Acts 9-11

Ch 9

Theme – The conversion of Saul on the road to Damascus; Saul confronted with the reality that he to persecute Christians is to really persecute the Lord Jesus; blinded, Saul is lead into Damascus where he fasts from food/ water & prays for 3 days; Ananias told to go to Saul & lay hands on him, but Ananias has concerns; Lord repeats the command & expresses that Saul is a chosen instrument of the Lord for a specific purpose (will be echoed in Acts 10:41 when Peter explains that the Apostles were chosen to be witnesses of the Lord Jesus); Ananias is faithful & scales fall from the eyes of Saul; Saul is immediately baptized (outward sign of the inward change); Saul preaches in Damascus and people are shocked by the radical change; after "many days" (possible reference to the 3 yrs in Arabia in Gal 1:17), Saul is in Damascus & there is a plot to kill him; Saul is smuggled out of Damascus in a basket through a hole in the wall; Saul goes to Jerusalem, but is distrusted by the Christians; Barnabas stands by Saul & puts his reputation on the line for Saul; with Barnabas's endorsement, Saul is able to associate freely with the Christians in the Jerusalem church; Saul speaks out boldly in the name of Jesus; 2nd plot to kill Saul, now in Jerusalem; Saul is sent to Tarsus (his hometown in modern day Turkey); church in Israel has a time of peace and continue in the fear of the Lord & comfort of the Holy Spirit; Peter's ministry outside of Jerusalem; the healing of Aeneas in Lydda; Tabitha (Dorcas in Greek) is raised from the dead on Joppa, Peter stays in Joppa for a while in the house of Simon the tanner

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Ch 10

Theme – Cornelius, a God-fearer (Gentile who fears God, but hasn't converted to Judaism) & a centurion receives a vision of an angel; Cornelius is given very specific instructions on who to seek & where to find him ("find Simon called Peter at Simon the tanner's house by the sea"); Cornelius immediately obeys; Peter is praying around lunch time & getting hungry; while in a trance, Peter sees a vision of a sheet descending with clean & unclean animals on it; Peter told to kill & eat, but Peter refuses on the basis of food cleanliness per the Mosaic Law; Peter told not to declare unclean/ unholy/ common/ defiled what God has made clean; vision happens three times (three witnesses: Deut 19:15); while Peter is pondering the vision, Gentile messengers arrive; Holy Spirit encourages Peter & instructs him to go with them; Peter and six additional Jewish Christian witnesses (total of 7 witnesses) go to Cornelius's house; Cornelius bows to Peter in worship, but Peter corrects him ("I am just a man"- v26); Cornelius explains the vision & instructions he received; Peter understands the meaning of the vision Peter received & declares that God does not show partiality, but invites & receives everyone who's heart is for Him (Jn 6:37- in no wise cast out); Peter presents the Gospel & speaks about the Lord Jesus; before Peter finishes the sermon, the Baptism of the Holy Spirit falls upon the Gentiles who believe; the Jewish

Christians were amazed that the door of the Gospel is open to the Gentiles; Peter declares that since they received the greater Baptism (of the Holy Spirit), how can we withhold the lesser baptism (of water); after baptizing the Gentile believers with water, Peter remains with them for a few days

Ch 11

Theme – Word reaches the Jewish Christians in Jerusalem of what happened at Cornelius's house & they confront Peter; Note: Peter is confronted for eating w/ Gentiles, not preaching Gospel to them (eating with Gentiles conveys acceptance & fellowship); Peter explains receiving the vision about not calling unclean what God has made clean, about the Holy Spirit telling Peter to go, & about the vision Cornelius received from God (note that Cornelius is not identified by name); Peter describes how the Holy Spirit fell upon the Gentiles before Peter completed the Gospel presentation (indicating that the Gentiles were not mimicking something Peter said); Peter understood that this is in keeping with Acts 1:5 & that the Lord said His disciples would be baptized w/ the Holy Spirit; "if this is a work of God, who was I to stand in His way"- v17 (application of Gamaliel's warning to the Sanhedrin in Acts 5:39); Jewish Christians glorify God for saving the Gentiles too (without their conversion to Judaism); some churches only intentionally preached to the Jewish people, but church at Antioch intentionally preached the Gospel to all & God powerfully blessed & grew them; Jerusalem church sends Barnabas to Antioch church; Barnabas rejoices to see anyone/ everyone saved; Barnabas encourages the Antioch church to remain faithful & church grows considerable; likely due to the growth, Barnabas finds Saul in nearby Tarsus (Antioch is along Syrian coast & Tarsus along southern coast of modern day Turkey); Note: Saul had been in Tarsus for about 5-8 years, since Acts 9:30; Saul serves alongside Barnabas at Antioch church for one year; Jerusalem church sends some prophets to Antioch church; one prophet, Agabus, prophesies a great famine was coming (takes place in 45 AD); likely because Jerusalem church is so vulnerable, Antioch Church collects freewill offers for the saints in Jerusalem church; benevolence is taken to Jerusalem by Barnabas & Saul (showing how trusted they were)