

Acts 11:1-18

Now the apostles
and the brothers and sisters
who were in Judea
heard

that the gentiles
had also accepted
the word of God.

² So when Peter
went up to Jerusalem,
the circumcised believers
criticized him,

³ saying,
“Why did you go
to uncircumcised men
and eat with them?”

⁴ Then Peter
began
to explain it
to them,
step by step,
saying,

⁵ “I was in the city of Joppa
praying,
and in a trance
I saw a vision.

There was something
like a large sheet
coming down
from heaven,

being lowered
by its four corners,
and it came close to me.

⁶ As I looked at it
closely
I saw
four-footed animals,
beasts of prey,
reptiles,
and birds of the air.

⁷ I also heard a voice
saying to me,

‘Get up,
Peter;
kill and eat.’

⁸ But I replied,
‘By no means, Lord,
for nothing
profane or unclean
has ever
entered my mouth.’

⁹ But a second time
the voice answered from heaven,

'What God has made clean,
you must not call profane.'

¹⁰ This happened three times;
then everything was pulled up again
to heaven.

¹¹ At that very moment
three men,
sent to me from Caesarea,
arrived at the house
where we were.

¹² The Spirit told me
to go with them
and not to make a distinction
between them and us.

These six brothers
also accompanied me,
and we entered the man's house.

¹³ He told us
how he had seen the angel
standing in his house
and saying,

'Send to Joppa and bring Simon,
who is called Peter;

¹⁴ he will give you a message
by which you
and your entire household
will be saved.'

¹⁵ And as I began to speak,
the Holy Spirit fell upon them
just as it had upon us
at the beginning.

¹⁶ And I remembered
the word of the Lord,
how he had said,

'John baptized
with water,
but you will be baptized
with the Holy Spirit.'

¹⁷ If then God gave them
the same gift that he gave us
when we believed
in the Lord Jesus Christ,
who was I
that I could hinder God?"

¹⁸ When they heard this,
they were silenced.

And they praised God,
saying,

"Then God has given
even to the gentiles
the repentance
that leads to life."

Revelation 21:1-6

Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth,
for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away,
and the sea was no more.

² And I saw the holy city,
the new Jerusalem,
coming down out of heaven from God,
prepared as a bride adorned for her husband.

³ And I heard a loud voice
from the throne
saying,

"See,
the home of God
is among mortals.

He will dwell with them;
they will be his peoples,

and God himself
will be with them
and be their God;

⁴ he will wipe
every tear from their eyes.

Death
will be no more;
mourning
and crying
and pain
will be no more,

for^[a] the first things
have passed away."

⁵ And the one
who was seated
on the throne
said,

"See,
I am making
all things new."

Also he said,
"Write this,
for these words
are trustworthy and true."

⁶ Then he said to me,
"It is done!
I am the Alpha and the Omega,
the Beginning and the End.

To the thirsty
I will give water
as a gift
from the spring
of the water of life.

⁷ *Those who conquer
will inherit these things,
and I will be their God,
and they will be my children.*

⁸ *But as for the cowardly, the faithless,
the polluted, the murderers,
the sexually immoral,
the sorcerers, the idolaters,
and all liars,
their place will be in the lake
that burns with fire and sulfur,
which is the second death."*

John 13:31-35

³¹ When he had gone out,

Jesus said,

"Now the Son of Man has been glorified,
and God has been glorified in him.

³² If God has been glorified in him,
God will also glorify him in himself
and will glorify him at once.

³³ Little children,
I am with you
only a little longer.

You will look for me,
and as I said to the Jews [sic *Judaioi*]
so now I say to you,

'Where I am going,
you cannot come.'

³⁴ I give you a new commandment,
that you love one another.

Just as I have loved you,
you also should love one another.

³⁵ By this everyone will know
that you are my disciples,
if you have love for one another."

Reading Acts This Week

This fencepost
is Acts' version of Peter's change,

Preparing for reconciliation
with Paul's movement
In relation to Gentiles
and *kasrut*, 'keeping kosher'

We're heading toward Acts 15
Jerusalem conference,
The negotiated resolution
between Peter and Paul
To save face,
Peter changes
by trance & vision
first

The standard UCC sermon
is about 'inclusiveness'
With casual anti-judaism tropes about *kasrut*
But our own subculture
has pretty narrow norms!

Notes from 9 years ago, 2016,
Confessing I'm prejudiced, bigoted:

<http://www.billbrucewords.com/2016/04/easter-changes-prejudices.html>

Reading Revelation This Week

We leap to another funeral text fencepost –
New heaven and earth, city, spring of water –
Omitting the awkward next verses of exclusivity

What's your vision of the moment of death, and beyond?
What's the point of the lake of fire, the second death?
Is it too soon, or too late, to talk about all that?

Here are selections from my old notes:

<http://www.billbrucewords.com/2001/05/city-without-church.html>

<http://www.billbrucewords.com/2004/05/gods-city-and-ours.html>

<http://www.billbrucewords.com/2010/03/obsolescent.html>

<http://www.billbrucewords.com/2013/04/god-with-us.html>

<http://www.billbrucewords.com/2019/05/not-yet.html>

Next Sunday, our Affirming Team offers another session,
Exploring how we read texts like verse 8
When they are weaponized by homophobia

Our greater challenge
Beyond rejecting the crude bigotry
Is to reclaim an affirmative vision of these exclusions!

Reading the Gospel This Week

John's got Judas leaving the room for this –
The passive and active 'glorified', *doxa* like doxology
Participation for some in 'love one another'
(and the implicit obverse, 'hate the world')

Yet again, I'm flagging *Judaïos* in v.33
And noting that if they can't come with Jesus,
Neither can the disciples!

How does the ugly 'glorification' of Jesus
Drive the 'love another'
And do we claim either very deeply?

Some of my notes under Revelation this week
Purport to reflect this gospel too
But I'd say weakly

I'll look forward to your reading –
You've practised more than preached it,
As I said 3 years ago:

[http://www.billbrucewords.com/2022/05/practising-christians.ht
ml](http://www.billbrucewords.com/2022/05/practising-christians.html)