

Acts Chapter 11

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[0 : 00] Well, before we get underway, I have a few laws that I want to share with you. This is the law of mechanical repair. After your hands become coated with grease, your nose will begin to itch and you'll have to pee.

I don't know about you, but this is the way it works for me. The law of gravity says any tool, nut, bolt, screw when dropped will roll to the least accessible corner.

The law of probability. This is the probability of being watched is directly proportional to the stupidity of your act. The variation law.

If you change lanes or traffic lanes, the one you were in will always move faster than the one you were in now. Works every time. The law of close encounters.

The probability of meeting someone you know increases dramatically when you are with someone you don't want to be seen with. The law of biomechanics is the severity of the itch is inversely proportional to the reach.

[1 : 20] And when you try to prove, this is the law of the result, when you try to prove to someone that a machine won't work, it will. You ever taken your car to the mechanic because it was making a funny noise and it won't make it for the mechanic?

He can't hear it. It never acts up. That's the way it is. And this is not a law, but this is just something to keep in mind. A doctor examining a woman who had been rushed to the emergency room took the husband aside and said, I don't like the looks of your wife at all.

Well, me neither, doc, said the husband, but she's a great cook and really good with the kids. And this is one of my favorites. I might have shared this with you before, but the graveside service had just barely finished when there was a massive clap of thunder followed by a tremendous bolt of lightning accompanied by even more thunder rumbling in the distance.

The little old man looked at the preacher and calmly said, well, she's there. But I do want to remind you that on Valentine's Day, do something special today for your sweetie.

And whatever you do, you ought not to let a day go by without affirming your love for her. Because one of the old adages of guys who've been married for a long time is, I don't know, I don't go in for that mushy stuff.

[2 : 49] She knows that I love her. Well, she needs to be reminded. She needs to be told. A wife will never get tired of hearing the words, honey, I love you.

Unless, of course, your actions do not demonstrate that. Then the words come across as hollow and without meaning. So make sure that your I love you's are backed up with demonstrations that convince her of that.

Whether it's fixing that leaky faucet or attending to your honey-do list or whatever. If your wife has got a honey-do list, these are things that if you take care of, will make her life just a little bit easier. And it will be a dramatic way of conveying to her that you care about her world when you're away and the things that she has to do and go through and face and all the rest.

And you're going to make things easier with her. Whether it's taking out the trash or fixing the leaky faucet or whatever it is. I can promise you she will appreciate that. Well, we are in Acts chapter 11 and working our way through this extraordinary event that is taking place.

[4 : 04] And, in fact, I gave away my last sheet. I ran out of those. But we are dealing with this. It's okay. I've got a text here.

So this will be fine. Well, if you're going to provide them. These are extras? Okay. We are in Acts chapter 11. We're dealing with a very dramatic, pivotal time in early history.

In fact, it isn't even... Now, this is going to be a shocker, perhaps, to some. But we are not even talking about church history here in Acts chapter 11. Because there is no church.

The church does not exist in Acts chapter 11. I know that sounds very strange. Because most people are committed to the idea that the church began in Acts chapter 2 with the day of Pentecost. But we've already treated that. Why we do not believe that to be so. The principal thing, fellas, that makes the church the church. And this is really important. That which makes the church the church. [5 : 07] is explained by the apostle Paul in Ephesians chapter 3. And if you want an excellent commentary on it, read that chapter. That which makes the church the church is the fact that Jew and Gentile, or Jew and non-Jew, are blended together into one body.

And of the two, Jew and Gentile, making one new entity. That new entity is the body of Christ. It did not exist before.

So that which makes the church the church is Jew and Gentile in one body. That's a bitter pill to swallow, particularly for historicists who are committed to the idea of the church starting in Acts chapter 2.

And we won't go into the reasons now why we don't believe that it did. But it is the bringing of Jew and Gentile together on the same level that caused all kinds of hostility and difficulty.

And Peter is going through this right now. Because we saw in Acts chapter 10, when Peter went to the house of Cornelius. Cornelius was a Gentile, not a Jew.

[6 : 23] He was a Roman army officer. But he had already come to the conviction that the God of Israel was the only true God. And for a Roman army officer to come to that conclusion was no small thing.

