

Notes on the Greek New Testament Day 168 – June 17th – Acts 11:1-30

Works frequently referenced in these notes on Acts

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Acts 11:1

Ἦκουσαν δὲ οἱ ἀπόστολοι καὶ οἱ ἀδελφοὶ οἱ ὄντες κατὰ τὴν Ἰουδαίαν ὅτι καὶ τὰ ἔθνη ἐδέξαντο τὸν λόγον τοῦ θεοῦ.

Ἰουδαία, ας f Judea; κατὰ τὴν Ἰουδαίαν
'throughout Judea'
ἐδέξαντο aor δεχομαι receive

"The classical rule that neut. plur. subjects take their verbs in the sing. is not always observed in NT Gk., especially when, as here, the noun denotes persons." Bruce

Verse 2

ὅτε δὲ ἀνέβη Πέτρος εἰς Ἱερουσαλήμ, διεκρίνοντο πρὸς αὐτὸν οἱ ἐκ περιτομῆς

ὅτε conj when, at which time
ἀνέβη Verb, aor act indic, 3 s ἀναβαινω go up

διακρινω judge; midd dispute, take issue

"οἱ ἐκ περιτομῆς ... It is possible that the expression here does not simply mean 'Jews' (as in 10:45), but denotes those Jewish Christians who were specially zealous for the law and sticklers for circumcision, those mentioned in 15:5; 21:20 cf Gal 2:12." Bruce

Verse 3

λέγοντες ὅτι Εἰσηλθες πρὸς ἄνδρα ἀκροβυστιαν ἔχοντα καὶ συνέφαγες αὐτοῖς.

This verse, with its echo of Luke 15:2, dispels any false view that the early church was a pure church which later degenerated into false forms and adopted false doctrine. Christ alone is perfect and with his ascension the church is already corrupt, full of false views, adopting false patterns and lacking in power. Many of the first members of the Christian church at Jerusalem seem little better than baptised Pharisees.

εἰσηλθες Verb, aor act indic, 2 s εισερχομαι enter

ἀκροβυστία, ας f uncircumcision;

ἀκροβυστιαν ἔχω be a Gentile

συνέφαγες Verb, aor act indic, 2 s συνεσθιω eat with

"Entering a Gentile house was bad enough (see on 10:28), but eating with them was the last straw. The favour which the apostles had enjoyed in Jerusalem was no doubt largely due to their strict adherence to the law; Stephen's attitude had gravely imperilled this favour, but it was just too bad that the leader of the Twelve should thus compromise their position. (It is probably no accident that shortly after this Agrippa I killed James the Zebedaeian and imprisoned Peter to please the Jews [12:1ff..])" Bruce

Verse 4

ἀρξάμενος δὲ Πέτρος ἐξετίθετο αὐτοῖς καθεξῆς λέγων·

ἀρξάμενος Verb, aor midd ptc, m nom s ἀρχω midd begin
ἐκτιθεμαι explain, expound
καθεξῆς adv. in order, in sequence

ἀρξάμενος ... καθεξῆς "That is to say he told the whole story in order from the beginning." Bruce

Verse 5

Ἐγὼ ἤμην ἐν πόλει Ἰόππῃ προσευχόμενος καὶ εἶδον ἐν ἐκστάσει ὄραμα, καταβαῖνον σκευῶς τι ὡς ὀθόνην μεγάλην τέσσαρσιν ἀρχαῖς καθιεμένην ἐκ τοῦ οὐρανοῦ, καὶ ἦλθεν ἄχρι ἐμοῦ·

εἶδον Verb, aor act ind, 1s & 3pl ὁραω see
ἐκστασις see 10:10
ὄραμα, τος n vision

Cf. 10:11 for much of the vocabulary of this verse

ἄχρι (and ἄχρις) until, as far as

Verse 6

εἰς ἣν ἀτενίσας κατενόουν καὶ εἶδον τὰ τετράποδα τῆς γῆς καὶ τὰ θηρία καὶ τὰ ἔρπετά καὶ τὰ πετεινά τοῦ οὐρανοῦ·

ἀτενίζω fix eyes on, look intently at

κατανοεω notice, observe

τετραποουν see 10:12

θηριον, ου n animal, beast

θηρια is not in 10:12. "These are to be distinguished from τετραποδα as in Gen 1:24f., where θηρια (Heb *hayyah*) are apparently the wild animals as distinct from τετραποδα or κτηνη (Heb *behmah*), the domesticated ones." Bruce

έρπετον see 10:12

πετεινον see 10:12

Verse 7

ἤκουσα δὲ καὶ φωνῆς λεγούσης μοι· Ἀναστάς, Πέτρε, θύσον καὶ φάγε.

