especially appropriate at this time?
367. How did Agabus and the others from Jerusalem become prophets?
368. Who was Claudius?
369. Why send relief to "those of Judea" since the famine was to affect the whole world? Why at this particular time?

5. AT JERUSALEM. 12:1-24.**a. Persecution of Herod. James beheaded. Peter imprisoned. 1-5.**

1 Now about that time Herod the king put forth his hands to afflict certain of the church.

2 And he killed James the brother of John with the sword.

3 And when he saw that it pleased the Jews, he proceeded to seize Peter also. And those were the days of unleavened bread.

4 And when he had taken him, he put him in prison, and delivered him to four quaternions of soldiers to guard him; intending after the Passover to bring him forth to the people.

5 Peter therefore was kept in the prison: but prayer was made earnestly of the church unto God for him.

1-2 Luke leaves the narrative of the two on their way to Jerusalem to travel ahead of them in his account to prepare our minds for the condition they were to face when they arrived. It was the year 44 A.D. and Herod Agrippa I had just been given his position as "king" over several provinces. (The history of the Herods as well as the emperors is of real interest and help to our study of this book). The king had the difficult task of ruling as a Roman and pleasing the Jews. The Christians or the church could very effectively serve the purpose of Herod; he could mistreat them and please the Jews and still give no offense to the Roman authorities. His plan of persecution was to "put forth his hands to afflict certain of the church." It would appear that his plan was to strike at the leaders. James, brother of John, was the first victim. There is no trial recorded; a mere statement that James was slain with the sword.

3-5 As we have said, Herod was carrying out this persecution purely for selfish ends, i.e. to seek the favor of the Jews. Since Herod was a part Jewish such actions would suggest to the Jews that he truly was in sympathy with their beliefs. The death of James was heralded as a victory for the cause of Judaism.

When word of this reached the ears of Herod he immediately went a step further and imprisoned Peter. But alas, no swift execution could take place for the "days of unleavened bread" had started. If he were to please the Jews he must lay aside the work of slaughter that they might observe the Passover Feast. There were

370. Why leave the two on the road and take up the narrative of the events in Jerusalem?

371. What was the date of the death of James?

372. How could the Christians serve the purpose of Herod?

373. Give a brief account of the life and rulership of Herod Agrippa I. (It will be necessary to use a Biblical encyclopedia for this answer.)

374. Why could not Peter be put to death as quickly as James?

seven days following the eating of the Passover called the "days of unleavened bread." In these days the spirit of the Passover was still present and they were made a vital part of the feast. (cf. Ex. 12:1-20).

Peter was made especially secure in the king's prison. Herod had doubtless heard of Peter's previous experience in being released from prison; this time he would not escape. To insure this he was delivered to four "quaternions of soldiers" that they might act as his guards. Four men made up a "quaternion."

While these sixteen soldiers set about their task of guarding Peter there were others who were looking to a higher and greater power than Herod the king, for Peter's release. "Prayer was made earnestly of the church unto God for him." This prayer meeting, as we shall observe later, was held in the home of Mary the mother of John Mark. The manner in which the soldiers guarded Peter is described in the sixth verse. It would seem that the four quaternions divided the hours up into four watches of three hours apiece every twelve hours. Thus Peter was chained between two men; half of the quaternion and the other two stood guard at the prison gates.

b. The miraculous release. 6-11.

- 6 And when Herod was about to bring him forth, the same night Peter was sleeping between two soldiers, bound with two chains: and guards before the door kept the prison.
- 7 And behold, an angel of the Lord stood by him, and a light shined in the cell: and he smote Peter on the side, and awoke him, saying, Rise up quickly. And his chains fell off from his hands.
- 8 And the angel said unto him, Gird thyself, and bind on thy sandals. And he did so. And he saith unto him, Cast thy garment about thee, and follow me.
- 9 And he went out, and followed; and he knew not that it was true which was done by the angel, but thought he saw a vision.
- 10 And when they were past the first and the second guard, they came unto the iron gate that leadeth into the city; which opened to them of its own accord: and they went out, and passed on through one street; and straightway the angel departed from him.
- 11 And when Peter was come to himself, he said, Now I know of a truth, that the Lord hath sent forth his angel and delivered me out of the hand of Herod, and from all the expectation of the people of the Jews.

