

NOTE: For exceptional Bible students, I have created links online to other material related to this chapter. Go to <http://LemmonsAid.WordPress.com> and type in the SEARCH BOX: Acts 11 Links.

Peter—Acts 11

Receiving the Uncircumcised; Disciples Called Christians

I. Additional Scriptures/Notes...

01. 11:3... Thou wentest in to men uncircumcised—“This was not explicitly enjoined by Moses, but it seemed to be implied in his institutions, and was, at any rate, the common understanding of the Jews. The design was to keep them a separate people. To do this, Moses forbade alliances by contract, or marriage, with the surrounding nations, which were idolatrous. See [Lev 18:24-30](#); [Deu 7:3-12](#); compare [Ezr 9:11-12](#). This command the Jews perverted, and explained it as referring to contact of all kinds, even to the exercise of friendly offices and commercial transactions. Compare [Joh 4:9](#).” [*Barnes’ Notes*].
02. 11:4... Peter rehearsed the matter from the beginning—“Peter quite properly concluded that his best defense would be a straightforward narrative of the events and circumstances which had proved so convincing to himself” [Coffman].
03. 11:15... as on us at the beginning—“as on us at the beginning indicates of MANNER and not the MEASURE of the reception” [Foy E. Wallace, Jr., *The Mission and Medium of the Holy Spirit*, p. 101]. This phrase indicates that what occurred at the home of Cornelius was without human intervention, similarly as what occurred in Acts 2 was also without human administration.
04. 11:16... Then remembered I—This led Peter to remember the promise preceding Pentecost made by John the Baptist of that which he received in Acts 2. However, neither Peter, the vision, the heavenly voice, the Spirit, the Jewish witnesses, nor Luke anywhere stated that what Cornelius received was the baptism of the Holy Spirit. To the contrary, “two places, Acts 10:45 and 11:17, refer to this outpouring as a ‘gift’ and not as the baptism, and it is nowhere directly called the baptism” [Wallace, p. 101].
05. 11:18... they held their peace—“This should have been the end of the circumcision problem which disturbed the church at that time and for years afterward. The umbilical cord that bound the infant church to Judaism should have been accepted as cleanly cut by this decision approving Peter’s actions; but Peter wavered, and the powerful Judaizing party in the Jerusalem church put up a prolonged struggle to drag circumcision and various other Jewish ceremonials into the church of Jesus Christ” [Coffman].

III. Chronology.

BIBLE PERIOD: **The Period of the Church.**

III. Summary.

Whenever news of what took place at the house of Cornelius began to be discussed among the apostles and brethren in Judea there was contention as a result. The Jews had a problem with Peter having gone into a Gentile home and eating there. Peter had that same problem and had mentioned it when he first spoke to Cornelius (10:28). However, the reason that Peter did what he did is that the Lord had instructed him to do so. Peter knew that he was doing the right thing when he did what the Lord directed him to do and he was quite well prepared to defend what he had done by giving a detailed explanation of the particular circumstances of it. Peter was careful to explain that in view of the vision he had received and considering the fact that God

had produced a sign at Cornelius' house (speaking in tongues) which was like the sign produced AT THE BEGINNING (Acts 2:4), Peter was made to realize that if he refused to have contact with these Gentiles, preach the gospel to them, and baptize them, he would find himself in the position of WITHSTANDING GOD (11:17). When Peter completed his explanation to his Jewish brethren, to their great credit, they accepted it, and glorified God. The chapter continues with further description of the spread of the gospel into Phoenicia, Cyprus, and Antioch. We are told that a great number believed and turned to the Lord (11:21). Barnabas was sent to Antioch to work with these brethren and to encourage them to be faithful. Barnabas then went to Tarsus to get Saul to help in that work. Many people were taught by their combined efforts. Agabus prophesies of a famine and the disciples at Antioch send relief to the brethren in Judea.

IV. Outline.

1. Jewish Christians contend with Peter over the conversion of Cornelius (Acts 11:1-3).
2. Peter gives a defense of his actions (4-17).
3. Peter's explanation is understood and accepted (18).
4. Scattered Christians spread the seed of the kingdom (19-21).
5. Barnabas is sent to Antioch (22).
6. The good work of Barnabas leads many to the Lord (23-24).
7. Barnabas brings Saul to Antioch (25-26).
8. Disciples are called CHRISTIANS (26b).
9. The Antioch church sends famine relief to Judaea (27-30).

V. Questions.

True or False

01. _____ Saul brought Barnabas to Antioch to help strengthen the church there.
02. _____ News of events at Cornelius' house had reached Jerusalem before Peter did.
03. _____ Grecians received the gospel in Antioch.
04. _____ Peter took at least six brethren with him to Cornelius' house.
05. _____ AT THE BEGINNING in this chapter is likely a reference to Genesis 1:1.

Multiple Choice (Select the BEST Answer)

06. _____ What charge was made against Peter when he returned to Jerusalem: (a) teaching false doctrine; (b) eating with Gentiles; (c) forsaking Christ.
07. _____ Who prophesied that there would be a famine: (a) Peter; (b) Saul; (c) Agabus.
08. _____ For how long (according to the text) did Barnabas and Saul work together in teaching the people at Antioch: (a) 6 months; (b) a year; (c) 18 months.
09. _____ Which of the following was NOT used by Luke to describe Barnabas: (a) glad; (b) full of the Holy Spirit; (c) full of faith; (d) a good man; (e) none of these.
10. _____ Peter felt that to refuse to baptize Cornelius would be the same as to: (a) withstand God; (b) honor Moses; (c) reject father Abraham.

