

ACTS

Chapter 11

Peter Reports to the Church

Now the apostles and the brothers who were throughout Judea heard that the Gentiles also had received the word of God. 2 So when Peter went up to Jerusalem, the circumcision party[b] criticized him, saying, 3 “You went to uncircumcised men and ate with them.” 4 But Peter began and explained it to them in order: 5 “I was in the city of Joppa praying, and in a trance I saw a vision, something like a great sheet descending, being let down from heaven by its four corners, and it came down to me. 6 Looking at it closely, I observed animals and beasts of prey and reptiles and birds of the air. 7 And I heard a voice saying to me, ‘Rise, Peter; kill and eat.’ 8 But I said, ‘By no means, Lord; for nothing common or unclean has ever entered my mouth.’ 9 But the voice answered a second time from heaven, ‘What God has made clean, do not call common.’ 10 This happened three times, and all was drawn up again into heaven. 11 And behold, at that very moment three men arrived at the house in which we were, sent to me from Caesarea. 12 And the Spirit told me to go with them, making no distinction. These six brothers also accompanied me, and we entered the man's house. 13 And he told us how he had seen the angel stand in his house and say, ‘Send to Joppa and bring Simon who is called Peter; 14 he will declare to you a message by which you will be saved, you and all your household.’ 15 As I began to speak, the Holy Spirit fell on them just as on us at the beginning. 16 And I remembered the word of the Lord, how he said, ‘John baptized with water, but you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit.’ 17 If then God gave the same gift to them as he gave to us when we believed in the Lord Jesus Christ, who was I that I could stand in God's way?” 18 When they heard these things they fell silent. And they glorified God, saying, “Then to the Gentiles also God has granted repentance that leads to life.”

11:1-18 The chapters before the text (Acts 9–10) are filled with dramatic and miraculous death-to-life events. Saul's conversion is the miraculous working of the Spirit to bring a prominent and zealous Jew to faith in Jesus (spiritual death-to-life). The raising of Dorcas from death (9:36–43) is a great physical miracle (physical death-to-life). The miraculous visions to Cornelius and then Peter in ch 10 lay the groundwork for the dramatic and miraculous working of God to include formerly unclean people to be part of his plan. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 23, Part 2)

11:1 *The apostles and the brothers.* At times “brothers” is used to refer to those of common Jewish lineage (2:29; 7:2), but in Christian contexts it denotes those united in Christ (6:3; 10:23). In matters of deep concern, the apostles did not act alone. The divine will gave guidance, and the apostles interpreted and exhorted, but the consent of the whole church was sought (“the whole group,” 6:5; “apostles and the brothers,” 11:1; “the church,” 11:22; “the church and the apostles and elders,” 15:4; cf. 15:22). (CSB)

Jewish converts to Christianity. (TLSB)

heard – Word of what had happened in Caesarea spread through the church like a wildfire fanned by a strong wind. And this is understandable, for what just happened was in every sense

of the word revolutionary. To bring non-Jews, Gentiles, into a full and equal relationship with Jews – entering their homes and eating their food at their tables – as Peter had done, was astounding. It left the church reeling from the suddenness with which this development had burst upon them. Up until now all the believers, even those in Samaria, were native Jews or those who upon accepting the Jewish faith, had submitted to all the ceremonial requirements, including circumcision. (LL)

Specifically, the affirmation of Christ as the Messiah and Savior. (TLSB)

News had traveled that Gentiles, *ethnē*, had received God’s Word. This was no small bit of news as it was a radical departure from previous protocol, whereby people were brought into the faith as proselytes to the synagogue. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 23, Part 2)

11:2-3 The distinctions are highlighted and made clear: either you are circumcised or uncircumcised. Either you went and ate with them or you didn’t. The circumcised group “criticized” or “contended,” *diekrinonto*, with Peter, questioning which group he was a part of or whether he was trying to stand in the middle. For them, it was black or white. (The touchy application of race and ethnicity and divisions within Christianity may apply today in some contexts more than others; in some communities, the issue of black and white and all racism is very strong.) (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 23, Part 2)

11:2 *circumcision party*. Jewish Christians. (CSB)