6-8 The seventh day of unleavened bread had come and gone and on the morrow Herod was to bring Peter and mock and slay him
375. How did Herod make special provisions in the imprisonment of Peter?

before the Jews. Peter was not anxious about the outcome of his imprisonment. His mind and heart were at rest in his Saviour. A few hours before he was scheduled to appear before a murderous assassin he was fast asleep in his cell. So sound asleep was the apostle that neither the appearance of the angel nor the light that shone into his cell awakened him.

Evidently the two guards were also fast asleep or else their eyes were holden. It was necessary for the angel to strike Peter to awaken him. When Peter finally opened his eyes he was greeted by his heavenly visitor with the words "Rise up quickly." He immediately arose from his sitting position; as he did, the shackles that had bound him to his guards clattered to the floor.

Peter was following the instructions of the angel with no comment, like one in a trance. We shall see later that he thought it was all a vision. "Gird thyself, and bind on thy sandals." The outer garment or cloak had been laid aside and Peter had removed his sandals to give him greater comfort for the night (what a manifestation of commitment to the will of God.) Peter followed the instruction of the angel. The final words of the angel were "Cast thy garment about thee and follow me." The first portion of this statement is given to emphasize the second. Peter had already dressed, now the angel says in essence "draw your clothes about you to prepare for departure and come follow me."

9-11 As we have said, Peter moved as one in a dream for although he was now following the angel he could not believe it was real. Probably the first and second guards spoken of in verse ten were half of the quaternion that was on guard at the time of the deliverance. The fact that they were enabled to pass by these men without detection bespeaks of some providential intervention. There was yet one barrier between Peter and the streets of Jerusalem, the iron gate which opened into the prison. Upon approaching this gate it began to move of its own accord and opened to permit the two to step out into the street. The angel stayed with Peter until they had "passed on through one street" (probably referring to a walk of a few blocks distance) until they reached the street on which Mary the mother of John Mark lived.

When the angel left him Peter "came to himself." Upon looking

376. Where was the prayer meeting for Peter held?
377. What did the angel do to awaken Peter?
378. How is the faith and humility of Peter shown in his imprisonment?
379. What were the three statements of the angel?
380. What was the first thought of Peter as to this incident?
381. Who are the first and second guards spoken of in verse ten?
382. How could Peter and the angel so easily pass these soldiers?
383. Why did the angel stay with Peter until they had passed on through one street?

about him he could truly lift his face to God and say from his heart "Now I know of a truth, that the Lord hath sent forth His angel and delivered me out of the hand of Herod, and from all the expectation of the people of the Jews." While the angel was with him it seemed too good to be true; but now he could rejoice in an unmistakable reality. The phrase "the people of the Jews" refers to the Sanhedrin or rulers who here are called "the people."

c. At the house of Mary. 12-17.

- 12 And when he had considered the thing, he came to the house of Mary the mother of John whose surname was Mark; where many were gathered together and were praying.
- 13 And when he knocked at the door of the gate, a maid came to answer, named Rhoda.
- 14 And when she knew Peter's voice, she opened not the gate for joy, but ran in, and told that Peter stood before the gate.
- 15 And they said unto her, Thou art mad. But she confidently affirmed that it was even so. And they said, It is his angel.
- 16 But Peter continued knocking: and when they had opened, they saw him, and were amazed.
- 17 But he, beckoning unto them with the hand to hold their peace, declared unto them how the Lord had brought him forth out of the prison. And he said, Tell these things unto James, and to the brethren. And he departed, and went to another place.