Cf. 10:13

Verse 8

εἶπον δέ· Μηδαμῶς, κύριε, ὅτι κοινὸν ἢ ἀκάθαρτον οὐδέποτε εἰσήλθεν εἰς τὸ στόμα μου.

Cf. 10:14

οὐδέποτε never

στομα, τος n mouth

Verse 9

ἀπεκρίθη δὲ φωνὴ ἐκ δευτέρου ἐκ τοῦ οὐρανοῦ· Ἄ ὁ θεὸς ἐκαθάρισεν σὺ μὴ κοίνου.

Cf. 10:15

δευτερος, α, ον second; ἐκ δ. a second time

Verse 10

τοῦτο δὲ ἐγένετο ἐπὶ τρίς, καὶ ἀνεσπάσθη πάλιν ἅπαντα εἰς τὸν οὐρανόν.

τρις three times

ἀνασπαω pull out, draw up

παλιν again, once more

ἅπας, ασα, αν (alternative form of πας) all, everything

Verse 11

καὶ ἰδοὺ ἐξαυτῆς τρεῖς ἄνδρες ἐπέστησαν ἐπὶ τὴν οἰκίαν ἐν ἧ ἡμεν, ἀπεσταλμένοι ἀπὸ Καισαρείας πρὸς με.

ἐξαυτης adv immediately, at once, at that moment

τρις, τρια gen τριων dat τρισιν three

ἐπέστησαν Verb, aor act indic, 3 pl ἐφιστημι come up to, approach

ἀπεσταλμένοι Verb, perf pass ptc, m nom pl ἀποστελλω send

Verse 12

εἶπεν δὲ τὸ πνεῦμά μοι συνελθεῖν αὐτοῖς μηδὲν διακρίναντα. ἦλθον δὲ σὺν ἐμοὶ καὶ οἱ ἐξ ἀδελφοὶ οὗτοι, καὶ εἰσήλθομεν εἰς τὸν οἶκον τοῦ ἀνδρός.

διακρινω judge, make a distinction between

Cf. 10:29

ἐξ six

"They were present when Peter was making his defence, as witnesses to the accuracy of his account. There were thus seven witnesses in all, including Peter himself." Bruce

Verse 13

ἀπήγγειλεν δὲ ἡμῖν πῶς εἶδεν τὸν ἄγγελον ἐν τῷ οἴκῳ αὐτοῦ σταθέντα καὶ εἰπόντα· Ἀπόστειλον εἰς Ἰόππην καὶ μετάπεμψαι Σίμωνα τὸν ἐπικαλούμενον Πέτρον,

ἀπαγγελλω announce, proclaim

τὸν ἄγγελον "The art. (om D P⁴⁵) presupposes the previous mention of the angel in 10:3, so far as readers of Ac. are concerned but so far as Peter's hearers are concerned, the implication is that the story in some form has already come to their ears, although they were now for the first time hearing a full and trustworthy account." Bruce

σταθεντα aor pass ptc ἵστημι and ἵστανω pass stand

εἰπόντα Verb, aor act ptc, m acc s λεγω μεταπεμψω see 10:5

Verse 14

ὃς λαλήσει ῥήματα πρὸς σὲ ἐν οἷς σωθήσῃ σὺ καὶ πᾶς ὁ οἶκός σου.

ῥημα, ατος n word, thing, matter

σωθήσῃ Verb, aor pass subj, 2 s σωζω save

'house'/'household' would have included slaves.

Verse 15

ἐν δὲ τῷ ἄρξασθαί με λαλεῖν ἐπέπεσεν τὸ πνεῦμα τὸ ἅγιον ἐπ' αὐτοὺς ὥσπερ καὶ ἐφ' ἡμᾶς ἐν ἀρχῇ.

