

Welcome friends to another broadcast of “Morsels for Zion’s Poor”

The cities of this world have all been indwelt by wicked men and the concentration of their populations has encouraged that innate wickedness which we see manifested as the LORD destroyed the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah. The only “*just*” man that could be found in that city (i.e. Lot), was rescued out of it. He was “*just*”, not because of his morality, but because of the ONE who is the JUSTIFIER of HIS elect. There was nothing “*upright*” in Lot’s conduct in the ensuing days, and nothing commendable about his sin, yet the LORD used his sin for good as his incestuous liaison produced offspring from which the lineage of CHRIST is traced. In this the LORD would show us that there is no good thing in men, all of their RIGHTEOUSNESS, is that which is imputed to them by the REDEEMER.

So, we find little recommendation in the scriptures for “*city dwelling*”, yet the LORD calls HIS sheep even while they are in the midst of these ungodly habitations. The city of Antioch is mentioned eighteen times in the NT. The LORD had people in that city, both Jew and Gentile, whom HE would call out of darkness and into the LIGHT. Thus, HE was pleased to send gospel preachers to declare the unsearchable riches of CHRIST, that they might hear and believe even as the saints of old who “*all died in faith, not having received the promises, but having seen them afar off, and were persuaded of them, and embraced them, and confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth. --- But now they desire a better country, that is, an heavenly: wherefore God is not ashamed to be called their God: for he hath prepared for them a city.*”

When many believers were scattered, in the days following the stoning of Stephen, some of them were sent, unbeknownst to them to the city of Antioch. At the first they (being Jews) only preached to the Jews of that city. The LORD raised up many who believed the gospel of the glory of JESUS CHRIST and upon hearing of their “*faith*”, the church at Jerusalem, sent Barnabas to bear witness of them and to them. While he was there the LORD caused many of the Jews to believe. In time Barnabas left Antioch in search of Paul and finding him; brought him back to Antioch. They both assembled with these believers for a year and the scripture notes that it was here in Antioch that those who confessed to being the followers of CHRIST were first called Christians. And when he had found him, he brought him unto Antioch. “*And the disciples were called Christians first in Antioch.*” This “*name*” (though probably bestowed upon them in a derisive way, by the unbelievers in the city) was actually quite a mark of honor. For it indicates that they were openly confessing those things that they believed and walked in obedience to those precepts. We sadly point out that this “*name*” has come to mean very little in the present day, since it is applied to men in such a general way as to signify nothing and most, claiming to be such, can produce little evidence in support of it. “*I know thy works, that thou hast a name that thou livest, and art dead.*”

These “*Christians*” in Antioch sent monetary gifts for the relief of the suffering brethren in Jerusalem, demonstrating their willingness to “*bear one another’s burdens.*” It was here in Antioch that the LORD was pleased to move among the people to send Barnabas and Saul unto the work which HE had called them to do in carrying the gospel to the island of Cyprus. When they returned to Antioch they went to the Synagogue, (as was their custom as Jews) on the Sabbath (i.e., seventh day of the week), and while there, declared the unsearchable riches of the crucified and risen CHRIST. Few of the Jews desired to hear of this MAN, yet many of the Gentiles who gathered on the fringes of that assembly desired to hear more of these things. Thus, Saul and Barnabas, spoke to them on the following Sabbath and the multitude of the Jews made a mockery of them but nearly the whole city turned out to listen to this message. Here we read of one of the most glorious and incontrovertible passages in the scriptures, which declares the Sovereign electing grace of GOD in appointing HIS people unto SALVATION. “*And when the Gentiles heard this, they were glad, and glorified the word of the Lord: and as many as were ordained to eternal life believed. And the word of the Lord was published throughout all the region.*” All of these things happened in Antioch unto the glory of our blessed GOD and SAVIOR who calls HIS own sheep by name and makes HIS people willing in the day of HIS power. Have you heard and believed the gospel of CHRIST’s redemption?

“*Thy free grace alone,*” #11 **If you would like a free transcript of this broadcast email us at forthe poor@windstream.net**