

ACTS OF THE APOSTLES

Lesson 10

Acts 11:19-30

This week our study in Acts takes us to the model church, the church at Antioch. My prayer this week is that you will come to learn more about the church at Antioch than you have known before; and from that knowledge, I pray that you will find ways within your own local congregation to apply the principles Christ teaches us through this church's testimony.

What was it like then to be a Christian, what did it mean, what was the "gospel message" that was proclaimed then, and how did the local church react to it. These are all questions that will be answered in the course of this lesson incorporating the study of Acts 11:19-30.

So let's get started, and see what the testimony of the church at Antioch can teach us about responsibilities as followers of Christ, and as members of a local congregation.

For our study, read Acts Chapters 11:19-30 and answer the following:

1. When the Jewish converts fled Jerusalem after the stoning of Stephen, who did they take the Gospel message to? (Acts 11:19)
2. Cyprus, Cyrene, and Antioch are three locations mentioned in the scripture passages. Can you identify what country/countries these locations equate to today?
3. Cyrenians are mentioned in several places in the New Testament. Read the following verses and note what was significant about each Cyrenian.
 - a. Luke 23:26
 - b. Acts 2:10
 - c. Acts 13:1-3
4. When these converts from Cyrene and Cyprus came to Antioch, who did they proclaim the Gospel message to?
5. What was the Gospel that they proclaimed to the early church, and how would it differ from ours today? (see Acts 11:20)
6. How did the membership grow at Antioch? What program did they institute that generated such a large growth in membership? How many ministry committees, business meetings, staff members and musicians does it say it took to add all those members ... or was it something else? What does it tell us in Acts 11:21?

7. According to verses 20 and 21, what can we determine is the basis for church growth?
8. What role does Barnabas play in the growth and success of the church at Antioch?
9. Barnabas sees the need for encouragement, leadership, and equipping of the new church - a Greek-speaking one with both Jew and Gentile membership. Who does he go and recruit to come and help him train and encourage the members? (Acts 11:25-26)
10. What does Isaiah 62:2 and 65:15 have in common with the church at Antioch - especially as described in Acts 11:26?
11. What is described in Acts 11:27-28?
12. When the church in Antioch realizes that there is going to be a famine, and they realize the impact that it will have on the church in Jerusalem, what do they do? (Acts 11:29-30)
13. While at Antioch, Peter comes to visit and see firsthand all that is happening in the church there. He once again meets with Paul. How did Paul react to Peter's visit to Antioch? Why was he so upset? (Galatians 2:11-14)
14. Did Antioch play a role in Paul's missionary journeys? (see verses below and answer)
 - a. Acts 14:27
 - b. Acts 18:22

From our previous study of Dorcas and her ministry to the poor and needy, we now see in this lesson a model church which steadfastly proclaims that Jesus is the Messiah, cares for their fellow workers in far away Jerusalem (because they know that a famine is coming), and ministers to the needs of peoples from many different countries and cultural backgrounds. Furthermore, everyone is treated equally. No one is treated differently as a result of their education, wealth, family background or testimony.

Antioch also modeled discipleship training, mentoring, missionary outreach and the gift of encouragement – all of which resulted in unity and a common sense of purpose and mission. This resulted in God adding great numbers to their local congregation and using them as a spring board for Paul's many missionary journeys.

What an example this church set for all of us. Oh, that we could follow in their footsteps!

Yours in Christ,

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