12-15 What would Peter do now that he was released? This was the thought of his mind as he stood in the darkness of the narrow streets of Jerusalem. He considered his actions well, as we shall discover in the ensuing events. He made his way to the house of Mary the mother of John Mark. Whether Peter knew or not that a prayer meeting for him was here being conducted we do not know.

It might be well to say a word about the manner of construction of the houses of that day. A proper understanding of verses 13-16 is dependant upon this knowledge. There was erected a high fence or barricade some few yards out from the house. This entirely surrounded the home. In this fence there was built a large gate. This was opened for use at times during the day; it was closed and locked at night. In this gate there was built a small door just large enough for the entrance of one person. It was at this small door

384. Memorize that wonderful statement of praise and thanks found in verse 11.
385. Describe in your own words the construction of the houses in that day and how it relates to the entrance of Peter into the house of Mary, the mother of John Mark.

in the gate that Peter knocked. The young maid named Rhoda who came to answer the knock heard Peter call out; she had probably heard that same voice many times in prayer and preaching and knew it was Peter. She was so full of ecstasy at the thought and sudden realization that she did not even open the gate but immediately turned and ran into the presence of the others bursting with the news that Peter was standing at the gate. We are struck with the strange unbelief of these early Christians, praying for the release of Peter and then when their prayers are answered they are unwilling to accept it. But to pause a moment in reflection will cause us to confess that we, too, have often prayed in the same type of unbelief. Perhaps it was not so much a surprise at the answer to their prayer but rather at the form the answer assumed.

They offered two explanations for the startling message of the maid: (1) "You are mad." She paid no heed to this but only more resolutely stood her ground; (2) "It is his angel." That angels are associated with the lives of the saints can be observed from Heb. 1:14. To this association the disciples alluded in their words to Rhoda.

16-17 All doubt as to who was right was removed when there came echoing into the room the loud knocks and cries of the apostle himself. Imagine the absolute dismay and astonishment that must have filled the hearts of those assembled. They went out to greet him. Before any of them could say a word, Peter motioned for quietness and quickly told them what had happened. He requested that those present tell James and the other brethren of Jerusalem. Then without saying where he was going he departed. The wisdom in not telling where he was going can be immediately seen in view of the fact that soldiers would doubtless be inquiring on the morrow and the disciples could say with all truthfulness that they knew not where he had gone. That James was singled out to be told of the news seems to indicate something of his position of leadership. The account of the 15th chapter and Gal. 1:17, 18 bears this thought out.

d. The death of the soldiers. 18, 19a.

18 Now as soon as it was day there was no small stir among the soldiers, what was become of Peter.

19 And when Herod had sought for him, and found him not, he examined the guards, and commanded that they should be put to death.

386. What was strange about the prayer meeting of these Christians?

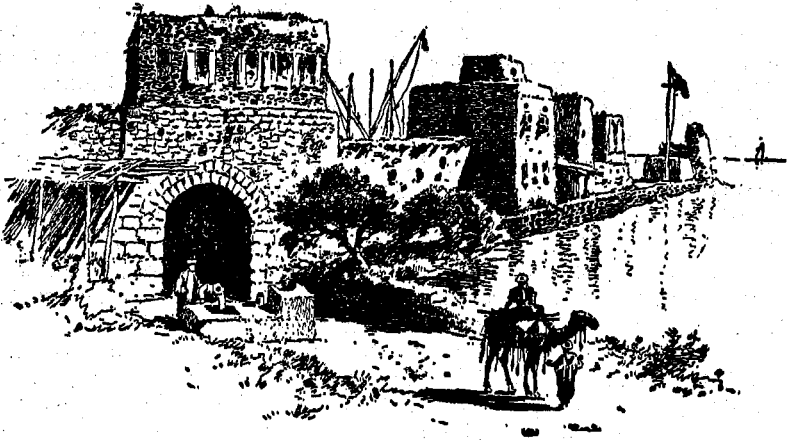
387. What two explanations did the disciples give for Rhoda's strange words? Explain the second.

