Acts 11:1-18

No Partiality...

- o Obeying the Lord...
 - At this point in the book of Acts everyone in the church was Jewish...
 - The assumption was to be saved someone first had to become part of Israel...
 - Having been given a VISION from the LORD instructed by the HOLY spirit to go Acts 10:20
 - Peter reluctantly left Joppa from Caesarea but brought brothers from the CHURCH with him...
 - When he arrived at the house of Cornelius it was PACKED with people...
 - Peter kept saying [imperfect] it was NOT lawful for a JEW to enter the house of a GENTILE...
 - But God had told him NOT to call anyone UNCLEAN!
- Gentiles Pentecost...
 - When he heard the story of the ANGEL who visited CORNELIUS...
 - He made realized the God has NO partiality but that ANYONE could be saved...
 - So he gave the GOSPEL [death and resurrection of Jesus] and the CHOICE...
 - God would JUDGE the LIVING and the DEAD [spiritually] and only FAITH in Jesus could save...
 - While he was still PREACHING [ῥῆμα] they heard the WORD [λόγος]
 - And the HOLY Spirit fell upon them a Gentile PENTECOST...
 - Therefore Peter commanded that they be BAPTIZED in the name of Jesus!

• 1^{st} - Not happy... vs. 1-3

- 1^{st} Breaking the rule... vs. 1
 - Rumors...
 - Now the apostles and brethren who were in Judea heard.
 - The Gentiles had also received the word of God!
 - It did NOT take long for the news to SPREAD [$\kappa\alpha\tau\dot{\alpha}$] about GENTILES being baptized...
 - And all the APOSTLES and BROTHERS in Judea heard about it...
 - Because it should come as no SURPRISE that BAD news travels VERY fast!
 - Ever notice how GOSSIP always seems to be about BAD things...
 - You will never see people whispering in corners about how GREAT someone is...
 - But the moment someone makes a MISTAKE it spreads like WILD fire!
 - People GOSSIP about others to make themselves look better...
 - Thinking they are more righteous because at least they did NOT to that...
 - But we must remember the word for GOSSIP comes from the word DEVIL [διάβολος]
 - So when we go around spreading RUMORS we are working for the ENEMY...
 - Because the only thing GOSSIP does is cause DIVISION!
 - Leviticus 19:16 "Do not spread... gossip among your people." [NLT]
 - Religion...
 - The question must be asked why was this BAD news...
 - We know that GENTILES getting saved was a reason to REJOICE...
 - But that was NOT the case for the JEWS in the early church [THREE reasons]
 - FIRST their RELIGION led them to believe they should be SEPARATE...
 - Everything about how they lived their lives made them DIFFERENT from GENTILES!
 - They could NOT work on SATURDAYS [sabbath] **Exodus 20:8**
 - They could NOT eat certain FOODS [pork shrimp] Leviticus 11

- They were NOT allowed to marry outsiders [gentiles] **Deuteronomy 7:3**
- God did all of this to make them HOLY [set apart] as an EXAMPLE to the world....
- But the Jews used these LAWS to create a WALL of separation between them and the world!
- History...
 - SECOND the GENTILES had NOT been kind to Jews!
 - Going all the way back to EGYPT the GENTILES had enslaved the JEWS Exodus 1:11
 - They were SCATTERED by the ASSYRIANS [diaspora] II Kings 17:6
 - Carried into CAPTIVITY [and the temple destroyed] by the BABYLONIANS Jeremiah 25:11
 - Faced GENOCIDE at the hands of the PERSIANS [Haman] Esther 3:13
 - Had their temple DESECRATED by the GRECIANS [Antiochus] Daniel 11:31
 - And were currently under the OCCUPATION of the ROMAN empire...
 - With a HISTORY like that there was understandable MISTRUST between the TWO peoples!
- Faith...
 - THIRD the JEW believed [rightly so] they had the TRUTH...
 - They were the CHOSEN people of God who had been given the WORD of God!
 - **Deuteronomy 7:6** "You are a holy people to the LORD your God. The LORD your God has chosen you to be a people for Himself a special treasure above all the peoples on the face of the earth."
 - But rather than seeing this as an opportunity to be an EXAMPLE to others...
 - The Jews [because of their Religion and History] became RECLUSIVE...
 - They saw their position as the CHOSEN people as EXCLUSIVE...
 - And therefore came to believe that God did NOT want to save GENTILES...
 - Because it THREATENED their RELIGION HISTORY and their understanding of FAITH!
- o 2nd The Attack... vs. 2
 - The Circumcision...
 - When Peter came up to Jerusalem those of the circumcision contended with him!
 - In light of their BIAS and dislike of the GENTILES...
 - WHEN [ὅτε] Peter came back to Jerusalem [you know he was dreading coming home]
 - Immediately he faced constant [imperfect] ATTACK [διακρίνω] from the CIRCUMCISION...
 - ATTACK [διακρίνω] thorough [διά] condemnation [κρίνω]!
 - The promise...
 - It is worth noting that those who ATTACKED were called the CIRCUMCISION...
 - When Abraham was NINETY years old God gave him a PROMISE...
 - He would be the FATHER of MANY nations [Isaac had NOT been born] **Genesis 17:4**
 - The PROOF of that PROMISE was the covenant of CIRCUMCISION...
 - It was meant to show how the JEWS were NOT to follow the FLESH [sinful nature]
 - From then on every JEW would be circumcised on the EIGHTH day **Genesis 17:12**
 - This became the SYMBOL for the JEWS of who were allowed to be SAVED!
 - The Symbol...
 - But CIRCUMCISION was never meant to SAVE anyone...
 - There is NO ritual [baptism] or RELIGION that can get us to heaven...
 - It was meant to be a SYMBOL of cutting off our sinful life!
 - There is a reason why sins bother us NOW when it did NOT used to...
 - It used to be if we lied or cheated or were mean to others it did NOT matter...
 - Yet now these things bother us because we have been CIRCUMCISED in our heart...

