

The Changing Face of the Church Acts 11

The emergence of Gentiles within the Church, 11:1-17

- ❖ Surprise: Some Jewish believers don't congratulate Peter but criticize him for going to a Gentile's home where he stayed, ate, and led a houseful to Christ!
- ❖ Peter is not defensive but offers a sequential defense for going to Cornelius' house, basically noting his own resistance and that it was all God's idea not his.
- ❖ No Gentile outreach is launched, which seems to explain the rise of Antioch.

The emergence of the Church at Antioch, 11:18-30

- ❖ 11:18 (cf. 8:1-3) shows the gospel was spreading but still focusing on Jews till converts from Cyrene (2:10) and Cyprus (4:36) target Gentiles in Antioch.
- ❖ Jerusalem's response to growth (21) = send Barnabas (Cypriot) to oversee.
Barnabas' response to growth (24) = fetch Saul (cf. 9:27) who's off in Tarsus.
Outsiders' response to growth (26) = refer to believers as "Christians."
God's response to growth (13:2) = Antioch is chosen to lead global outreach.
- ❖ Agabus (cf. 21:10) predicts a famine that offers an opportunity for Gentile believers to help out Jerusalem believers (later also helping in Rom. 15:25ff.).



What often happens to those who try to enact change in the church?

What can happen to a church or ministry if it fails to embrace a new direction because it's a bit uncomfortable and changes the status quo?

What may happen if believers embrace that which at first seemed a little threatening?