

The Unlikely Church That Changed The World



Soon the news reached the apostles and other believers in Judea that the Gentiles had received the word of God.



But when Peter arrived back in Jerusalem, the Jewish believers criticized him.



"You entered the home of Gentiles and even ate with them!" they said.



Then Peter told them exactly what had happened.





"As I began to speak," Peter continued, "the Holy Spirit fell on them, just as he fell on us at the beginning.



Then I thought of the Lord's words when he said, 'John baptized with water, but you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit.'



And since God gave these Gentiles the same gift he gave us when we believed in the Lord Jesus Christ, who was I to stand in God's way?"



When the others heard this, they stopped objecting and began praising God. They said,



"We can see that God has also given the Gentiles the privilege of repenting of their sins and receiving eternal life."



Meanwhile, the believers who had been scattered during the persecution after Stephen's death



Traveled as far as Phoenicia, Cyprus, and Antioch of Syria. They preached the word of God, but only to Jews.



However, some of the believers who went to Antioch from Cyprus and Cyrene began preaching to the Gentiles about the Lord Jesus.



The power of the Lord was with them, and a large number of these Gentiles believed and turned to the Lord.



When the church at Jerusalem heard what had happened, they sent Barnabas to Antioch.



When he arrived and saw this evidence of God's blessing, he was filled with joy, and he encouraged the believers to stay true to the Lord.



Barnabas was a good man, full of the Holy Spirit and strong in faith. And many people were brought to the Lord.



Then Barnabas went on to Tarsus to look for Saul.



When he found him, he brought him back to Antioch. Both of them stayed there with the church for a full year,



Teaching large crowds of people. (It was at Antioch that the believers were first called Christians.)



Their Beginning...



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Saul was one of the witnesses, and he agreed completely with the killing of Stephen. A great wave of persecution began that day,



Sweeping over the church in Jerusalem; and all the believers except the apostles were scattered through the regions of Judea and Samaria.



(Some devout men came and buried Stephen with great mourning.)



But Saul was going everywhere to destroy the church. He went from house to house,



Dragging out both men and women to throw them into prison.



But the believers who were scattered preached the Good News about Jesus wherever they went.





Their Beginning... It began from suffering





Their Beginning... It began from some ordinary people





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The Boom



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The Blessing



During this time some prophets traveled from Jerusalem to Antioch.



One of them named Agabus stood up in one of the meetings and predicted by the Spirit



That a great famine was coming upon the entire Roman world. (This was fulfilled during the reign of Claudius.)



So the believers in Antioch decided to send relief to the brothers and sisters in Judea, everyone giving as much as they could.



This they did, entrusting their gifts to Barnabas and Saul to take to the elders of the church in Jerusalem.



