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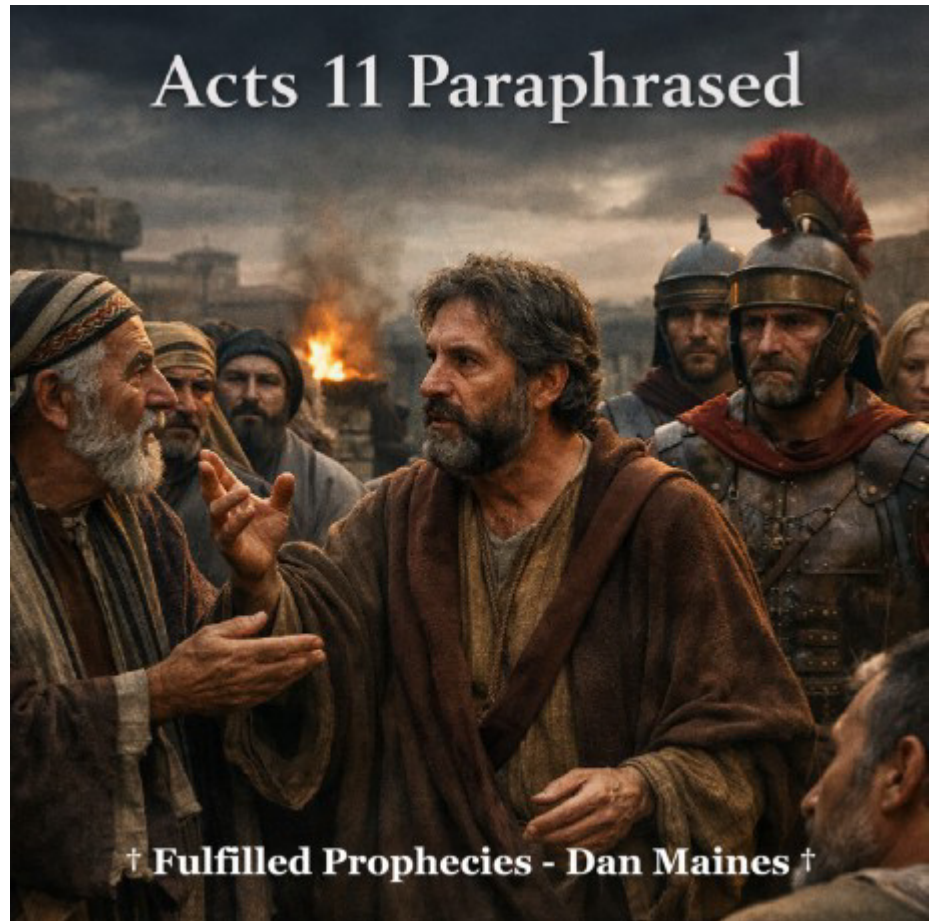
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Acts 11 Paraphrased



By Dan Maines

Acts 11 Paraphrased

Introduction

† This chapter shows the turning point where the gospel openly goes to the Gentiles and is confirmed by God Himself

† Peter defends what God did, proving it wasn't man's idea but God's direct work

† This is fulfillment in action, showing the nations were always included in God's plan (Genesis 12:3)

Acts 11:1

Now the apostles and the brothers throughout Judea heard that the Gentiles had also received the word of God

† News spread quickly because this was a major shift in understanding (Acts 10:44-45)

† The issue wasn't whether God saved, but who He saved

† This begins the breaking of old covenant boundaries

Acts 11:2

When Peter came up to Jerusalem, those who were circumcised took issue with him

† These were believing Jews still holding to old covenant identity markers

† They struggled because they hadn't fully grasped fulfillment yet

† This tension shows the transition period before AD 70

Acts 11:3

Saying, you went to uncircumcised men and ate with them

† Eating with Gentiles was seen as defilement under the law

† Their concern was based on tradition, not revelation

† God was dismantling these divisions (Ephesians 2:14-16)

Acts 11:4

But Peter began speaking and explained to them in orderly sequence

† Peter doesn't argue emotionally, he lays out what God did

† Truth is established by testimony of God's work

† This mirrors how witnesses functioned in the first century

Acts 11:5

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

† God initiated this, not Peter

† The vision came during prayer, showing God's timing

† This connects directly to Acts 10

Acts 11:6

And when I had fixed my gaze on it and was observing it I saw the four footed animals of the earth and the wild beasts and the crawling creatures and the birds of the air

† The vision challenged what was considered clean and unclean

† God was redefining categories

† This symbolized people, not just animals (Acts 10:28)

Acts 11:7

I also heard a voice saying to me, get up Peter kill and eat

† God commanded what the law once restricted

† This shows covenant change

† Authority comes from God, not tradition

Acts 11:8

But I said, by no means Lord, for nothing unholy or unclean has ever entered my mouth

† Peter still thought in old covenant terms

† His response shows how deeply rooted those laws were

† Even apostles had to learn this transition

Acts 11:9

But a voice from heaven answered a second time, what God has cleansed, no longer consider unholy

† God declares the change, not man

† Cleansing now comes through Christ, not law

† This applies to people, not food alone (Acts 10:35)

Acts 11:10

This happened three times, and everything was drawn back up into the sky

† Repetition confirms certainty

† God made sure Peter understood

† This wasn't symbolic confusion, it was direct instruction

Acts 11:11

And behold, at that moment three men appeared at the house in which we were staying, having been sent to me from Caesarea

- † God coordinated events perfectly
- † The vision and the arrival aligned
- † This shows divine orchestration