- That change of heart CIRCUMCISION of the heart is the SIGN that we are SAVED!
- **Colossians 2:11** "When you came to Christ you were circumcised but not by a physical procedure. Christ performed a spiritual circumcision the cutting away of your sinful nature." [NLT]
- 3^{rd} The Complaint... vs. 3
 - Eating...
 - Saying: You went in to uncircumcised men and ate with them!
 - The one COMPLAINT of the CIRCUMCISION [Jews] had of Peter...
 - He ATE [aorist] with men who are [present] NOT circumcised...
 - Although there is NO law in the Bible that forbids eating with GENTILES...
 - The MISHNAH [oral teachings] does state it is forbidden [bishul akum]
 - Because GENTILES might use non-KOSHER ingredients [unclean animals]
 - And the GENTILES themselves were considered UNCLEAN!
 - The Law called the Jews to be HOLY separate from sinners **Leviticus 19:2**
 - And in those days everyone would eat from a COMMON bowl...
 - There were NO rules about DOUBLE dipping so you really shared the meal...
 - So in the EYES of the JEWS Peter had become ONE with UNCLEAN gentiles...
 - But their RULES [Mishnah] kept them SEPARATED rather than being an EXAMPLE!
 - Variety...
 - Sadly many still have this sense of SEPARATION today...
 - People cling to their DENOMINATION and decry everyone else as WRONG...
 - Yet God has allowed there to be many DENOMINATIONS within His Church...
 - Each with a slightly different FLAVOR all with the same Lord...
 - The reason is so that the church can minister to all different kinds of people!
 - I Corinthians 9:22 "All things to all men that I might by all means save some."
 - Christ is NOT divided so therefore the Church of Christ should NOT be divided...
 - There is only ONE Jesus ONE cross ONE salvation ONE heaven Ephesians 4:4-6
 - We are going to spend eternity together we should start getting along now!
 - Maturity...
 - **I Corinthians 3:4** "When one of you says I am a follower of Paul and another says I follow Apollos are you not acting just like people of the world?" [NLT]
 - People in the world love to DIVIDE they have their groups...
 - In the world it is all about our family our town our county!
 - When people argue over being Catholic Baptist [religions]
 - They reveal they are either NOT saved or have NEVER grown in the Lord...
 - Because they are acting NO differently than BEFORE they knew Jesus...
 - There is nothing wrong with enjoying a particular CHURCH...
 - The problem comes when we make that CHURCH our identity...
 - It causes division within the BODY of Christ hindering the power of the Gospel...
 - We wonder why more people do NOT believe in Jesus why churches are EMPTY...
 - It is because the CHURCH of God is DIVIDED busy fighting itself...
 - No wonder God included this story THREE times in the Bible [important]
 - Just like the Jews we love to DIVIDE and God has called us to break down the walls!
 - John 13:35 "All will know you are My disciples if you have love for one another."
- 2^{ND} Plan of God... vs. 4-14
 - o 1st The Explanation... vs. 4