388. How were they convinced?

399. Show the wisdom in the words of Peter upon this occasion.

390. Why "tell James?"

ACTS MADE ACTUAL



TYRE.

About eighty-five miles north of Joppa and about thirty miles from Nazareth, Tyre stood originally on the mainland. It was strongly fortified and resisted the siege of Nebuchadnezzar for thirteen years. At a later period the city was built on a small island about half a mile from the shore. On the land side it was protected by a wall 150 ft. high. This new city was taken by Alexander the Great, after a siege of seven months.

Hiram, King of Tyre, was closely connected in business affairs, both with David and Solomon. The destruction of Tyre was in fulfillment of prophecy. Ezekiel the twenty-sixth chapter foretells in detail the destruction of the city by Alexander the Great. The present city of Tyre is not on the location of the ancient city. Jesus visited Tyre. (Matt. 15:21) Paul spent seven days here. Acts 21:3-7. A thriving congregation of Christians was established here in the early days of the church. We do not know who established this church. Every Christian in that first day of the church felt his responsibility to the lost world about him. If Christians today would go everywhere preaching the Word then there would be congregations of believers everywhere.

18-19a We can add nothing in this account to the graphic words of Luke: "Now as soon as it was day, there was no small stir among the soldiers, what was become of Peter?" All sixteen soldiers were involved in this incident and many and varied must have been the comments of these men. The guards knew that the inevitable request would be forthcoming. Sure enough it came: "Bring forth the prisoner." But he was not to be found. Where he went was a perfect mystery. If there were no prisoner to stand before Herod then the guards would stand in his place. This they did and after an examination in which they could only plead complete ignorance of the circumstances, they were led off to their death. Such treatment of those that displeased him was usual for Herod Agrippa I.

e. Herod's speech and death at Caesarea. 19b-23.

- 19b And he went down from Judaea to Caesarea, and tarried there.
- 20 Now he was highly displeased with them of Tyre and Sidon: and they came with one accord to him, and, having made Blastus the king's chamberlain their friend, they asked for peace, because their country was fed from the king's country.
- 21 And upon a set day Herod arrayed himself in royal apparel, and sat on the throne, and made an oration unto them.
- 22 And the people shouted, saying, The voice of a god, and not of a man.
- 23 And immediately an angel of the Lord smote him, because he gave not God the glory: and he was eaten of worms, and gave up the ghost.
- 24 But the word of God grew and multiplied.

19b-20 Maybe the humiliating experience with Peter caused Herod to leave the place of his embarrassment to find satisfaction for his deflated ego, in exerting his authority in Caesarea. Whatever were the motives back of his move, we find him in Caesarea. After a short time in the city he called for a trial of certain persons from the cities of Tyre and Sidon. For one reason or another they had incurred the wrath of Herod. It would not do, however, to seek to establish their position for they were greatly dependent upon the country over which the king ruled for their food. All they wanted was peace. These of the two cities of Phoenicia had a plan where-

391. What do you imagine were the words of the soldiers when they discovered the disappearance of Peter?
392. Should the guards have been put to death? Why were they?
393. What occasioned the trip of Herod to Caesarea?

by they could gain the favor and leniency of Herod. They had secured the friendship of the king's "chamberlain" or personal servant.

21-24 The day for the trial arrived and it was to be no common affair. Herod arrayed himself in his most gorgeous of royal apparel. He pompishly took his place upon the judgment seat. Josephus states that the judgment seat or throne was located in the open air and that Herod was dressed in a dazzling silver robe that reflected the light of the sun. The king had prepared an oration to impress the people with his position and authority. As he spoke, if tradition is to be depended upon, the sun reflecting as it was from his silver cloak, there was given to him an appearance almost supernatural. This accounted for the cry of the people "the voice of a god, and not of a man."