Fill in the Blanks

11. Then the _____, _____ according to his _____, _____ to send _____ unto the brethren which dwelt in _____.
12. That they had also _____ _____ _____ is what Christians of Judaea had heard concerning the Gentiles.
13. _____ and _____ and _____ and _____ and _____ are the body parts mentioned in Acts 11.

14. Peter was instructed by the Holy Spirit to go with the messengers from Cornelius _____.
15. _____ I that I could _____? was Peter's question to his Jewish brethren.

Each Question is worth 7 Points

My Score is: _____

Answers will be found on next week's handout

ANSWERS to Acts 10 Questions... [(1) True, Acts 10:45; (2) False, Acts 10:7; (3) True, Acts 10:33; (4) True, Acts 10:17; (5) True, Acts 10:23 + 45; (6) c, Acts 10:47; (7) b, Acts 10:42; (8) c, Acts 10:10; (9) b, Acts 10:29; (10) c, Acts 10:14; (11) Peter, Acts 10:41; (12) ninth, praying, trance, sixth, Acts 10:30, 9-10; (13) three, I, have, sent, them, Acts 10:19-20; (14) Peter, truth, perceive, no, respecter, Acts 10:34; (15) Cornelius, called, together, near, friends, Acts 10:24.]

VI. Lessons & Applications.

1. ...WHEN PETER WAS COME UP TO JERUSALEM, THEY THAT WERE OF THE CIRCUMCISION CONTENDED WITH HIM (Acts 11:2). Peter was NOT regarded as a POPE by his Jewish brethren, contrary to Roman Catholic tradition.
2. ...PETER REHEARSED THE MATTER FROM THE BEGINNING, AND EXPOUNDED IT BY ORDER UNTO THEM (Acts 11:4). Peter's response shows remarkable restraint. His work is being sharply criticized here, but he does not lash back at his opposers. Peter KNEW what he had done was the will of the Lord and had no fear in presenting the facts in an orderly way to those who did not have all of the facts. The results turned out to be quite favorable (v. 18).
3. ...THEY HELD THEIR PEACE, AND GLORIFIED GOD (Acts 11:18). These brethren are to be commended for being willing to admit their error in criticizing Peter. How greatly this spirit is needed in the church today! When mistakes or errors in judgment are made, we must be big enough to admit them and go on from there.
4. ...AND THE HAND OF THE LORD WAS WITH THEM (Acts 11:21). Any time and any place that Christians are carrying out their responsibilities, the Lord IS there WITH them (Mt 28:18-20).
5. ...TIDINGS OF THESE THINGS CAME UNTO THE EARS OF THE CHURCH (Acts 11:22). This figure of speech emphasizes that the church is a body. Someone or some ones was/were serving as EARS of the Jerusalem church. They received news of the good work that was being accomplished around Antioch. This news was then shared, discussed, and assistance was sent to Antioch. The church TODAY needs EARS that listen for OPPORTUNITIES to help in spreading the gospel!
6. ...WHEN HE CAME, AND HAD SEEN THE GRACE OF GOD, WAS GLAD, AND EXHORTED THEM ALL THAT WITH PURPOSE OF HEART THEY WOULD CLEAVE UNTO THE LORD (Acts 11:23). Notice that Barnabas' exhortation here is rich and practical in content. For another study of "What Makes a GLAD Preacher?," go to: <http://LemmonsAid.net/laposts/la0506.htm>
7. ...EVERY MAN ACCORDING TO HIS ABILITY DETERMINED TO SEND RELIEF (Acts 11:29). The generosity and concern of these Antioch disciples is very CHRISTIAN (cf., v. 26b).

VII. Seek-A-Word Puzzle.

A A W F H R E C E I V E D G R I E J L C
M B V B D H X J U I S V R S H E I M G V
H M D R A W H B A R N A B A S U Z M X V
A D D E L N A S C O N T E N D E D P A U
Q U W L G S O F I T R P Y Q Z G R H C U
M W H I N O Y R E X I A S Z U T F D X U
P W O E R H C D Q H B W E H O Y E E G E
O M L F H E P T T C B R B C U U J P L T
M I E V V D C B B F R F E O G J V I I R
R X Y I M H T T O S D K O T P W R C M K
C B E O R C X V R E H Y H S H T M R D E
F Y A J D Z H B S C C D W O S R C S N R
A I R X N I L R O D E X J J M B E U A W
T E X M D X A I E S K F U P C Q Y N T O
I L F E R E T V N Z Q R O C T D G O S W
S L Z E H N A A B E A J K J C L N S H L
R V O E A S E R E M E M B E R E D A T G
J P R W P L G S E A T O W J J Q U L I F
S V T X C D E S I C M U C R I C N U W E
U G H S L Z E A F X I W T Z H K V A G B

[The words (or word locaters) listed below are to be found in the text of our lesson. They also are found in the puzzle above. This is just one more way to reinforce what you have studied from the text. Why not read the whole verse where the word is found one more time as you do the puzzle? Thank you for the good effort you are putting forth in Bible study. Let's desire the sincere milk of the word that we may grow (1 Pet 2:2). DRL]

Acts 11

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|------------------|----------------|
| received, 1 | withstand, 17 |
| contended, 2 | granted, 18 |
| uncircumcised, 3 | Barnabas, 22 |
| eat, 3 | Antioch, 22 |
| rehearsed, 4 | glad, 23 |
| cleansed, 9 | whole year, 26 |
| six brethren, 12 | relief, 29 |
| saved, 14 | |
| as on us, 15 | |
| remembered, 16 | |

For More Lessons in this Series, Visit: <http://LemmonsAid.net/bsg/bsg-list.htm>