Those who insisted on circumcision along with saving faith. Cf Gal 3. Since the uncircumcised Gentiles were only beginning to be received into the Church, this title may be retrospective—we see the party forming from this incident. Cf Ac 15. (TLSB)

The ones who appear to be the most upset were those who insisted that circumcision and other Jewish laws were absolutely essential for membership in the Christian church. We might call them the circumcision party. They appeared on the scene again in Antioch some time later and created a problem among Paul and Peter and Barnabas (Gal. 2:11-13). (LL)

11:3 *uncircumcised men*. The Gentiles who would not observe the laws of clean and unclean food and would violate Jewish regulations concerning food preparation. (CSB)

The Pharisees had criticized Jesus for eating with sinners and tax collectors (Mk 2:15–16). (TLSB)

11:4 *explained* – Peter didn’t reprimand his accusers, nor did he argue with them. He remembered His own attitude in this whole matter not more than four or five weeks earlier. Beautifully and carefully he led his hearer through the same schooling he had received from the Lord. (LL)

To defend himself, Peter begins an orderly account of events, much in the Lukan style of how he set to write the Books of Luke and Acts. It is as if Peter is on trial and begins to tell the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth (so help him God!). (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 23, Part 2)

11:5-7 The parallels between vv 5–10 and 10:10–16 are clear. The virtual repetition corroborates the story. Peter is practically “in another world” deep within himself and connected to God—in

the context of prayer and a “trance” and a “vision,” a triple introspection. The “sheet,” *othonēn* (like a tablecloth?), came specifically to him, and the menagerie was meant for him to see. Peter understands the voice to be the Lord, *Kyrie*. The specific command addressed to him by name, “Rise, Peter; kill and eat,” leaves no doubt what he is to do. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 23, Part 2)

11:8-9 For how shocking a command this is, Peter’s refusal to God’s clear directive is bold! His point that nothing “common,” *koinon*, or “unclean” has ever crossed his lips is a source of pride and faithfulness for a Jew. Here playing with “common” can yield some homiletical fruit. Its meaning of “sharing in something” or “fellowship” can have interesting application in who God set apart (only the Jews?), who shares in the promise, and even in table fellowship as it comes to understanding of altar fellowship and Holy Communion shared only among those who have been made one in faith. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 23, Part 2)

11:10 The repetition of this three times must not be lost on Peter, as it seems to be God’s signature method for dealing with him (Jn 13:38; 21:15–17). (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 23, Part 2)

11:11-12 Here, Peter’s vision and Cornelius’s (10:1–8) intertwine. The three men are sent and received, and Peter’s companions (six of them) go with him. This becomes larger than just Peter and Cornelius and starts to involve others, who had not seen the visions, becoming part of God’s plan to bring Jews and Gentiles together—just as Peter is hoping that those to whom he is relating this story will become a part of God’s plan. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 23, Part 2)

11:12 Six brothers represent twice the number of witnesses needed to establish testimony (Mt 18:19–20). (TLSB)

11:13-14 The angel’s message shows what the visions are truly about: not just eating or fellowship but *salvation* itself (*sōthēsēi*) to Cornelius and his household! (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 23, Part 2)

11:14 *you and all your household.*† Not only the family, including any children, but also slaves and employed individuals under Cornelius’s authority. (CSB)

11:15 The connection of the Spirit’s work here to what had happened to them “at the beginning” at Pentecost is perhaps the clincher in Peter’s defense. How can one argue with the work of the Spirit? (Note that Peter uses the same verb, *diakrinanta*, in v 12 when he says he did not contend with or doubt the Spirit but went along with his working.) If the Spirit had worked in and through the first believers at Pentecost, couldn’t he also work here? (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 23, Part 2)

11:16-17 The remembrance of Baptism and the Spirit bringing to life is significant. We ought not look for miraculous dreams now, but rather to that way God has promised to work through water and the Word. Such a “common” occurrence as a Baptism is no less miraculous than the events of these chapters of Acts. The same Spirit works in all to give the same gift of faith. Peter’s final question of himself elicits the final response of his hearers in v 17: “who was I that I could stand in God’s way?” (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 23, Part 2)

