

# THIS WEEK'S MESSAGE

MAY 10TH, 2026 // THE BOOK OF ACTS

## CLARITY IN SALVATION (ACTS 11:1-18) INSIDERS AND OUTSIDERS

Chapter 11 picks up right where we left off in Chapter 10. Peter shared Jesus with the Gentiles, and they believed, thus receiving the Holy Spirit.

- Even so, once the Jewish Christians heard of this happening, they became judgmental and offended. They were even critical of Peter and what he had just done.

## THE CIRCUMCISION PARTY

God made the original circumcision covenant with Abraham and all subsequent offspring in Genesis 17. Circumcision was set "to serve as a sign of the covenant between [God] and [His people]" (Genesis 17:11).

- **Instead of being united through the Holy Spirit, these Jewish Christians distanced themselves from the Gentiles through religious bias.**

## PETER SHARED A MEAL WITH GENTILES

- Sitting down with others in their home and sharing a meal was reserved for close family and friends. It was a sign of fellowship and community. In Matthew 9:10-11, **the Pharisees had the same issues with Jesus.**
- **When we find difficulty in the thought of having fellowship with people who look different than us, our hearts are far from Jesus.**

## SHOULD WE CRITICIZE IN OUR FAITH?

Peter was not doing something wrong or operating outside the will of God. If he had been, proper criticism or even a rebuke may have been necessary. Does this mean the group of critics was wrong for confronting Peter?

- Accountability is essential for Christians, but it must be done with the right motives. We must also give a proper account when confronted.

## ARE WE MOTIVATED BY PRIDE OR UNITY?

Pride can create a sense of hierarchy in our faith. However, **"In Christ there is not Greek and Jew, circumcision and uncircumcision...slave and free; but Christ is all and in all"** (Colossians 3:11).

- If we allow this selfish pride to take root, **we can become more obsessed with what others are doing than what God is doing.** We will rob ourselves of front-row seats to God's handiwork.

## "PETER BEGAN TO EXPLAIN...STEP BY STEP"

Starting in verse 4, Peter begins to recall the events that happened in Chapter 10. Notice that he included all the details and made sure to mention that "the Spirit told [him] to accompany them with no doubts at all" and that the "six brothers also accompanied [him]."

- Peter made sure to leave no doubt in his audience's mind that this was God's will.

## "I REMEMBERED THE WORD OF THE LORD"

In verse 16, Peter recalls Jesus' words in Mark 1:8. For Peter to remember, he first had to know Jesus' words. Upon recollection, Peter was also reminded of what happened to them on the day of Pentecost.

- In order to be reminded of Jesus, we must first know Him. Once we are reminded, it must rejuvenate us in our love and worship.

## THEY WERE STUNNED

Once Peter had finished, he realized that there was nothing he could do—even if he wanted to—to hinder God. Even more, the group of Jewish Christians walked away giving glory to God.

- The contrast between the Pharisees' response to Jesus and these Jewish Christians' response to Peter is enormous! **One party was appalled, and another was astonished.**

## EVANGELISM (ACTS 11:19-26) FIRST TO THE JEWS

At first, the gospel message was preached only to the Jews—as Paul did in Acts 9:20. This could have been for a multitude of reasons:

- They were already familiar with the law and Jesus.
- They could have been more inviting/accepting.
- As in all forms of discipleship, you start small and encourage exponential growth.

## THEN TO THE GREEKS

Along the coast of the Mediterranean, Antioch was approximately 1,200 miles from Cyrene.

- Tarsus was about 100 miles further northwest of Antioch.

## THE CITY OF LIGHTS

Behind Rome and Alexandria, Antioch was the third largest city in the Roman Empire. Because of its size and influence, pagan worship, gambling, and sexual immorality were all prevalent in Antioch.

- It seems impossible for the gospel to spread in a place so rooted in darkness. Nevertheless, **the light is always brightest in the darkness** (John 1:5).

## "THE LORD'S HAND WAS WITH THEM"

Nothing proves the Lord's provision more than a situation where His involvement is necessary. Without the hand of the Lord, we can point people towards an individual or even a church, but we can never point people towards the Lord without His help.

- All the salvation "wins" in this passage point to the singular source: God.

## LEADING BY EXAMPLE

Because he was from Cyprus but also a Jew, Barnabas was the ideal choice for someone to send from Jerusalem. He would have been able to relate to and encourage so many across the spectrum of race, culture, and religion.

- **We must never forsake the opportunity to lead from our experience or our God-given character.**

## THE FIRST "CHRISTIANS"

The disciples earned the nickname "Christian" because of their countercultural way of living and teaching and their overall example. Now that Christ had been taught and generally understood, His representatives were being compared to the original.

- They did not need to announce their title; **their devotion was evident.**

## RELIEF (ACTS 11:27-30)

### A FAMINE PREDICTED

Not only do we have biblical proof that this warning of famine came to be, but we also have historic documents recalling a famine around the year 46 during the reign of Claudius Caesar.

- At this point in time, traditional Jews believed prophesying was a thing of the past. Here, Agabus predicted by the Spirit, and the people were right in preparing accordingly.

### THEY DETERMINED TO SEND RELIEF

The disciples saw a need and responded. They didn't require a committee meeting or need to run it by other members of the church.

- Many verses in the Bible instruct us to love our neighbors (Matthew 22:39) and carry one another's burdens (Galatians 6:2). When the opportunities arise, do we act in accordance?

### EVERYONE PARTICIPATED AS THEY COULD

It appears everyone had a hand in helping where it was needed. In the church, we are all called to the same form of involvement and sacrifice (giving our time, finances, possessions). Still, that level of involvement will vary based on our abilities.

- **Our ability or desire to be involved in our church and community depends on our priorities.**

## SALVATION AND EVANGELISM

- For the unbeliever: what is your view of the Believer?
- For the Believer: what is your view of the unbeliever?
- **Matthew 20:1-16**
- **Are we desperate for the lost to be found?**
- Do we marvel at the miraculous work of salvation in a lost person's heart?

## CHRISTIANS

- What are our primary identifiers?
- If we proclaim Jesus, our lives must point people to Him and not the world.
- **Do we fully understand the weight of identifying with Christ? Are our lives even worthy of bearing the title of Christian?**
- Do we proudly display the title of Christian?
- **Do we remind others of His likeness?**

## OPERATING AS THE CHURCH

- The light shines brightest in the darkness. In a dark world, is the modern church a bright light like the church in Antioch was?
- As the Church, are we still living on mission in accordance with the gospel?
- **Once we've experienced true life change, have we moved from "What can the Church do for me?" to "What can I do for the Church?"**