ὥσπερ as, even as

ἀρχη, ης f beginning

I.e. the day of Pentecost

Verse 16

ἐμνήσθην δὲ τοῦ ῥήματος τοῦ κυρίου ὡς ἔλεγεν· Ἰωάννης μὲν ἐβάπτισεν ὕδατι, ὑμεῖς δὲ βαπτισθήσεσθε ἐν πνεύματι ἁγίῳ.

ἐμνήσθην Verb, aor pass indic, 1 s

μιμησκομαι remember, call to mind

ὕδωρ, ὕδατος n water

βαπτισθήσεσθε Verb, fut pass indic, 2 pl
βαπτίζω

Cf. 1:5.

Verse 17

εἰ οὖν τὴν ἴσην δωρεὰν ἔδωκεν αὐτοῖς ὁ θεὸς
ὡς καὶ ἡμῖν πιστεύσασιν ἐπὶ τὸν κύριον
Ἰησοῦν Χριστόν, ἐγὼ τίς ἡμῖν δυνατὸς
κωλύσαι τὸν θεόν;

ἴσος, ἡ, ον equal, the same

δωρεα, ας f gift

ἔδωκεν Verb, aor act indic, 3 s δίδωμι

πιστεύσασιν "Probably agrees with both αὐτοῖς
and ἡμῖν." Bruce

κωλύω hinder, prevent, forbid

ἐγὼ τις ἡμῖν δυνατός a construction which
weaves together two thoughts: i) 'Who was I
that I should hinder God?' and ii) 'Was I able
to hinder God?'

Verse 18

ἀκούσαντες δὲ ταῦτα ἠσύχασαν καὶ ἐδόξασαν
τὸν θεὸν λέγοντες· Ἄρα καὶ τοῖς ἔθνεσιν ὁ
θεὸς τὴν μετάνοιαν εἰς ζωὴν ἔδωκεν.

ἠσυχάζω be silent, cease

μετάνοιαν εἰς ζωὴν ἔδωκεν "I.e., has given
them the change in heart and mind which
results in spiritual and eternal life. See on 2:38.
Gramatically, εἰς ζωὴν goes with ἔδωκεν, not
with τὴν μετάνοιαν." Bruce

"They accepted Peter's report and made no
attempt to avoid the conclusion that the
Gentiles were not outside the scope of the
Gospel. The resulting questions on the terms
on which Jewish and Gentile believers were to
associate and the obligation on Gentile
believers to observe the Jewish law were not
pressed at the moment, but they were by no
means solved. Even Peter on a later occasion
wavered in faithfulness to the lesson that he
had learned on the housetop at Joppa (Gal.
2:11 ff.). The question became more acute than
ever after the return of Paul and Barnabas from
their first missionary journey (cf. 15:1ff.)."
Bruce

Verse 19

Οἱ μὲν οὖν διασπαρέντες ἀπὸ τῆς θλίψεως τῆς
γενομένης ἐπὶ Στεφάνῳ διήλθον ἕως Φοινίκης
καὶ Κύπρου καὶ Ἀντιοχείας μηδενὶ λαλοῦντες
τὸν λόγον εἰ μὴ μόνον Ἰουδαίοις.

Cf. 8:4.

διασπαρέντες Verb, aor pass ptc, m nom pl

διασπειρω scatter

θλίψις, εως f trouble, suffering

Antioch was the third largest city in the Roman
Empire, having a population of between
500,000 and 800,000. It was one of the chief
centres of the Jewish diaspora and was to
become the centre for the spread of Gentile
Christianity. It was a major trading centre, a
port on the river Orontes, 15 miles from the
coast. The city was only 5 miles from Daphne,
the seat of the cult of Artemis and Apollo (a
semi-Hellenised version of the Syrian goddess
Astarte and her consort). Its immortality was
proverbial.