11:16 Peter comments on what went through his mind during the events of 10:44–48. Pentecost was the fulfillment of this prophecy about Baptism and the Spirit (ch 2). (TLSB)

11:17 *God gave the same gift* – God withheld neither the gift of grace nor the Holy Spirit from the Gentiles. Peter, having seen Christ’s ministry, death, and resurrection, was also an eyewitness of the Gentiles’ receiving of the Holy Spirit through the proclamation of the Gospel. (TLSB)

stand in God’s way. Peter could not deny the Gentiles the invitation to be baptized (10:47) and to enjoy full fellowship in Christ with all believers. The Jewish believers were compelled to recognize that God was going to save Gentiles on equal terms with Jews. By divine action rather than by human choice, the door was being opened to Gentiles. (CSB)

11:18 *repentance that leads to life.*† A change of one’s attitude, which leads to a turning from sin to God and results in eternal life (CSB)

It means that a mission by Jews to Gentiles can begin because, as Peter has seen, God has removed the social barrier between Jews and Gentiles. It is a breakthrough not simply because Peter and the Jerusalem church now accept Gentiles for baptism but also because they recognize the right of Jewish Christians to freely associate with Gentiles in the course of their mission. (Tannehill)

The response is one of faith. They stop speaking their own words and thoughts and became “silent,” *hēsuchasan*, until the response of faith came out as praise. They realized that the call to repentance and life came also from God to these Gentiles. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 23, Part 2)

11:1–18 Through the Law, God condemns all sinners and drives them to repentance; through the Gospel, He grants life everlasting. Live a life of daily repentance, and glorify God for His lavish blessings and gifts to you and all people. • Lord, let our likeness to some not be a barrier to others. Draw everyone to You, O Holy Spirit, even the unlikely. Amen. (TLSB)

The Church in Antioch

19 Now those who were scattered because of the persecution that arose over Stephen traveled as far as Phoenicia and Cyprus and Antioch, speaking the word to no one except Jews. **20** But there were some of them, men of Cyprus and Cyrene, who on coming to Antioch spoke to the Hellenists also, preaching the Lord Jesus. **21** And the hand of the Lord was with them, and a great number who believed turned to the Lord. **22** The report of this came to the ears of the church in Jerusalem, and they sent Barnabas to Antioch. **23** When he came and saw the grace of God, he was glad, and he exhorted them all to remain faithful to the Lord with steadfast purpose, **24** for he was a good man, full of the Holy Spirit and of faith. And a great many people were added to the Lord. **25** So Barnabas went to Tarsus to look for Saul, **26** and when he had found him, he brought him to Antioch. For a whole year they met with the church and taught a great many people. And in Antioch the disciples were first called Christians. **27** Now in these days prophets came down from Jerusalem to Antioch. **28** And one of them named Agabus stood up and foretold by the Spirit that there would be a great famine over all the world (this took place in the days of Claudius). **29** So the disciples determined, every one according to his ability, to send relief to the brothers living in Judea. **30** And they did so, sending it to the elders by the hand of Barnabas and Saul.

11:19-30 The Good News of Jesus and his resurrection spreads farther and farther. More and more people believe and turn to the Lord. Philip preached to the Samaritans and taught the truth of salvation to an Ethiopian. After relating in elaborate detail the conversion of the Gentile Cornelius, Luke turns to a brief account of the establishment of the first predominantly Gentile church. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 7, Part 2)

Peter has just finished explaining his visit to the Roman centurion, Cornelius, to members of the circumcision party in Jerusalem. Those who listened to Peter's defense drew the conclusion, "God has granted even the Gentiles repentance unto life" (Acts 11:18). It is very possible that the events reported by Luke in our text have happened at roughly the same time as the incidents described in ch 8. The persecution was the means by which God led his followers out of Judea to Samaria and the first stage beyond, Antioch. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 16, Part 2)

11:19 *were scattered* - Acts is a step-by-step unfolding and not a haphazard affair. Now the Gospel is taken to pagans, not just God-fearers like the Ethiopian eunuch and even Cornelius. It is likely that the events described here happen within the same time frame as those that Luke also describes as happening as a result of the Jerusalem persecution (see also 8:1, 4). (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 16, Part 2)