- But Peter explained it to them in order from the beginning!
- [δè] But Peter did NOT argue or debate...
- Instead he took the time to EXPLAIN to them WHY he ate with GENTILES...
- He did so by CALMLY going back to the BEGINNING [ἄρχομαι] of the story!
- When people ATTACK us it is only natural to become DEFENSIVE...
- We want to react in KIND and ATTACK back because we are UPSET...
- In the MOMENT we often are full of EMOTION and need to COOL down before we speak...
- Because if we let HURTFUL words come out they will NOT help ...
- But if we respond instead in LOVE then we will bring HEALING!
- Proverbs 15:1 "A soft answer turns away wrath BUT a harsh word stirs up anger."
- o 2^{nd} The Vision... vs. 5-10
 - Details... vs. 5
 - I was in the city of Joppa praying and in a trance I saw a vision.
 - An object descending like a great sheet let down from heaven by four corners it came to me!
 - As Peter begins to recount the EVENTS he does alter a few details...
 - While he EMPHASIZED that he was PRAYING [seeking God]
 - And in response God gave him a VISION from the [τοῦ] HEAVEN [οὐρανοῦ]
 - He conveniently leaves out the part where he was HUNGRY Acts 10:10
 - I can image this was to remove any questions about the validity of his VISION...
 - Seeing FOOD when you are HUNGRY might lead some to question what he saw!
 - Unclean... vs. 6-8
 - When I observed it intently and considered.
 - I saw four-footed animals of the earth wild beasts creeping things and birds of the air.
 - And I heard a voice saying to me: Rise Peter kill and eat.
 - But I said: Not so Lord! For nothing common or unclean has at any time entered my mouth!
 - As Peter was FOCUSED [ἀτενίζω] on the sheet...
 - He SAW that it was filled out ALL kinds of ANIMALS [clean and unclean]
 - As he tried [imperfect] to FIGURE out [$\kappa\alpha\tau\alpha\nu\circ\epsilon\omega$] what it meant [it confused him]
 - A voice commanded [imperative] him to KILL and EAT!
 - No doubt in the story the CIRCUMCISION were looking very UPSET...
 - So Peter makes sure to emphasize he had the right JEWISH response...
 - He told the Lord [κύριος] he could NEVER [μηδαμ do that...
 - ullet Because nothing COMMON [κοινός] or UNCLEAN [ἀκάθαρτος] had EVER entered his mouth!
 - Not common... vs. 9-10
 - But the voice answered me again from heaven:
 - What God has cleansed you must not call common.
 - Now this was done three times and all were drawn up again into heaven!
 - The same voice from HEAVEN [the Lord] answered Peter...
 - ullet What God [θεός] has [indicative] CLEANSED [καθαρίζω] is NOT common [κοινός]
 - This was done THREE times before the sheet was taken back up into heaven...
 - In Jewish tradition THREE is a very important number...
 - It represented an ABSOLUTE confirmation of the TRUTH!
 - **Deuteronomy 19:15** "By the mouth of... three witnesses the matter shall be established."
 - I have to wonder if telling the story again further confirmed it for Peter...
 - As he retold the story of what God had done it established it in his heart!

- There is a benefit to sharing with others what God has shown us...
- As we recount His Word it gives us a change to remember and reflect...
- We get to see things from a different perspective [looking back]
- And that often strengthens our resolve makes us confident in the Lord!
- **Psalm 105:5** "Remember His marvelous works which He has done."
- o 3^{rd} Doubt nothing... vs. 11-12
 - Three men... vs. 11
 - At that very moment three men stood before the house where I was.
 - Having been sent to me from Caesarea the Spirit told me to go with them doubting nothing!
 - And [καί] IMMEDIATELY [ἐξαυτῆς] behold [ἰδού]
 - Peter did NOT want the CIRCUMCISION to miss the timing [not a coincidence]
 - THREE men stood at the house sent from Caesarea to find HIM [με]
 - And $[\delta \epsilon]$ the SPIRIT then spoke to Peter GO with them...
 - He was NOT to DOUBT [διακρίνω] why they had COME [ἦλθον]!
 - There is a SUBTLE change here in the STORY...
 - Where the SPIRIT commanded [imperative] Peter to GO [πορεύω] Acts 10:20
 - Peter here tells us the SPIRIT said [no command] to GO [συνέρχομαι]
 - GO [συνέρχομαι] emphasizing they were to come [ἔρχομαι] together in UNITY [σύν]!
 - Accountability... vs. 12
 - Moreover these six brethren accompanied me!
 - But [δέ] Peter took SIX brothers [ἀδελφός] with him...
 - Presumably those same SIX men were still standing next to Peter confirming the story!
 - Men should not be alone with women [unmarried]
 - There are TWO teachers in every classroom...
 - The reason because we want to make sure there is ACCOUNTABILITY!
 - I Thessalonians 5:22 "Abstain from all appearance of evil." [KJV]
 - The problem with doing things without ACCOUNTABILITY...
 - When [not if] something happens it is our word against the other person...
 - We have an ENEMY who loves to make false accusations Revelation 12:10
 - And we want to be READY with WITNESSES when those accusations come!
- o 4^{th} The command... vs. 12-14
 - Generic... vs. 12
 - And we entered the mans house!
 - Peter conveniently leaves out a few details...
 - He does NOT mention that Cornelius is a CENTURION...
 - It was bad enough it was a GENTILE home much less a solider from ROME...
 - He also did NOT mention how FULL the house was [packed]
 - Because he was trying to make a POINT not PROVOKE the Jews!
 - The Angel... vs. 13-14
 - He told us how he had seen an angel standing in his house who said to him:
 - Send men to Joppa, -and call for Simon whose surname is Peter.
 - Who will tell you words by which you and all your household will be saved!
 - The man [Cornelius] gave Peter the MESSAGE [ἀπαγγέλλω]
 - Telling him about the ANGEL that stood in his home...
 - And how he commanded [imperative] him to send to Joppa for SIMON called PETER...