Acts 11:12

The Spirit told me to go with them without misgivings

- † The Spirit gave direct instruction
- † Peter didn't act on opinion
- † This confirms the Spirit was leading the inclusion of Gentiles

Acts 11:13

And he reported to us how he had seen the angel standing in his house, and saying, send to Joppa and have Simon, who is also called Peter, brought here

- † Cornelius also received divine instruction
- † Both sides were prepared by God
- † This removes any doubt about God's involvement

Acts 11:14

And he will speak words to you by which you will be saved, you and all your household

- † Salvation comes through the message of Christ
- † This includes entire households
- † The gospel was never limited to Israel only

Acts 11:15

And as I began to speak, the Holy Spirit fell upon them just as He did upon us at the beginning

- † Gentiles received the same Spirit as Jews
- † This is equal standing before God
- † This happened without circumcision

Acts 11:16

And I remembered the word of the Lord, how He used to say, John baptized with water, but you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit

- † Peter connects this to Jesus' promise
- † This confirms fulfillment was happening
- † The Spirit marked the new covenant reality

Acts 11:17

Therefore if God gave to them the same gift as He gave to us also after believing in the Lord Jesus Christ, who was I that I could stand in God's way

- † Peter submits to God's authority
- † No man can oppose what God does
- † This ends the argument

Acts 11:18

When they heard this, they quieted down and glorified God, saying, well then God has granted to the Gentiles also the repentance that leads to life

- † They recognized God's work
- † Repentance and life are given to all
- † This fulfills prophecy (Isaiah 49:6)

Acts 11:19

So then those who were scattered because of the persecution that occurred in connection with Stephen made their way to Phoenicia and Cyprus and Antioch, speaking the word to no one except to Jews alone

- † The gospel spread through persecution
- † At first it was still focused on Jews
- † This shows gradual transition

Acts 11:20

But there were some of them, men of Cyprus and Cyrene, who came to Antioch and began speaking to the Greeks also, preaching the Lord Jesus

- † Now Gentiles are directly included
- † Antioch becomes a key center
- † This marks expansion beyond Israel

Acts 11:21

And the hand of the Lord was with them, and a large number who believed turned to the Lord

- † God's power confirmed the message
- † Many believed
- † This wasn't a small movement

Acts 11:22

The news about them reached the ears of the church at Jerusalem, and they sent Barnabas off to Antioch

- † Jerusalem still had oversight
- † Barnabas was trusted
- † This ensured unity

Acts 11:23

Then when he arrived and witnessed the grace of God, he rejoiced and began to encourage them all with resolute heart to remain true to the Lord

- † Barnabas recognized God's grace
- † He encouraged faithfulness
- † This shows leadership in action

Acts 11:24

For he was a good man, and full of the Holy Spirit and of faith, and considerable numbers were brought to the Lord

- † Character matters in leadership
- † The Spirit works through faithful men
- † Growth continued

Acts 11:25

And he left for Tarsus to look for Saul

- † Barnabas brings Paul into the work
- † God was preparing Paul for the Gentile mission

† This is strategic

Acts 11:26

And when he had found him, he brought him to Antioch, and for an entire year they met with the church and taught considerable numbers, and the disciples were first called Christians in Antioch

† Teaching was consistent

† The name Christians begins here

† Identity now centers on Christ

Acts 11:27

Now at this time some prophets came down from Jerusalem to Antioch

† Prophets still operated in this transitional period

† This was before completion of revelation

† God was guiding the church

Acts 11:28

One of them named Agabus stood up and began to indicate by the Spirit that there would certainly be a great famine all over the world, and this took place in the reign of Claudius

† This prophecy was fulfilled historically

† It confirms real events in that generation

† Josephus records this famine

Acts 11:29

And in the proportion that any of the disciples had means, each of them determined to send a contribution for the relief of the brethren living in Judea

† The church responded with action

† Giving was voluntary and proportional

† This shows unity across regions

Acts 11:30

And this they did, sending it in charge of Barnabas and Saul to the elders

- † Leadership handled distribution
- † Order was maintained
- † This shows organized care within the body

Historical References

- † Josephus records the famine under Claudius confirming Acts 11:28
- † Eusebius affirms early church expansion to Antioch as a major turning point
- † Irenaeus speaks of the unity of Jew and Gentile in Christ as fulfillment of prophecy
- † Clement of Alexandria notes Antioch as a center of early teaching and growth

How It Applies To Us Today

- † God has already fulfilled the inclusion of the nations, we aren't waiting for it
- † There is no division between Jew and Gentile in Christ, that wall has already been removed
- † We don't go back to old covenant identity markers, God already declared them fulfilled
- † The kingdom isn't future, it was established and revealed in that generation
- † We live in the reality they were stepping into

Q & A Appendix

Q: Why was there conflict about Gentiles?

A: Because many still held to the law, but God had already fulfilled and removed those barriers (Ephesians 2:14-16)

Q: Did God clearly show Gentiles were accepted?

A: Yes, He gave them the Holy Spirit just like the Jews (Acts 11:15-17)

Q: Was this planned from the beginning?

A: Yes, God promised all nations would be blessed (Genesis 12:3)

Q: Why is Antioch important?

A: It became the center for Gentile teaching and where

believers were first called Christians (Acts 11:26)

Q: Was the famine real?

A: Yes, it occurred during Claudius' reign and is recorded historically by Josephus

† This is the fulfilled perspective we proclaim at Fulfilled Prophecies †

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Source Index

† Acts 11

† Josephus, Antiquities of the Jews

† Irenaeus, Against Heresies

† Eusebius, Ecclesiastical History

† Clement of Alexandria, Stromata

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