**The Answers of the 1st, 2nd, 3rd RUTC:**

**Absolute Answers One Must Experience Amidst Tribulations (Acts 11:1-26) 5/31/2020**

The Bible says that we will hear of many disastrous news, but there are things that await us afterwards. It says that the people of God will face tribulations (Matthew 24:9, 2Timothy 3:12). However, there is no reason to be afraid. God has given us the answer through His word and has raised up many witnesses who enjoyed the blessing of saving the world during such time of difficulties.

**The Antioch Church from the passage becomes our important model.** When our church first began, we held onto this covenant of the Antioch Church. It is of utmost importance for us to hold onto that very covenant and reflect on our church and on ourselves in this time of hardships. In verse 19, it says that those who had been scattered by the persecution that broke out when Stephen was martyred began the Antioch Church. “Those who had been scattered by persecution” can be called “diasporas” in a good way, or “refugees” in a lesser way. To these people, no one is there to help (Nobody). There is no way (No Way). It is a time of despair (No Time). They have nowhere to go (Nowhere).

**The seven remnants of the Bible all went through such times.** Perhaps, there are some among us that are experiencing hardships now, and there will undoubtedly be a day where churches and people of God will face hardships in the end times. All people of God must hold onto God’s absolute covenant. It is a blessing that only God can fulfill, only God can give, and only those who are within God can enjoy.

**1. God’s absolute plan. No matter what, saved people of God are within God’s absolute plan.**

**1) First, we must hold onto the absolute covenant given to us through Christ.**

**① Undoubtedly, Christ solved three fundamental curses through his death on the cross and resurrection.** He finished the curses of original sin, curses of Satan, and eternal curses. We are no longer to be condemned or judged. We are the ones who will enjoy God’s blessings (Ephesians1:3-5). The Satan who destroyed Adam had brought us inexplicable failures and curses in our families and the world, but we will surely have victory (1Corinthians 15:25, Romans 16:20). Christ has become our way. Until the day we go to heaven, He will be with us, guide us, and work among us (John 14:6, John 14:16-18).

**② We must come to a conclusion. Christ finished all problems, and no problem is really a problem (John 19:30).** So if we truly hold onto the covenant and pray, how did He promise to answer us? Jeremiah 33:3, Romans 8:28, Acts 1:8.

**2) No matter how weak and lacking and how we have nothing to offer, God will fulfill through the ones who hold onto the covenant.** The people who lasted until the Antioch Church did not have any names nor any positions. God gave this covenant even to the Israelites who lost their land and were taken away as slaves (Isaiah 60:22).

**3) We must train to change the base, level, and the standard of our thoughts. We must train to change our imprint, root, and nature.**

**① People of God with the covenant are constantly deceived because they think in a level that is lower than that of non-believers.** Even non-believers say things like, “If you change your thoughts, your life will change” and “thoughts change your destiny.” If we do not have the Gospel, we are deceived by ourselves. However, we have Christ who gives us the covenant and fulfills it within us.

**② The important fact is that they thought of evangelism even while they were chased down by persecution.** When they realized that they were not chased but rather God had sent them, that place became the absolute field (Genesis 45:5).

**③ There is something more important. Everyone only evangelized to the Jews, but there were some people that evangelized to the Greeks (verse 20).** God was pleased with this. They were carrying out the work of saving all nations, which was God’s absolute desire. Be considerate to individuals of all ethnicities and TCKs, as you help and bless them. That is the heart of God.

**2. God’s absolute grace. God has promised the strength to fulfill the absolute plan in all circumstances and environments.**

“Grace” (hen/chen, hesed, charis) means it is given by someone from above who sympathized and loved us.

**1) Evaluate your current address accurately and acknowledge yourself honestly.**

**① This is why we go through problems and experience failures.**

We must take a look at ourselves, who cannot go on without God’s grace. That is when you experience His absolute grace. All the people who were used greatly by God experienced this and stood up as someone who saved an entire age (Genesis 6:8, Romans 4:4-8, 1Corinthians 15:10).

**② One of the reasons we cannot overcome our hardships is because we do not acknowledge our current addresses.** In order to rescue someone from drowning, we must wait until he loses strength. This is like God’s time schedule. When you are evangelizing, pray and wait for God’s time schedule and for that individual’s time schedule as you treat them nicely.

**2) Then, you can look upon only Christ and make Him your Lord and master (Galatians 2:20).**

What does it mean, in verse 20, that these people proclaimed of the Lord Jesus? They spoke of the correct Gospel. This was possible because of their faith in looking only to Christ.

**3) What was the result? In their small devotion and ministry, God’s greater grace was upon them.** “The Lord’s hand was with them, and a great number believed and turned to the Lord” (verse 21). This story was spread to Jerusalem, and when a minister named Barnabas came, what did he see at the Antioch Church? (verse 22-23). May God’s grace come upon the smallest of things you do, and may that grace of God be seen by others.

**3. God’s absolute evidence. God fulfills whatever he has promised.**

The Bible is a book of covenant and evidence. When we hold onto the word, we are walking the path of the covenant and witness.

**1) To the church that was raised amidst persecution, God gave them the evidence of spiritual and numeric revival.** “a great number of people were brought to the Lord” (verse 24). “brought to the Lord” means the Lord fulfilled and blessed them.

**2) God gave the Antioch Church another important evidence.**

“The disciples were called Christians first at Antioch” (verse 26). They were even acknowledged by the outside world. I pray that our remnants will become true Christians in all fields of this age. That is the real summit.

**3) Financial blessings. The entire world was facing famine, but this Antioch Church was sending offering to the church of Jerusalem (verse 29).** Such works arise when we hold onto the covenant that pleases God, possess the heart that pleases God, and do the work that pleases God.

**Conclusion** – In times of tribulations, the real will be distinguished (Luke 18:8), come forth as gold (Job 23:10), and be made white in the blood of the Lamb (Revelations 7:14). When we hold onto the absolute covenant of Christ, everything will be transformed into works of uniqueness and re-creation. May your hardest of times be a new beginning in which you hold onto God’s absolute plan, enjoy His absolute grace, and stand as the absolute witness.