

Comments About Acts 11

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BIG SANDY, Texas—Recently, I began a series of brief articles to discuss chapters in the book of Acts. This week, we will talk about chapter 11.

May this project encourage you to review the valuable history found in the book of Acts.

Upon the gentiles

As you recall in Acts 10 (verses 44-48), the Holy Spirit was given to gentile believers.

- As Peter was speaking, the Holy Spirit fell upon the audience (verse 44).
- People were astonished that the gift of the Holy Spirit had been poured upon the gentiles (verse 45) also—as it earlier had been poured upon the Jewish believers (Acts 2).
- These recipients of the Holy Spirit in this spectacular moment in history spoke with tongues (verse 46)—reminiscent of Acts 2:3-4.
- These recipients of the Holy Spirit in this spectacular moment in history received the power before water baptism (verses 47-48)—reminiscent of Acts 2.

Peter defended

How do you think the apostles and brethren in Judea reacted when they heard that the gentiles had received the Holy Spirit?

- Some of the "circumcision" contended with Peter (Acts 11:2) by saying: "You went among uncircumcised men and ate with them" (verse 3).
- (In Galatians 2:11-12, Paul revealed a time when Peter was inconsistent with his practice of eating with the gentiles.)
- Peter explained to them about the events of his vision (Acts 11:4-15).
- In verse 16, Peter mentioned that he remembered the words of the Lord (in Acts 1:5): "John indeed baptized with water, but you shall be baptized with the Holy Spirit."
- Peter said some powerful words in verse 17.

Acts 11:17—"If therefore God gave them the same gift as He gave us when we believed on the Lord Jesus Christ, who was I that I could withstand God?"

■ The disciples recognized the beautiful reality: "God has also granted to the gentiles repentance to life" (verse 18).

Church at Antioch

Because of the limited communication and transportation of those days, the word about the gentiles spread slowly.

■ After Stephen was martyred (*Acts 7:54-60*), the disciples scattered as far as Phoenicia, Cyprus and Antioch (*Acts 11:19*).

■ News about the gentiles finally reached Antioch (verse 20).

■ As news of the Lord's power in Antioch reached Jerusalem, the apostles sent Barnabas to Antioch (verses 21-22).

■ Barnabas served in Antioch (verses 23-24).

■ Barnabas went to Tarsus to take Saul back to Antioch, where they stayed for a year (verses 25-26).

Sent food

When the congregation at Antioch heard about a drought in Judea, they sent food to their brethren there.

■ The prophet Agabus foretold a worldwide drought—which occurred when Claudius was emperor (verses 27-28).

■ The disciples in Antioch decided to send help to the disciples in Judea (verse 29).

■ Barnabas and Saul took their gifts to the church leaders in Jerusalem.