Because these people were committed to polytheism, that is the worship of many gods and many deities. And this is one reason that the Jews had complete contempt for the Romans. Not only because they occupied their country as a military victor, but because they were polytheists. They believed in many gods.

You know, the Roman gods and the Greek gods. And they had a god for this and a god for that and all the rest of it. Well, if a Roman ever came to the conclusion that there was just one God, not many gods.

And the God of Israel was that true God. He was called a God-fearer by the other Jews. That's what Cornelius was. And Cornelius obviously had been praying for truth.

[7 : 22] And the angel came to Cornelius and said, You send men to Joppa and find a fellow who is residing in the house of Simon the Tanner.

This is a guy who had a tanning business. He tanned hides for a living. And Peter is staying with him. And you find him. And have your men escort him back here to you in Caesarea.

And when he gets here, he will tell you what you need to know. So, Cornelius dispatched men to go find Peter. And while they were doing that, Peter was in a vision seeing this great sheet let down from heaven with all manner of four-footed beasts in them.

Clean and unclean animals. And he was confused by that. And what that picture was conveying was that God was putting all of these together. And to use clean and unclean animals.

Which was unthinkable in the Jewish mind. But he was beginning to program Peter for this new thing that was coming. So, Peter goes to the house of Cornelius.

[8 : 27] He gets there and he says, Well, I don't understand what this is all about. But God said that I am to come here. And I don't have a clue what's going on here. What is this? And Cornelius told him the whole story about the angel and the message.

And Cornelius says, Now, everybody's here. He had a whole house full of people. And Cornelius says, Everybody's here to hear words that you've got to say to us. So, please tell us what it is that we need to know.

And Peter begins by saying, You know that it's unlawful for me to even be here. I am a Jew.

And I am out of my comfort zone. And I don't, I'm not comfortable being, But God has told me that I am to come here. And I have no idea what's going on. So, Peter revealed to these Gentiles the person of Christ.

And as he was telling them, As Peter was telling them about Jesus the Messiah, Israel's Messiah, Those in Cornelius' household, Including Cornelius, Had to have been saying to themselves, In their own mind, This is it.

[9 : 44] This is what I have been waiting for. This is what I needed to know. And Peter was exclaiming, The person of Jesus of Nazareth, And the light bulbs came on all over that place.

That was their moment of truth. And to vindicate and authenticate this whole situation, When the Spirit of God descended on this gathering, There were Peter and six other Jews that accompanied him, Along with the Roman army soldiers that Cornelius had sent for them.

And the text says, The Spirit of God came on them, And they began speaking with languages they had not previously learned.

So obviously there were different languages involved there, And in the Bible, Languages always proved to be a barrier, Of people communicating, Just like they are today.

And it all started back in Genesis 10, With the confusion of the nations. And what God did on the day of Pentecost, When all of those people from all over the world, Were able to hear the word in their own tongue, What God did is, He just miraculously reversed.

[11:05] The confusion of languages that He imposed, On the civilization in Genesis chapter 10, At the Tower of Babel.

And now He's doing the same thing. And this is God's way, Of authenticating to Peter, That God was really in this. Because these people were not Jews.

But on Pentecost, In Acts 2, They were all Jews. They were gathered for the Jewish feast. It was the feast of Pentecost. And, They were from all over the Mediterranean world, Gathered there as pilgrims.

All with different languages. And the only thing they had in common, Was Judaism. Was their religion. But they had all these different languages, And couldn't communicate. So the Spirit of God came on them.

It was a very practical thing. So that they could all hear the message. Now the same thing is happening, But these aren't Jews. These are Gentiles. And that is enormously significant.

[12:11] Peter can't get over it. And let's read here, What we've got in, Chapter, Chapter, Chapter 10, And verse 43.

Of him, He is speaking of Christ, Of course. And he said, Of him, All the prophets bear witness.

That is, All of the Old Testament prophets. And by the way, Keep in mind, That when Peter is saying this, What we know is the New Testament, And what we are reading from now, In the New Testament, Didn't even exist then.

Peter is talking about the Old Testament. Of him, All the prophets bear witness, That through his name, Everyone who believes in him, Receives forgiveness of sins.