Phoenicia. A country about 15 miles wide and 120 miles long stretching along the northeastern Mediterranean coast (modern Lebanon). Its important cities were Tyre and Sidon. (CSB)

Cyprus. An island in the northeastern Mediterranean; the home of Barnabas (4:36). (CSB)

Antioch. The third city of the Roman empire (after Rome and Alexandria). It was 15 miles inland from the northeast corner of the Mediterranean. The first largely Gentile local church was located here, and it was from this church that Paul's three missionary journeys were launched (13:1-4; 15:40; 18:23). (CSB)

Had about one-half million in population. (PBC)

It is important to note that the arrival of the Gospel in Antioch is the result of the scattering of Christians following Stephen's death, not the result of a mission organized by the Jerusalem church. (Tannehill)

240 miles north of Jerusalem. (LL)

Antioch was named for Seleucus Nicator's father, Antiochus. Antioch was a political center, the third most important city in the empire because of its extensive Mediterranean trade. Wealth of the East flowed through Antioch on its way to Rome. Armies of Greece and Rome had marched through it. It was a sophisticated and tolerant city, for its population was Syrian, its culture was Greek, and it was ruled by Rome. Antioch was also known to be a morally corrupt city; outside was a grove of trees called the Grove of Apollo, notorious as a location for sexual indulgence. Antioch was so well-known for its immorality that when the satirist Juvenal was trying to describe how Rome had become corrupted by the East, he said, "The Syrian [river] Orontes has flowed into the Tiber" (Richard Rackham, *Acts of the Apostles* [Eugene, OR: Wipf and Stock, 2003], 165, used by permission; the full text may be obtained from www.wipfandstock.com). Yet Antioch had a large Jewish colony with many proselytes. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 16, Part 2)

speaking the word – What a much needed lesson for Christians today! Everywhere these early untrained Christians went they talked about the message of God’s love in Christ. No one told them this was their responsibility. It was simply a matter of “We cannot help speaking about what we have seen and heard!” (3:20). (LL)

We surmise that the scattered disciples spoke boldly about their Lord, but their audience was first predominantly Jewish hearers, for Luke writes that they told “the message only to the Jews.” But the message of a resurrected Lord cannot be contained; it must spread. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 7, Part 2)

11:20 *Cyrene*. For the first time, disciples from the island of Cyprus and from Cyrene in northern Africa deliberately preached to Gentiles in Antioch, 240 miles north of Jerusalem, a city of half a million people. Built in 300 B.C., Antioch was the third largest city in the Roman empire. This mission work was carried on by Greek-speaking Jewish Christians who had been scattered from Jerusalem by Saul’s persecution of the believers. Many Greeks joined the Antioch church, which would later serve as the hub of all three missionary trips of Paul. While v 19 says that some of the scattered Christians preached only to Jews, v 20 emphasizes that others actually were preaching to Greeks—pagans—a revolutionary idea. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 7, Part 2)

Hellenists. Not Greek-speaking Jews, but Gentiles. (CSB)

preaching the Lord Jesus – Now Luke turns at once to the mission of the Hellenists in Antioch. By so doing he shows that the expansion of the people to include Gentiles is not the work only of one person but is part of a larger enterprise. (Sacra)

11:21 *hand of the Lord*. Cf. 4:30; 13:11; cf. also Lk 1:66. It indicates divine approval and blessing, sometimes evidenced by signs and wonders (see Ex 8:19). (CSB)

“The hand of the Lord” (ESV) is an Old Testament formula signifying that the events described were guided by God and so have his approval. The conclusion was drawn because of the large number of pagans who became believers. The Lord to whom they turned and believed is Jesus. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 16, Part 2)

turned to the Lord. Luther: “Faith is an unceasing and constant looking ... which turns the eyes upon nothing but Christ, the Victor over sin and death and the Giver of righteousness, salvation, and life eternal” (WLS § 1374). (TLSB)

Growth in the church, however large or small, is strictly and solely by the grace of God and the work of the Holy Spirit through the spoken and written Word. (LL)

Their eager witness was certainly obvious, but the church grew as many “turned to the Lord” because “the Lord’s hand was with them.” “The Lord’s hand” includes the Holy Spirit, who turned the hearts of these Greeks to their new Savior. The grace of God was made visible in this effort. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 7, Part 2)

11:22 *the report of this came* - Most of the apostles apparently were absent from the central church in Jerusalem, conceivably doing the work of mission and ministry. When the news of this successful church reached the Jerusalem church, it was imperative that this young congregation be recognized for its activity and thus be included in the fellowship of Christian churches.