It is to be remembered that Herod was partly Jewish. From contemporary history we learn that he was thoroughly acquainted with the laws and customs of the Jews. From this we might say the hand of God was laid upon him because he acted directly against his own knowledge when he accepted the worship of those of Caesarea.

Josephus says that . . . "Herod was seized with violent pains in the bowels, and that he lingered in great torture for five days."

In spite of all these acts of violence and opposition the word found a place in more and more hearts, and each day saw a multiplying of the members of the body of Christ.

6. BACK TO ANTIOCH. 12:25.

25 And Barnabas and Saul returned from Jerusalem, when they had fulfilled their ministrations, taking with them John whose surname was Mark.

A review of the events of Chapter Twelve:

When Barnabas and Saul arrived in Jerusalem to give their offering to those of Judea they found:

1. James had been beheaded. 12:1-2.
2. That Peter was imprisoned. They were present at his divine release. 12:3-17.
3. They no doubt heard of the death of the soldiers. 12:18-19a.
4. They probably also heard of the divine vengeance wrought on Herod. 12-19b-23.
5. They must have rejoiced with the others in the increase of the word. 12:24.

394. Why did the peoples of Tyre and Sidon have Blastus for their friend?

395. Tell of the traditional account of Herod's oration to those of Tyre and Sidon at Caesarea.

396. Why could we say that Herod acted contrary to his own conscience in accepting the worship of the people?

397. What is the meaning of "eaten of worms?"

398. Give from memory the five points in the outline of the twelfth chapter.

ACTS MADE ACTUAL

25 Now of two servants of Christ return to Antioch following the distribution of their bounty; taking the young man John Mark as their attendant. 25.

ACTS TEST OVER CHAPTERS EIGHT THROUGH TWELVE

True or False

8:1-4

- 1. The opposition of the church takes a definite turn in procedure beginning with the eighth chapter.
- 2. This change, or turn, was in the fact that the Sadducees now took up the persecution whereas it was formerly the Pharisees.
- 3. The rulers really had nothing to fear for the Christians would have always been in the minority.
- 4. This persecution was in reality providential.
- 5. The book of Acts teaches us that this persecution was only confined to Jerusalem.
- 6. Christians stayed in Jerusalem; there is record of their secret meetings.
- 7. The death of Stephen was a great defeat.
- 8. Only the men, of course, "went everywhere preaching the word."
- 9. There is a record of the apostles hiding themselves in Jerusalem and thus were they enabled to stay in the city.
- 10. "The word" they preached was preached everywhere.

Multiple Choice

8:5-12

- 1. Philip went to Samaria and proclaimed unto them: 1) The Messiah. 2) The Christ. 3) Jesus.
- 2. This Philip was: 1) Philip the apostle. 2) Philip the deacon. 3) Another Philip.
- 3. Philip became "an evangelist": 1) When he was ordained by the apostles. 2) When he started evangelizing. 3) Later in Caesarea.
- 4. They believed Philip when they saw: 1) His honest face. 2) The signs which he did. 3) His marvelous delivery.
- 5. Among those diseases healed by Philip was: 1) Demon possession. 2) Blindness. 3) Deafness.
- 6. As a result of the preaching and healing there was much: 1) Conviction. 2) Joy. 3) Conflict in the city.
- 7. The record states that Simon amazed the people by: 1) Sorcery. 2) Ventriloquism. 3) Both.
- 8. All believed Simon "from the least to the greatest" because: 1) He had been doing it for such a long time. 2) He was the mayor of the town. 3) He had an agreement with the leaders of the city.

ACTS MADE ACTUAL

9. They believed Philip instead of Simon because: 1) Not all heard Simon. 2) Some never did believe in Simon. 3) Philip's message and work were plainly superior to those of Simon.
10. Acts 8:12 compares very well with: 1) Acts 2:38. 2) 3:19. 3) Mark 16:15-16.