And fellas, Not only then, But today, There is no greater need, That any human being has, Than the forgiveness of sin, And a right relationship, With the God who made them.

There is no greater need, Not for food, Not for water, Not for air. We need forgiveness, More than we need anything. Because that's what's going to determine, Our eternal state.

[13:27] And this forgiveness, Is available, Through Jesus Christ. And then verse 44, What we were saying, While Peter was still speaking these words, The Holy Spirit fell on all those, Who were listening to the message.

These people, Had already, Mentally, Emotionally, Locked into Peter's message, And they were believing, As they sat there, And listened to this.

They were putting this stuff together. They were making decisions, In their minds, And hearts, As Peter was speaking. I don't know, If you've experienced this or not, But I have a number of times. When you are listening to someone, Proclaim the word of God, You may well be saying, In your own mind, As they are speaking, This is true.

This fits. This connects. I buy this. I understand this. I commit to this. You are making mental decisions, As the message is developing.

[14:32] That's exactly what's happening here. Many times, People come to faith in Christ. I've talked to people, Who've made decisions, At things like Billy Graham crusades, And stuff like that.

And many of them say, When Billy Graham would give the invitation, He preached the gospel, And give the invitation, For people to come forward. And you've seen, You've maybe even attended, Some of these crusades.

I have in the past. And people start streaming forward, As Billy would give an invitation, You want to receive Christ as your Savior. And I've had a number of people tell me, I did that when I was still seated.

I did that before he ever asked us to come forward. But I came forward, Just to see what they had to say, To show a commitment, Or a decision that I had made, To register it.

And many of them, Were saved, Sitting right there in their seat. As he was proclaiming the message, And they were putting the facts together, In their mind. Because, Our mind is engaged, In processing information.

[15:33] And as we hear the information, We start accumulating things, In our mind. And we reach conclusions. And the conclusion is, You know what? This, Is what I've been looking for.

This fits. This connects. I get this. I understand this. I connect the dots. And decisions are made, Oftentimes, Right there. And the getting up, And going forward, Is just like a confirmation of that. But what takes place, In the mind, And in the heart, Is what God really responds to. And that's what was taking place, In the minds and hearts, Of these people, As they heard Peter, Express this message.

And God confirmed it, By the spirit of God, Descending on these people, Just like he did, On the day of Pentecost. And Peter is shocked.

Peter is saying to himself, This is just like it was. On the day of Pentecost, When I was there. But those people, Those people were all my countrymen.

[16:36] They were all Jews. These are not Jews. These are Gentiles. What's going on? I don't understand this. And Peter is absolutely perplexed. So let's read on.

We are at the top of, Well, I lost my place. While Peter was still speaking these words, The Holy Spirit fell on all those, Who were listening to the message.

Because as I said, While they were listening, They were processing, And reaching decisions. And all the circumcised believers, Who were they?

Jews. Jews. All the circumcised believers, Who had come with Peter, Were amazed. Stunned. Shocked. Saying to each other, What's going on here? What is this? This isn't the way it's supposed to be. But this is what God was doing.

[17:35] Because, Because, They were shocked, Because, The gift of the Holy Spirit, Had been poured out, Upon the Gentiles, Also.

Fellas, You've got to understand, This was a, First. It was the second descent, Of the Holy Spirit, In this way.

But it was the first, For Gentiles. And Peter, And the six Jewish friends, Who are with him, Don't know what to make of this. This is very confusing.

Because the promise, That was originally given, And by the way, Let me just back up here, A little bit. As regards the day of Pentecost, Where so many, Are convinced, That I know this is the party line, I know it's the party line, Because I believed this, And taught this, For years.

For years. That Acts chapter 2, Was the birthday of the church. It was a new beginning. It wasn't any such thing. Acts chapter 2, Was the fulfillment of a prophecy.

[18:42] And Peter makes that very clear, When all these people, Are trying to figure out, What's going on? Some say, Oh, They're drunk with wine. And Peter says, These are not drunk, As you suppose, Seeing it's but the third hour of the day.

Peter says, This is that, Which was spoken of, By the prophet Joel. And now, It is being fulfilled. And Joel prophesied that, Hundreds of years earlier.