"Notice that Luke gives no account of
evangelisation east and south of Palestine; he
is concerned with the movement of the Gospel
towards the heart of the Empire." Bruce

Verse 20

ἦσαν δὲ τινες ἐξ αὐτῶν ἄνδρες Κύπριοι καὶ
Κυρηναῖοι, οἵτινες ἐλθόντες εἰς Ἀντιόχειαν
ἐλάλουν καὶ πρὸς τοὺς Ἑλληνιστάς,
εὐαγγελιζόμενοι τὸν κύριον Ἰησοῦν.

Ἑλληνιστής, ου m Hellenist (one who uses
the Greek language and customs)

In previous occurrences of this word (6:1;
9:29) it has referred to Greek speaking Jews.
Here the context clearly implies Gentiles.

Verse 21

καὶ ἦν χεὶρ κυρίου μετ' αὐτῶν, πολὺς τε
ἀριθμὸς ὁ πιστεύσας ἐπέστρεψεν ἐπὶ τὸν
κύριον.

God's 'hand' refers to his *power* or *Spirit*.

πολύς, πολλή, πολυ gen πολλοῦ, ἡς, ου

much, many

ἀριθμός, ου m number, total

ἐπιστρέφω turn back

Verse 22

ἠκούσθη δὲ ὁ λόγος εἰς τὰ ὅσα τῆς ἐκκλησίας
τῆς οὔσης ἐν Ἱερουσαλὴμ περὶ αὐτῶν, καὶ
ἐξαπέστειλαν Βαρναβᾶν ἕως Ἀντιοχείας·

οὗς, ὅτος n ear

ἐξαποστελλω send out, send away

"Barnabas was to play in Antioch the part that
Peter and John played in Samaria (8:14). A
better man could not have been chosen for this
delicate work; apart from his character
(described in v.24), he was himself a Cyprian
Jew, like some of those who had taken the
initiative in tis Gentile evangelisation, and
therefore much more likely to be sympathetic
than a more rigid Jerusalem disciple might
have been." Bruce

Verse 23

ὃς παραγενόμενος καὶ ἰδὼν τὴν χάριν τὴν τοῦ θεοῦ, ἐχάρη καὶ παρεκάλει πάντας τῇ προθέσει τῆς καρδίας προσμένειν τῷ κυρίῳ,

παραγενόμενος Verb, aor midd dep ptc, m nom s παραγίνομαι come, arrive, appear

ἰδὼν Verb, aor act ptc, m nom s ὄρω
ἐχάρη Verb, aor pass dep indic, 3 s χαίρω
rejoice (passive has same sense as active)

χάριν ... ἐχάρη "Probably an intentional play on words: cf. Lk 1:28, χαίρε, κεχαριτωμένη. God's grace (χαρίς) brings joy (χαρά)." Bruce

παρακαλέω exhort, encourage
προθεσις, εως f purpose, plan

"τῇ προθεσει τῆς καρδίας 'with purpose of heart', i.e. with determination.

προσμένω remain, stay with, remain faithful to, continue in

Verse 24

ὅτι ἦν ἀνὴρ ἀγαθὸς καὶ πλήρης πνεύματος ἁγίου καὶ πίστεως. καὶ προσετέθη ὄχλος ἱκανὸς τῷ κυρίῳ.

ἀγαθος, η, ον good
πλήρης, ες (sometimes not declined) full,
προσετέθη Verb, aor pass indic, 3s
προστιθημι add to, increase
ἱκανός, η, ον sufficient, large, great

It would seem that Barnabas not only encouraged those who were already converted but that also, through his ministry of encouragement, others were added to the church.

Verse 25

ἐξήλθεν δὲ εἰς Ταρσὸν ἀναζητῆσαι Σαῦλον, ἀναζητεῶ look for, search for

"This reinforces the impression received from 9:27, that Barnabas was previously acquainted with Saul. He evidently knew that Saul was just the man required for this work at Antioch. So he fetches him from Tarsus, where he had left him in 9:30." Bruce

It would seem that Paul had been some ten years in Cilicia (Acts 9:30; Gal 1:21). Barnabas' ministry of encouragement extended also to discovering and encouraging the use of gifts in others for the benefit of the church.