Barnabas, a native of Cyprus, a good man because he was full of the Spirit, was sent as an authoritative representative to see if the reports were true and to bestow God's blessing on this vibrant mission congregation. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 7, Part 2)

Once again (see 8:14), the Jerusalem Church hears of the Gospel's advance into unfamiliar territory. This time, instead of sending Peter and John, Barnabas is dispatched. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 16, Part 2)

Barnabas. Anxious that these new Gentile believers know that they were fully accepted into the one Christian church, the congregation decided to send their greetings and blessings to these new believers in Antioch. (CSB)

Barnabas was not only a good man, full of the Holy Spirit and faith, but he had another qualification that made him just the right person for the job – he was a native-born Cyrian, just as some of those who had taken the Gospel to Antioch. All of this, of course, was neatly set in motion by God. (LL)

Antioch. The sending of Barnabas was apparently in keeping with the Jerusalem church's policy of sending leaders to check on new ministries that came to their attention (see 8:14). (CSB)

11:23 *glad...exhorted- charin and echarē* form a nice wordplay. God's grace gladdens the heart. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 16, Part 2)

with all their hearts - prothesei tēs kardias is found only in Symmacus's rendering of Ps 10:17, "in the purpose of their hearts." Barnabas continued to exhort the faithful, not just once. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 16, Part 2)

11:24 *full of the Holy Spirit and of faith.* See the description of Stephen (6:5). (CSB)

Barnabas saw what God's power can do. He "saw the evidence of the grace of God" and "he was glad." For us, grace is often an intellectual concept that we try to simplify with the acronym "God's Riches At Christ's Expense." But in Antioch the grace of God was dynamic; it was "visiblized." Although Barnabas physically could see only their eagerness, he knew the cause behind it: the very grace of God. Therefore, Barnabas was exhorting (*parekalei*, imperfect) them to remain (*prosmenein*, present infinitive) in the Lord, because the task of remaining faithful is an ever-present challenge and responsibility. This is especially true in cosmopolitan Antioch, which was known for its luxury, immorality, and lustful living. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 7, Part 2)

11:25 *Tarsus.* Luke wants to show that Paul (still called Saul) was directly involved with the early history of this church. So Barnabas, remembering Saul and his qualifications, went to Tarsus and made a thorough search (*anazētēsai*) for Saul. He invited him to come to Antioch and to work with him in this new Christian community. This was Saul's start. Barnabas sets in motion a congregational rhythm of church life: continuing proclamation (*elaloun*, imperfect, v 20); conversion (the aorist verbs in vv 21, 24 for completed action), and teaching (encouragement and nurture, vv 23, 26). God's power was mightily at work. In spite of the odds against this decadent city and its life, the Word of God made inroads. The simple explanation: "The Lord's hand was with them"—the grace of God became visible. When the peace of God—his joy and forgiveness—is shared, people turn to its source. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 7, Part 2)

Apparently, Barnabas believed that Saul would be helpful in teaching the new converts at Antioch. Their work in Antioch forms the basis for their further missionary activities together. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 16, Part 2)

11:26 *whole year*. Luke notes definite periods of time (18:11; 19:8, 10; 24:27; 28:30). (CSB)

Christians. Whether adopted by believers or invented by enemies as a term of reproach, it is an apt title for those “belonging to Christ” (the meaning of the term). (CSB)