In Joel chapter 2. And Peter is saying, This is what Joel was talking about. So, Acts 2, Is not the beginning, Of the Christian church, As is commonly taught.

And as I commonly taught, For 15 years, After I came to faith in Christ, What it was, Was the fulfillment, Of a promise, God made to Israel, Through the prophet Joel.

And Peter is saying, This is the fulfillment of that. This is what that's all about. So, What we've got here then, As we continue on, They were hearing, Verse 46, They were hearing them, Speaking with tongues, And that too, Is often confusing.

[19:44] Because, When the Bible uses the word, Tongues like this, And speaking in tongues, What it really means, And what it's really saying, Is, Languages. Languages.

Different languages. And the word, Tongue, Is just used as a metaphor, For language, Because, Nobody speaks hardly, Without using the tongue.

And we often equate the tongue, Of what tongue a person is. We mean what language they are. And they are speaking with languages, And exalting God. Then Peter answered.

In the midst of his shock, Peter says, Well, surely, No one can refuse, The water, For these to be baptized, Who have received, The Holy Spirit, Just as we did.

Now, All Peter is doing here, Is reaching a very logical, Predictable conclusion. Because, Because, This message, That here is going to culminate, In water baptism, Is the same message, And the same baptism, That John, Began his ministry with.

[20 : 57] John, The baptizer, Came preaching, Repent, For the kingdom of heaven, Is at hand. Repent, And be baptized, For the remission of sins.

Repentions. That's, What's going on here. That was the message, On the day of Pentecost, That was the message, And, Remember when John, Was baptizing with water, And Jews, From all different tribes, Not just Levi, Up till this time, The only ones, The only Jews, Who were baptized, And underwent this ritual purification, Were going to be inducted, Into the Jewish priesthood, And they were from the tribe of Levi.

But when God said, In Exodus 19, 7, That I'm going to make, The whole nation of Israel, A nation of priests, That meant that they were to be, The light to the Gentiles, And that the whole nation of Israel, Was to be a priesthood nation, For all the other nations.

So when John, Began his baptism, He didn't ask these people, Who came to him, To be baptized, By the way, Are you from the tribe of Levi? Levi, Because that would make you, Eligible for the priest, No, no, He was baptizing everybody, They came from Jordan, From Judea, From all around, And John was baptizing all, Because John was saying, This, Is the beginning, Of what God is doing, In making Israel, A whole nation of priests, And John was baptizing, All of these people, And then he said this, He said, John said, I baptize you with water, But there comes one, After me, Who is mightier than I, He, He, Meaning Jesus, He, Will baptize you, With the Holy Spirit, And with fire, And there are two extremes there, The one, Is a baptism, Unto repentance, And salvation, The fire, Is a baptism, Unto damnation,

For those on the opposite end, Of the spectrum, For the unbelievers, Everybody, Everybody was going to be baptized, One way or another, Baptism, Unto repentance, And remission of sins, Or, Baptism, Unto condemnation, Both of those, Would be baptism, By the way, Let me just, Mention this as an aside, Almost every time, The word baptism is used, People assume, H₂O, And sometimes it is, And it's water here, It's H₂O here, John was baptizing, In real water, And Peter is here, Baptizing in real water, But this baptism, That Peter is baptizing with here, Is the same baptism, With which they had been baptized, Up to this point, It was John's baptism, That was all they knew, And that was all they needed, And that was all that was provided, To that time, In the Bible, There are, Twelve, Count them, Twelve, Different baptisms, In the Bible,

[23 : 57] And only, Two, Of the twelve, Are water, It's a fascinating study, In and of itself, Maybe we'll engage it sometime, So, There is, An appropriate place, For water baptism, And yet, Water baptism, In my estimation, And as a result, Of my study of the scriptures, And I realize, That I've got a lot of, Good, Godly brethren, Who disagree with me, But it is, Spirit baptism, For by one spirit, Are we all baptized, Into one body, Whether we be Jew, Gentile, Bond or free, Male or female, And have all been made to drink, Of one spirit, That is spirit baptism, And it is, For, The body of Christ, When you become a believer, In Jesus Christ, No matter what your background, Or who you are, When you became a believer, In Jesus Christ, You were, Baptized, By the Holy Spirit, Into the body of Christ, Now maybe this is splitting hairs, I don't think so,

