



MIDWEEK FILLUP | THE STUDY OF ACTS

ACTS 11

OBJECTIVES IN STUDYING THIS CHAPTER

1. To glean from Peter's own account of the conversion of the household of Cornelius, what was the purpose of the baptism of the Holy Spirit on the Gentiles
2. To note the beginning of the Lord's church in Antioch, and the early ministry of Barnabas and Saul

SUMMARY

The apostles and brethren in Judea soon heard of the Gentiles' conversion. When Peter returned to Jerusalem, brethren who were "of the circumcision" (i.e., Jewish Christians) took issue with his eating with uncircumcised men. Peter carefully explained the sequence of events, including the vision in Joppa and the manner in which the Spirit fell upon the Gentiles as he began to speak to them. The baptism of the Spirit on the Gentiles was understood to indicate that Gentiles were now allowed to hear the words of salvation, and that they could repent in order to have life (1-18).

Luke then records how the gospel spread from Jerusalem to Antioch. Those scattered after the persecution of Stephen (Ac 8:1,4) included men from Cyprus and Cyrene who began preaching Jesus to the Hellenists (Grecian Jews). When a great number believed and turned to the Lord, the news was soon heard by those in the church at Jerusalem. Barnabas was sent to Antioch, and rejoiced in what he saw. He first spent some time encouraging them by himself, but later went to Tarsus to find Saul. For a full year they worked together with the church in Antioch and taught many people. The disciples were first called Christians in Antioch, and in hearing from the prophet Agabus that there was going to be a famine, they displayed their Christ-like character by sending relief according to their ability to brethren in Judea. This they did, sending it to the elders by the hands of Barnabas and Saul (19-30).

OUTLINE

- 1. CONVERSION OF THE GENTILES DEFENDED (1-18)**
 - a. PETER CHALLENGED BY JEWISH CHRISTIANS (1-3)**
 - i. Apostles and brethren in Judea hear that Gentiles received the Word of God
 - ii. Peter challenged upon his return to Jerusalem
 1. Those of the circumcision contend with him
 2. They accuse him of eating with the uncircumcised

b. PETER RECOUNTS THE GENTILES' CONVERSION (4-18)

- i. He explains the events in the order in which they occur
 1. His vision in Joppa with the sheet and the unclean beasts
 2. The voice from heaven: "What God has cleansed you must not call common."
 3. The arrival of men from Caesarea at the conclusion of the vision
 4. The Spirit telling him to go with them, accompanied by six brethren
 5. How Cornelius was told to by an angel to send for Peter who would tell him words by which they would be saved
 6. How as he began to speak, the Holy Spirit fell on the Gentiles just as upon the apostles at the beginning
- ii. Peter's reaction to the events
 1. He remembered the Lord's promise of the baptism of the Holy Spirit
 2. He reasoned that if Gentiles received the same promise as they did when they believed, who was he to stand in God's way?
- iii. The reaction by those who heard Peter's account
 1. They became silent, and then glorified God
 2. They concluded that God has granted Gentiles repentance to life

2. THE MINISTRY OF BARNABAS AND SAUL (19-30)

a. THEIR WORK IN ANTIOCH (19-26)

- i. Those scattered by persecution preach the word
 1. They travel as far as Phoenicia, Cyprus, and Antioch, preaching only to the Jews
 2. Some from Cyprus and Cyrene preach to the Hellenists in Antioch
- ii. They enjoy great success in Antioch
 1. The hand of the Lord is with them
 2. A great number believe and turn to the Lord
- iii. Barnabas arrives in Antioch
 1. Sent by the church in Jerusalem
 2. Glad to see the grace of God
 3. Encouraging them to continue with the Lord with purpose of heart
 4. He was a good man, full of the Holy Spirit and of faith
 5. A great many people are added to the Lord

- iv. Saul arrives in Antioch
 - 1. Brought from Tarsus by Barnabas
 - 2. Assembling with the church for a whole year, teaching a great many people
 - 3. The disciples are first called Christians in Antioch

b. THEIR WORK IN JUDEA (27-30)

- i. Prompted by prophets coming from Jerusalem to Antioch
- ii. Agabus shows by the Spirit that there will be a famine
- iii. The disciples determine to send relief to brethren in Judea
- iv. They send it to the elders by the hands of Barnabas and Saul