Fill in the Blanks

8:20-25

1. "But Peter said: Thy silver _____ with _____ for thou hast thought to obtain the gift of God with money."
2. "... and pray the Lord, if _____ the thought of thy heart shall be forgiven thee."
3. "For I see that thou art in the _____ of bitterness and the _____ of iniquity."
4. "They therefore, when they had testified and spoken the word of the Lord, returned to _____ and preached the gospel to many _____ of the Samaritans."
5. "But an _____ of the Lord spake unto Philip, saying, Arise, and go toward the south unto the way that goeth down from Jerusalem unto Gaza; the same is _____."
6. And he arose and went; and behold, a man of Ethiopia, a _____ of great authority under Candace, queen of the Ethiopians, who was over all her treasure, who had come to Jerusalem to _____.
7. And Philip ran to him, and _____ him reading Isaiah the prophet . . .
8. He was led as a sheep to the slaughter; and as a lamb before his shearer is dumb, so he opened not his mouth; in his _____ his judgment was taken away.
9. And Philip opened his mouth, and beginning from this scripture, _____ unto him _____.

Find FIVE (5) mistakes in this paragraph.

8:36-40

Philip preached Jesus from Jeremiah the prophet to this negro. Near to where they were was a body of water. The eunuch seeing the water said: "Behold here is water; what doth hinder me to be baptized?" The horses were called to a halt and the eunuch went down alone into the water and was baptized. From this text, apart from the Greek, it would be impossible to determine the mode of baptism. The Azotus mentioned is the city of Gaza on the Philistine plain. Philip was at this time a single man who could make this trip even as Paul did on his missionary journeys.

UNDERLINE the words that are out of place.

(ONE word for each question)

1. Acts 9:1-2. 1) Saul. 2) Slaughter. 3) Synagogues. 4) Share.

ACTS MADE ACTUAL

2. Acts 9:1-2. 1) Letters. 2) Leniency. 3) Lord.
3. Acts 9:3-8a. 1) Damascus. 2) Drew nigh. 3) Dream.
4. Acts 9:3-8a. 1) Light. 2) Letters. 3) Liberty. 4) Lord.
5. Acts 9:3-8a. 1) Goad. 2) Go. 3) Grown.
6. Acts 9:3-8a. 1) Boast. 2) Blind. 3) Broken. 4) Best.
7. Acts 9:3-8a. 1) Conviction. 2) Conversion. 3) Confession.
4) Constitution.
8. Acts 9:8b-22. 1) Ananias. 2) Arise. 3) Amazed. 4) Azotus.
9. Acts 9:8b-22. 1) Saints. 2) Suffer. 3) Share. 4) Seen.
10. Acts 9:8b-22. 1) Brother. 2) Bear. 3) Bring.

Affirm or Deny But Tell the Reason Why

1. I say that Simon the sorcerer was never really converted.
Affirm _____ Deny _____ Tell why.
2. I say the "despised Samaritans" were the first Gentile converts.
Affirm _____ Deny _____ Tell why.
3. I say that Acts 8:14 ("Now when the apostles that were at Jerusalem heard that Samaria had received the word of God, they sent unto them Peter and John") offers proof that Peter was not the first Pope.
Affirm _____ Deny _____ Tell why.
4. I say that Peter and John were sent to Samaria to investigate the faith of these Samaritans and see if they were on the right track.
Affirm _____ Deny _____ Tell why.
5. I say that **nowhere** did **anyone** ever connect prayer with receiving the Holy Spirit.
Affirm _____ Deny _____ Tell why.
6. I say that the Samaritans did not have the Holy Spirit until the apostles arrived and gave it to them.
Affirm _____ Deny _____ Tell why.
7. I say the Holy Spirit "fell on them" in answer to prayer; therefore we should pray the same prayer today.
Affirm _____ Deny _____ Tell why.
8. I say that Luke does not tell us all of the circumstances of Simon's sin and that it must have been a real temptation to Peter and John.
Affirm _____ Deny _____ Tell why.
9. I say that Simon must have thought about it a long while before he made the offer to Peter and John.
Affirm _____ Deny _____ Tell why.
10. I say that Simon would have had to wait until the Lord's day to be forgiven of his sin.
Affirm _____ Deny _____ Tell why.