But, But it was said of Christ, He will baptize you, With, The Holy Spirit, And you will receive, The gift of the Holy Spirit, That was for back then, Christ was baptizing, With the Holy Spirit, Today, We are baptized, By the Holy Spirit, Into, The body of Christ, That's not the same thing, Two different programs, Both are baptism, But one is baptized, Where Christ is the agent, Doing the baptizing, With the Holy Spirit, But now, In the church age, We are, Baptized, By the Holy Spirit, Into the body of Christ, It's just, The reverse, And it is an important distinction, Because it's talking about, Two different programs, And this is the thing that, Is, What is in vogue here, In Acts 10, Is the same baptism, With which they've been familiar, And Peter knew, That John came baptizing, And Christ came baptizing, And Peter was doing it with them,

And now that these Gentiles, Have come to faith in Jesus, Peter is thinking, The logical thing, Is to baptize them, Just like we did everybody else, And just like we were, And he was right on track with that, That was precisely, What they were supposed to be doing, And that is what they did, And then he ordered them, Verse 48, To be baptized, In the name, Or under the authority, Of Jesus Christ, And they asked him, To stay on, For a few days, Well I guess, Wouldn't that have been something, And the few days, That he stayed on for, Must have been exhilarating, I think it was a big, Long extended Bible class, And Peter was teaching it, And telling them, All the things that Christ had

done, While he was with them, For three years, The miracles, And the teachings, And everything, And these people, Were just like sponges, They were just soaking it up, They couldn't get enough, Of what Peter had to share with them, So we'll undertake the next chapter, When we come back, Any questions or comments, Before we, Yeah, Well,

Water baptism, Can serve as a symbolism, And a symbolism for cleansing, A symbolism for an indifference, Induction into a new situation, But, Someone has made the point, And I think it's a valid observation, That it doesn't make any difference, What position you take, Regarding water baptism, You will be in a minority, You think about that, You've got, You've got extremes, All the way, From the, From the Roman Catholic, Lutheran position, Which is, There is no entrance, Into heaven, Without water baptism, And this is, This is a rationale, And it's a perfectly, Logical rationale, If you accept that premise, This is why they baptize babies, Because if that baby dies, Then it's going to limbo, Rather than heaven, And that's what their theology teaches, So, All the way from, Baptism,

Water baptism, Is essential for salvation, All the way over to, Water baptism, Is not required at all, For this dispensation, Those are the two, Polar extremes, And everybody else, Is somewhere in between, And some sprinkle, And some pour, And some immerse, Once backwards, Some immerse, Forward, Three times, And very often, They will not accept, Each other's baptism, As being, A valid baptism, You've got to be baptized, Their way, Into their mode, Whatever that might be, So it's a real mixed bag, And it is very confusing, But I trust that some of these things, Will give you a little bit of clarity, Richard?

[28 : 44] Have you ever thought, There's somebody who, Oh yeah, They don't believe, But the God, But the God, And they don't believe, Is that Jesus Christ, And your Savior, And your Savior, And your Savior, The reason I say that, Is because, There in Acts 10, Verse 36, You know, It says, It's not, Just written up that faith, And God left that faith, In Christ.

Yeah. And, That's, Uh-huh. Sorry. Have you ever heard, Of an argument, In the name of Cliff? No one, Can't say that I have. Well, It turns out, This man, Um, Uh, Uh-huh.

Uh-huh. Yeah. Yeah. Yeah.

Yeah. You're right. Absolutely. Absolutely. I appreciate that. Yeah. Well, What I've shared with you this morning, May be completely new, And foreign to you, And I would not be surprised, If you reject it out of hand, Because that's exactly what I did.

The first time I heard it, I said, This can't be, This can't be, I couldn't be wrong about this, But, I must confess, I later discovered, That I was wrong, And it was a bitter pill to swallow, Because I don't know of anything harder to do, Than reverse yourself from something, That you've taught for years, And, Uh, In fact, I've even apologized to my congregation, For some of the things I taught back when then, And yet, My heart was in the right place, I taught in accordance with what I believed was true, And, And, Uh, And yet, When you learn that what you taught was not true, You need to clarify it, And that's what we're trying to do.