Verse 26

καὶ εὐρὼν ἤγαγεν εἰς Ἀντιόχειαν. ἐγένετο δὲ αὐτοῖς καὶ ἐνιαυτὸν ὅλον συναχθῆναι ἐν τῇ ἐκκλησίᾳ καὶ διδάξαι ὄχλον ἱκανόν, χρηματῖσαι τε πρῶτως ἐν Ἀντιοχείᾳ τοὺς μαθητὰς Χριστιανούς.

ἤγαγεν Verb, aor act indic, 3 s ἄγω

ἐνιαυτος, ου m year

συναχθῆναι Verb, aor pass infin συναγω
gather, gather together, assemble

ἐν τῇ ἐκκλησίᾳ "The first use of ἐκκλησία in Acts for a community other than the original Jerusalem church ... Henceforth in Acts the word is regularly used of individual communities of Christians." Bruce

διδασκῶ teach

χρηματίζω instruct, reveal

χρηματίζω normally means reveal, disclose, warn (see 10:22). Here it bears completely separate sense, 'be named', 'be called'. Bruce says that *this* sense of the verb is from χρηματα meaning 'business', the verb bearing the sense, 'do business [in the name of].'

πρῶτως adv for the first time

Christianity is beginning to have an identity of its own, rather than being viewed as a Jewish sect.

Verse 27

Ἐν ταύταις δὲ ταῖς ἡμέραις κατήλθον ἀπὸ Ἱεροσολύμων προφητῆται εἰς Ἀντιόχειαν·

κατήλθον aor κατερχομαι go down, come down

For prophets in the church cf. 13:1; 15:32; 21:9,10.

Verse 28

ἀναστὰς δὲ εἶς ἐξ αὐτῶν ὀνόματι Ἄγαβος ἐσήμανεν διὰ τοῦ πνεύματος λιμὸν μεγάλην μέλλειν ἔσσεσθαι ἐφ' ὅλην τὴν οἰκουμένην· ἥτις ἐγένετο ἐπὶ Κλαυδίου.

For Agabus cf. 21:10.

ἐσημανεν aor σημαίνω indicate, make known

λιμος, ου m & f famine, hunger

ἔσσεσθαι Verb, fut infin εἶμι

"Apart from εἰσελευσεσθαι (Heb 3:18) and χωρησειν (Jn 21:25) the future infinitive in the NT is limited to Acts." Bruce

οἰκουμένη, ης f world, inhabited earth

I.e. the Roman world.

ἐπὶ Κλαυδίου during the time of Claudius

Verse 29

τῶν δὲ μαθητῶν καθὼς εὐπορεῖτο τις ὥρισαν ἕκαστος αὐτῶν εἰς διακονίαν πέμψαι τοῖς κατοικοῦσιν ἐν τῇ Ἰουδαίᾳ ἀδελφοῖς·

εὐποροεμαι have financial means

Here alone in the NT, but cf. εὐπορία 19:25.

ὀρίζω decide, determine

διακονία, ας f ministry, contribution, help

κατοικεω live, inhabit

Verse 30

ὁ καὶ ἐποίησαν ἀποστείλαντες πρὸς τοὺς
πρεσβυτέρους διὰ χειρὸς Βαρναβᾶ καὶ
Σαύλου.

πρεσβυτερος, α, ον elder

"Why were the apostles not mentioned?
Probably because the business of the Twelve
was not this διακονια but the διακονια του
λογου (6:2ff)." Bruce.

Of this visit of Paul to Jerusalem Bruce
comments: "If it is to be identified with Paul's
second Jerusalem visit according to his own
account in Gal 2:1ff. (the most satisfactory
identification, in my opinion), we should
connect ἀνεβην δε κατα ἀποκαλυψιν (Gal 2:2)
with the prophecy of Agabus, and Gal 2:10
(μονον των πτωχων ινα μνημονευωμεν, ο και
εσπουδασα αυτο τουτο ποιησαι) with the
object of the visit according to Ac. The visit of
Gal 2:1ff. took place about AD 46 (if we
reckon the fourteen years of Gal 2:1 from
Paul's conversion, not from his first Jerusalem
visit); this agrees quite well with the date of
the famine, between 44 and 48 (if, as is most
likely, it is the same as that recorded by
Josephus)."