ACTS MADE ACTUAL

True or False

- 1. The main thought of Luke in the whole work of Peter was the conversion of Cornelius.
- 2. The eunuch was the first Gentile convert to Christianity.
- 3. Cornelius could have been saved if he had continued in his devoutness.
- 4. Cornelius could have been saved in his pious life if he had had no opportunity to hear of Christ.
- 5. Cornelius was an officer of the Roman army maintained in Caesarea to keep law and order.
- 6. Cornelius probably obtained his faith through association with the Jews.
- 7. No worship to Jehovah in sincerity goes unrewarded.
- 8. Cornelius observed the Jewish hours of prayer.
- 9. The angel appeared at noon. (To Cornelius).
- 10. The angel had on garments that literally shone with their brightness.
- 11. Cornelius did not connect the angel with God.
- 12. The angel told Cornelius to go himself to Joppa and fetch Simon Peter.
- 13. The angel did not want Cornelius to mix Simon the apostle with Simon the tanner, so he told him of his surname.
- 14. Cornelius sent only his two household servants as messengers to fetch Peter.
- 15. It was at the sixth hour when the men arrived in Joppa.
- 16. The vision of Peter and Cornelius were exactly similar.
- 17. To have eaten what was in the sheet would have been to sin, so thought Peter.
- 18. The sheet descended from heaven three times.
- 19. The men from Cornelius stood outside of the house at the outer gate and called in to inquire of the whereabouts of Simon Peter.
- 20. The messengers of Cornelius made the mission of Peter as attractive to the Jewish mind as possible.

Multiple Choice

1. Who heard the news of Peter's work in Caesarea? 1) The apostles and disciples. 2) The apostles and brethren. 3) The apostles and brethren of Judea.
2. Who contended with Peter at Jerusalem? 1) The apostles. 2) The disciples. 3) They of the circumcision.

ACTS MADE ACTUAL

3. Their charge was: 1) He should not have preached to them. 2) Eaten with them. 3) Baptized them.
4. To convince these of Jerusalem, Peter: 1) Preached the gospel to them. 2) Only told them of the baptism of the Holy Spirit. 3) Told them how the Lord had convinced him.
5. Peter concluded his defense by saying: The Holy Spirit had: 1) Overcome them. 2) Fallen on them as on us in the beginning. 3) filled them.
6. Peter's closing words were that: 1) God had accepted the Gentiles in that He had given them the Holy Spirit. 2) The Gentiles had been baptized in the Holy Spirit, therefore were saved and accepted. 3) God had plainly told him to accept these unclean persons.
7. "Now when they heard these things they": 1) Praised the Lord. 2) Contended with Peter. 3) Held their peace and glorified the Lord.

The Labors of the Early Disciples

11:19-21

Here is a list of TEN words. Pick out the ones that DO NOT relate to this section. The correct ones are all QUOTED from the text.

1. Scattered.
2. Scarcely.
3. Tribulation.
4. Tremble.
5. Traveled.
6. Cyprus.
7. Syria.
8. Phoenicia.
9. Antioch.
10. Hebrews.