Gk *christianos*; from a Lat noun that indicates allegiance to Christ. A title used by outsiders, reflecting their attitude. Hus: “The faithful were first called disciples and brethren, and later Christians” (*The Church*, p 63). Luther: “ ‘On this rock, that is, on me, Christ, I will build all of my Christendom, just as you and the other disciples are built on it through my Father in heaven, who revealed it to you.’ ... Thus Luke in Acts 11 [:26] says that the disciples in Antioch were first called Christians, which is why names have survived such as, ‘Christians, Christendom, Christian faith,’ etc.... Whoever believes in Christ is built on this rock and will attain salvation, even against all the gates of hell; whoever does not believe in Christ is not built on this rock and must be damned, with all the gates of hell” (AE 41:314–15). (TLSB)

Luke reports facts with three historical infinitives (*sunachthēnai*, “to meet together”; *didaxai*, “to teach”; and *chrēmatisai*, “to give instruction”) to show how these activities were for the benefit of this congregation (dative of advantage). The last of the three infinitives informs us that the disciples were first called Christians here in Antioch. Usually, they called themselves apostles (v 1), saints (9:13), or brothers (1:16). The word “Christian” here (*Christianous*, “belonging to Christ”) is used only two other times in the Bible (Acts 26:28; 1 Pet 4:16). Church historians are not certain if this name was used as a term of derision or of praise. The word that the followers of Christ prefer is “disciple.” No doubt these people met daily to receive instruction for daily living. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 7, Part 2)

sunachthēnai, “to be gathered together.” (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 16, Part 2)

chrēmatisai. The active form is often found with a passive meaning, “to be called.” Disciples were called “Christ-people” first in Antioch and so stood apart from Judaism. F. F. Bruce offers evidence that these followers did not pick that name for themselves (F. F. Bruce, *The Acts of the Apostles* [Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1988], 228). This separation from Judaism will do two things: first, it will bring a risk of losing their status as an approved religion, which they enjoyed as a sect of Judaism; second, it will create challenges in maintaining ties to the people of Abraham. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 16, Part 2)

11:27 *prophets*. The first mention of the gift of prophecy in Acts. Prophets preach, exhort, explain or, as in this case, foretell (see 13:1; 15:32; 19:6; 21:9–10; Ro 12:6; 1Co 12:10; 13:2, 8; 14:3, 6, 29–37; see also notes on Jnh 3:2; Zec 1:1; Eph 4:11). (CSB)

came down. From the heights of Jerusalem. (TLSB)

11:28 *Agabus*. Later foretells Paul’s imprisonment (21:10). In Acts, prophets are engaged in foretelling (v. 27; 21:9–10) at least as often as in “forthtelling” (15:32). (CSB)

esēmainen, “to foretell,” especially when followed with the phrase “through the Spirit” and used of future events. History records at least five different famines in the reign of Claudius. Josephus

speaks of a famine in Palestine in AD 44–48, about this time, under the procurators Cuspius Fadus and Tiberius Alexander (*Antiquities of the Jews*, 3:15.3; 20:2.5, 5.2). (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 16, Part 2)

The Spirit demonstrated power through foretelling of the future.

great famine ... in the days of Claudius. Claudius ruled as Roman emperor AD 41–54. Josephus mentions these economic troubles (*Ant* 20:51). (TLSB)

11:29 The congregation as a body decided (plural verb) to provide help (imperfect verb, which denotes a continuing response) by gathering an offering for their brothers. They determined as a church body to support their fellow believers in Jerusalem. In so doing, each person (*hekastos*) had to individually decide the extent of their personal involvement. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 7, Part 2)

11:30 *elders*.† First reference to them in Acts. Since the apostles are not mentioned, they may have been absent from Jerusalem at this time, or the elders may have had charge of mundane matters, freeing the apostles' time for "the ministry of the word of God" (6:2). (CSB)

11:19–30 Though persecution scatters the believers, the Lord uses the persecution to proclaim the Gospel even more broadly. As believers grow in faith, they commit themselves to acts of service. Men of God, such as Barnabas, not only confirm the work of the Holy Spirit among believers but also ensure that new believers are nurtured in the faith through instruction (Mt 28:19–20). •
"Awake, Thou Spirit, who didst fire
The watchmen of the Church's youth,
Who faced the Foe's envenomed ire,
Who witnessed day and night Thy truth,
Whose voices loud are ringing still
And bringing hosts to know Thy will." Amen. (*TLH* 494:1) (TLSB)