- Who said Peter would speak [$\lambda\alpha\lambda\dot{\epsilon}\omega$] to him **Acts 10:6**
- The fact Cornelius knew both of his NAMES was proof the Angel had spoken to him...
- And Peter then interprets the SPEAK as he was to tell $[\dot{\rho}\tilde{\eta}\mu\alpha]$ him how to be SAVED $[\sigma\dot{\phi}\zeta\omega]$
- Peter took the time to explain all of this so the Jews could understand the PLAN of God...
- There ideas about who could be SAVED were wrong the Gospel is for EVERYONE!
- I have known people who ATTACK the traditions of other denominations...
- But attacking their belief will likely only end up putting us into an argument...
- Like Peter we need to be sensitive on how we share...
- Be sensitive to our listeners gently giving them the Word of God!
- **Ephesians 4:15** "Speaking the truth in love."
- 3^{RD} Salvation for all... vs. 15-18
 - o 1st Confirmation... vs. 15-17
 - Began to speak... vs. 15
 - As I began to speak the Holy Spirit fell upon them as upon us at the beginning!
 - Peter does NOT repeat his Gospel presentation to Cornelius instead jumps to the END...
 - Because no sooner had he started speaking [ἄρχομαι] NOT his words that had the power...
 - The HOLY Spirit fell upon the GENTILES just as He had upon the Jews Acts 2:4
 - The Word... vs. 16
 - Then I remembered the word of the Lord how He said:
 - John indeed baptized with water but you shall be baptized with the Holy Spirit!
 - As Peter saw them SPEAKING in other languages [like Pentecost]
 - It caused him to REMEMBER [passive] the words [ἡῆμα] of our Lord [κύριος]
 - Acts 1:5 "John truly baptized with water but you shall be baptized with the Holy Spirit."
 - Peter was NOT just looking at one verse he looked at the whole teaching...
 - Jesus told the disciples the Spirit would come so that they could be WITNESSES!
 - Acts 1:8 "You shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you and you shall be witnesses to Me in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria and to the end of the earth."
 - Peter now understood the plan of God was to bring the GOOD news to everyone...
 - The Gospel had gone to Jerusalem [Acts 2] Judea [Acts 3-7] and Samaria [Acts 8]
 - Now God was fulfilling His Word and bringing the Jesus to the World!
 - When we go to the Bible for answers we need to look at the context...
 - Not just taking a verse or a part of a verse and making it fit our interpretation...
 - But instead letting the verse be interpreted by the surrounding passage!
 - Will of God... vs. 17
 - If therefore God gave them the same gift as He gave us.
 - When we believed on the Lord Jesus Christ who was I that I could withstand God?
 - SINCE [indicative] God gave the GENTILES the same GIFT [$\delta\omega\rho\epsilon\dot{\alpha}$] of the Spirit...
 - ullet How could Peter have [imperfect] the POWER [δυνατός] to stop [κωλύω] God!
 - We may NOT like the idea that God can save WICKED people...
 - We might think that MURDERERS BAD people deserve to be JUDGED...
 - But in spite of what we THINK who are we to ARGUE with God...
 - The truth is there are NO levels with the LORD we are ALL sinners Romans 3:23
 - And the same GRACE that saved us can save ANYONE!
 - o 2nd Silent... vs. 18

- When they heard these things they became silent!
- They glorified God saying: Then God has also granted to the Gentiles repentance to life!
- When the CIRCUMCISION heard the WORD [Jesus] and the EVIDENCE [Spirit]
- They chose [active] to stop ARGUING [ἡσυχάζω] with Peter...
- They did NOT like it they still did NOT want the GENTILES to be saved...
- And this was NOT the end the debate would come up again **Acts 15:1**
- But for the moment there was NOTHING more they could say...
- Therefore [καὶ] they gave [imperfect] GLORY to God [τὸν θεὸν]
- Who had GIVEN [δίδωμι] the GENTILES [ἔθνος] repentance to life!
- It is NOT our responsibility to convince people...
- Or to try and make people from different denomination get along...
- All we need to do is follow Jesus and stand on the Word God does the rest!