

**FIRST INTERNATIONAL CHURCH!**  
**ACTS CH11:19-30**

**INTRODUCTION**

What does it mean to bring God Glory? Or to glorify God! What does it mean? Let's have a look back to the Gospel of Luke Ch2:14 and link it to Acts Ch11:18!

**GLORIFYING GOD IN SPEAKING! V19-21**

Luke has already recorded for us on three occasions, in **Ch8:14, Ch11:1 + Ch11:18**, that the Gentiles were receiving the Word of God! But what is going to happen here and why is Luke recording it here? These are things that we need to work out!

Remember Ch8:4? Christians being forced out of Jerusalem just after the stoning of Stephen, because of the persecution, led by Saul (aka Paul)? Any of this ringing a bell? Christians scattered all over the place, with some of them travelling as far as Phoenicia, Cyprus and Antioch in Syria!

They travelled there and as "**unnamed evangelists**" started spreading the Good News about Jesus v19 + v20. Initially to the Jews only v19, before some of them, still "**unnamed evangelists**" preached Jesus Christ to the Hellenists! Now this phrase, "Hellenists" Luke has already used in Ch6:1 referring to Christian Greek speaking Jews and he also used it in Ch9:29 referring to Non-Christian Greek speaking Jews! Here, Luke uses it, I would like to suggest, **for Greek speaking non-Christian people (Hellenas or Hellenistas?)**, who after being preached to, become Christians v21!

In v21 we see a beautiful threefold cord (Ecclesiastes Ch4:12), the **unnamed evangelists** preaching Christ, with the **hand of the Lord** upon them (God's Sovereignty) and the Hellenists responding **by believing and turning to the Lord** (human responsibility). **How beautiful!**

**GLORIFYING GOD IN SENDING! V22-26**

Why send Barnabas? Why not send an apostle, like before (Ch8:14; Ch10:23)? John Stott cites Barclay who said the reason they sent Barnabas was because in his opinion he was "The man with the biggest heart in the Church" (Cited in John Stott, Commentary on Acts, page 203)! **What do we know about Barnabas?**

- Ch4:36 – His name means – son of encouragement, a Levite, a native of Cyprus!
- Ch4:37 – He sold a field and laid the money at the feet of the apostles!
- Ch9:27 – Stuck up for Paul in front of the early Church! (Galatians Ch1:18)
- Ch11:24 – A good man, full of the Holy Spirit and faith!
- Ch11:25-26 – Found Paul and took him to Antioch!
- Ch13:1-6 – Sent out by the Antioch Church!
- Ch13:46 – Speaking boldly with Paul!
- Ch14:4+14 – He has apostolic gifting!
- Ch15:36-39 – Had a huge disagreement with the apostle Paul over John Mark!
- Colossians Ch4:10 – A cousin of John Mark!
- 1<sup>st</sup> Corinthians Ch9:6 – Like Paul, never took the rights of an apostle!
- Galatians Ch2:9-14 – Gentile missionary work, but easily misled! Whenever the apostle Paul mentions Barnabas, it is always with words of sympathy and respect!

***What an example!***

Was Barnabas an apostle? John Stott says "On the one hand there were the apostles of

Christ, personally appointed by him to be witnesses of the resurrection, who included the twelve, Paul and probably James (Acts Ch1:21; 1<sup>st</sup> Cor Ch9:1; 1<sup>st</sup> Cor Ch15:7-9; Acts Ch10:41). There is no evidence that Barnabas belonged to this group. On the other hand, there were the apostles of the churches (2<sup>nd</sup> Cor Ch8:23) sent out by a Church or Churches on particular missions, as Epaphroditus was an apostle or messenger of the Philippian Church. So too Paul and Barnabas were both apostles of the Church of Syrian Antioch, sent out by them, whereas only Paul was also an apostle of Christ" (Cited in John Stott, Commentary on Acts, page 229).

So, I would like to suggest that Barnabas was not an eye witness to the resurrection of Christ, therefore not an apostle of Christ, but he was sent out by the Church, as he had apostolic gifting!

Christianoi – Christians, used only here! Christian is used in Acts Ch26:28 + 1<sup>st</sup> Peter Ch4:16, but Christians is used only here, a phrase used first by the non-Christians towards the "followers/belonging to Christ" because they talked so much about Christ!

### **GLORIFYING GOD IN SHARING! V27-30**

V27 – Why does Agabus travel to Antioch? Why not just stay in Jerusalem and tell the Church there? ***Agabus travels to the "First International Church" in Syria Antioch, because he has a message from God for them! The prophetic message is for that Church! Prophecy in the New Testament is used in three ways:***

1. Acts Ch2:17-18 every born again Christian has the gift of prophesy, used as we tell people the Good News about Jesus Christ!
2. As above with Agabus having a prophetic message to an individual Church!
3. Finally, Agabus again in Acts Ch21:10-11, a prophetic message for an individual!

We have seen the Christians sharing amongst the congregation in Acts Ch2:44-46, Ch4:32-37 and in Ch6:1-4 and now the same godly principle is used in an inter-church need. The Jerusalem Church sent Barnabas and Agabus, now the young fledgling international church responds, by also sending! Not only do they send Barnabas and Saul, but as people gave v29 according to their ability, they send a vital financial gift. ***Partnerships between churches involve different levels of giving and receiving in ministry to one another!***

***For this "International Church" to grow, they had the unnamed evangelists, Barnabas and Saul and now Agabus! Which allowed them to grow in giving!***

### **APPLICATION**

Let's think through our giving!

Let's think through our Holiday Kidz Connect!

Let's think through when it comes to our finances and the finances of the Church, what is the plan? With our minds we are capable of reading God's Word and discovering His will for our finances. We can have this head knowledge! However, will our hearts accept God's will for our finances? Will our hearts accept it? Because mine wants to disobey and rule my own affairs! We could just plough ahead, using so called knowledge, common sense, and life experience that we have and try and manage ours and the Church finances! Jesus during His ministry, it's understood, spoke about finances 25% of the time! We can be heroes, like the first International Church, being brave and demonstrating ultimate faith in Christ and give generously as God presents the need!