

## Notes on Acts 11ish to 12ish

Acts 11:19-21 – The Church in Antioch: The Gospel proclaimed to Hellenists

Connection back to 8:1, after the martyrdom of Stephen and the great persecution chased disciples of Jesus out of Jerusalem to the regions of Judea and Samaria

Now we hear of this evangelism outreach to Phoenicia, Cyprus (home of Barnabas), and Antioch, but at first the Word was spoken only to Jews (11:19)

Then some men of Cyprus and Cyrene spoke to the Hellenists too

“Hellenists,” either means “Greek-speaking Jews” or “Greeks,” that is Gentiles or (non-Jews). Which is more likely?

Their message: Jesus is Lord (not Jesus is the Christ) (11:20)

Acts 11:22-24 – Jerusalem sends Barnabas to Antioch

Barnabas was originally from Cyprus (Acts 4:36-37), later Barnabas spoke up for Saul in Jerusalem (9:27)

Barnabas sees God’s grace, and is glad; he exhorts them to remain faithful to the Lord

Barnabas was a *good* guy (no one else in Acts described this way) – full of the Holy Spirit and of faith

A great many were added (Acts 2:41, 47, 5:14) to the Lord

Acts 11:25-26 – Barnabas brings Saul to Antioch

As numbers increase in Antioch, Barnabas gets Saul from Tarsus (9:30) to help

For a year Saul and Barnabas teach the people

In Antioch, the disciples were first called *Christians*

Acts 11:27-30 – Antioch sends Barnabas and Saul with relief to Jerusalem

Prophets in Acts (11:27, 13:1, 21:10)

Agabus foretells a great famine which took place in the time of Claudius (r. 41-54)

Send relief to the *brothers* in Judea (reminiscent of Acts 2:45?)

Sending it to the elders – Who are the “elders”? (*presbyteros*)

Acts 12:1-5 – In Jerusalem, James martyred, Peter imprisoned

Herod the king – this is Herod Agrippa I, the grandson of Herod the Great (Matt. 2:1), the nephew of Antipas, who put Jesus to death

Why the outbreak of violence against the Church after peace (9:31)? See 12:3.

Executed James the brother of John (cf. Mark 10:35-40)

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Peter imprisoned for the third time (cf. Acts 4:3, 5:18)

A trial during the Feast of Unleavened Bread?? (cf. Luke 22-23)

Acts 12:6-17 – Peter’s Rescue and Departure

An angel of the Lord (cf. 5:19; 10:3; 12:23, 27:23)

It is his angel! (guardian angel? usually connected to Matt. 18:10)

The house of Mary, the mother of John whose other name was Mark (12:25) – sometimes suggested as the site of the Last Supper

Peter being freed is an answer to prayer or is it? (12:16, cf. 12:5)

Tell James and the brothers – James is regarded as Jesus’ brother, the “head” of the Jerusalem believers

Peter departed – Luke doesn’t tell us more, but Peter will be back in Acts 15

Acts 12:18-23 – Herod’s powerlessness against God’s Work and the end of Herod Agrippa I

Herod had the guards executed! – Have the words of Gamaliel been forgotten? (Acts 5:38-39)

Herod retreats to his palace in Caesarea

Tyre and Sidon – port cities, which were powerful but not agriculturally productive (remember the mention of famines in Acts 11:28-30!)

This episode is also recorded in Josephus’ writings – it was a day celebrating Emperor Claudius Herod wore a silver, shining robe, and was greeted as a god by the people

According to Josephus, this was the year A.D. 44, not necessarily the same year James was executed

Acts 12:24 – But the Word of God increased and multiplied!

The Word of God increased... (6:7, 9:31, 12:24, 16:5, 19:20, 28:31)

The kingdoms of Herod and Caesar have been in upheaval, but God’s Kingdom continues

Acts 12:25 – Barnabas and Saul (and John Mark) return to Antioch from Jerusalem

The stories of Barnabas and Saul are now resumed. The timeline of events here is a little bit fuzzy. Luke seems more interested in the thematic story than a chronological one, so that Acts 12:1-24. In all likelihood the persecution of the church in Jerusalem took place first, Herod returned to Caesarea, then we hear about famine, at which time it’s likely that Saul and Barnabas also brought aid to Jerusalem and then around this time we hear about the entreaties of Tyre and Sidon and Herod’s death in A.D. 44.