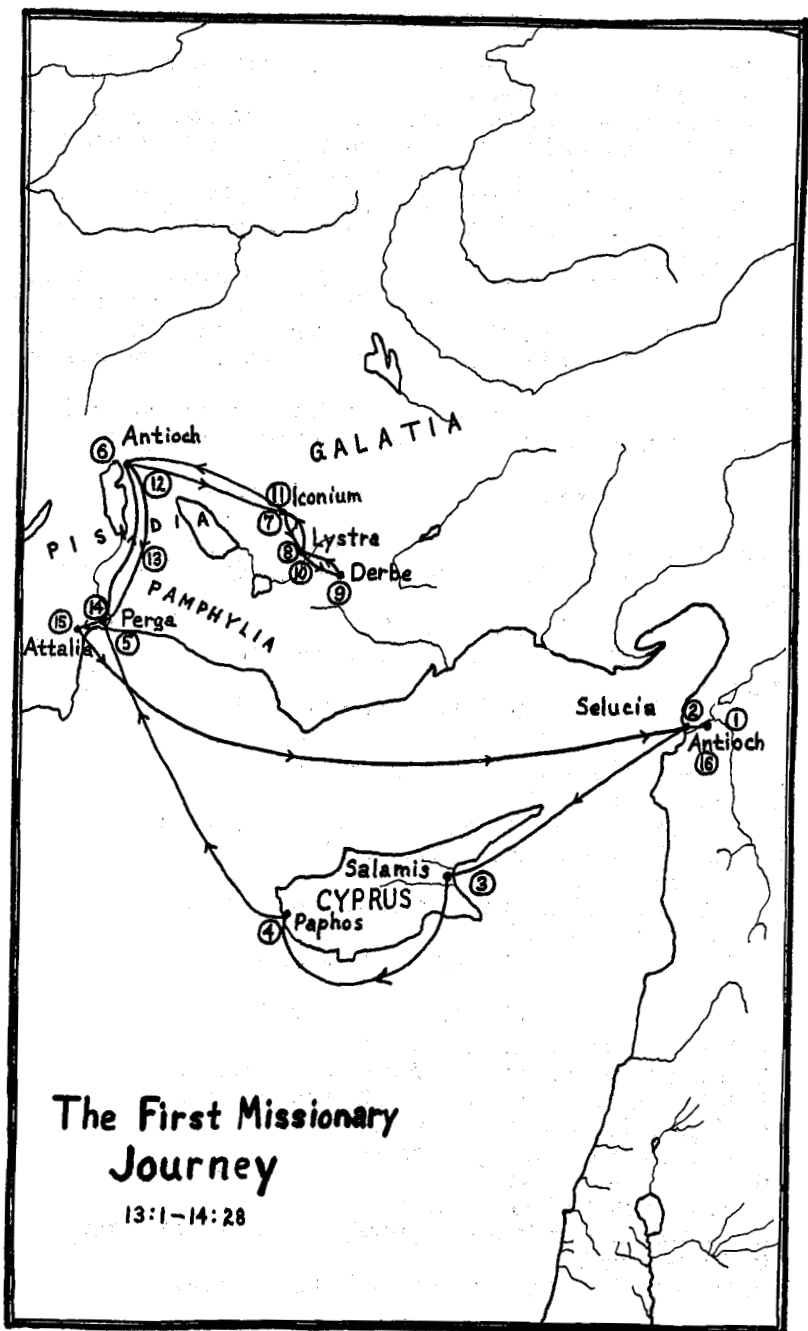
Who's Who in 11:22—12:25.

Who said the following?

1. "There will be a famine over all the world."
2. "Rise up quickly."
3. "Now I know of a truth, that the Lord hath sent forth his angel. . ."
4. "Peter is standing before the gate."
5. "It is his angel."
6. "Tell these things unto James and the brethren."
7. "Put them to death."
8. "The voice of a god, and not of a man."

Who did the following?

1. Went to seek for Saul in Tarsus.
2. Became the ones who were first called "Christians."
3. Killed James the brother of John with a sword.
4. Slept at the door of the prison.
5. Had a prayer meeting in her house.
6. Went down to Caesarea.
7. Made "Blastus" their friend.
8. Arrayed himself in royal apparel, and sat on the throne.
9. Smote Herod.
10. Went back to Antioch with Paul and Barnabas.



The First Missionary Journey

13:1-14:28