

ACTS



Rev. Doreen Forde-FTCC Bible Study March 26, 2026

Acts 11:4-18

4 Starting from the beginning, Peter told them the whole story: 5 “I was in the city of Joppa praying, and in a trance, I saw a vision. I saw something like a large sheet being let down from heaven by its four corners, and it came down to where I was. 6 I looked into it and saw four-footed animals of the earth, wild beasts, reptiles, and birds. 7 Then I heard a voice telling me, ‘Get up, Peter. Kill and eat.’ 8 “I replied, ‘Surely not, Lord! Nothing impure or unclean has ever entered my mouth.’ 9 “The voice spoke from heaven a second time, ‘Do not call anything impure that God has made clean.’ 10 This happened three times, and then it was all pulled up to heaven again. 11 “Right then three men who had been sent to me from Caesarea stopped at the house where I was staying. 12 The Spirit told me to have no hesitation about going with them. These six brothers also went with me, and we entered the man’s house. 13 He told us how he had seen an angel appear in his house and say, ‘Send to Joppa for Simon who is called Peter. 14 He will bring you a message through which you and all your household will be saved.’ 15 “As I began to speak, the Holy Spirit came on them as he had come on us at the beginning. 16 Then I remembered what the Lord had said: ‘John baptized with water, but you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit.’ 17 So if God gave them the same gift he gave us who believed in the Lord Jesus Christ, who was I to think that I could stand in God’s way?” 18 When they heard this, they had no further objections and praised God, saying, “So then, even to Gentiles God has granted repentance that leads to life.”

Review 11:4-18.

➤ While the brothers and sisters were focused on Peter eating with the Gentiles, Peter started from the beginning and explained the events in order. The Holy Spirit's activity is laced through the beginning, middle, and end of the story, and it will be confirmed by the six brothers who accompanied Peter.

❖ Describe the Spirit's activity in this passage.

11:5

11:7

11:12

11:13

11:15

11:16

❖ What did Peter, known to be a man of threes, reveal about his encounter with the Spirit in 11:10?

11:4-18

- Peter knew his audience. Standing before a group of law-abiding Jewish men and women, he could identify with their anger and confusion. If he had not experienced all this for himself, he likely would have the same questions they did. As he recounted his experience, he explained how, at first, he dug his heels in against the Spirit's command.
- ❖ Reread **11:12**. How was Peter supposed to go with the men who visited him?
- When the Spirit spoke to Peter, he would have remembered Jesus' words in **John 16:13**, *"But when he, the Spirit of truth, comes, he will guide you into all the truth. He will not speak on his own; he will speak only what he hears, and he will tell you what is yet to come."* This is a promise that still applies to us today.
- ❖ In **11:17**, Peter makes an important statement. What event — and who — caused him to say this?
- Peter explains how God had leveled the playing field and broken down the dividing wall. God made no distinction. God gave the uncircumcised the same gift He had given the circumcised when they believed.
- Peter realized he could not stand in God's way. This is the same point made earlier by Gamaliel, a Pharisee in **5:39**.

11:18

- In **11:18**, we see a silent and dramatic pause. They had no idea what to say.
- Despite his three protests at the beginning of these events, Peter had a complete role reversal; he became the one to convince the Jews of the Lord's work in the Gentiles' hearts. The Spirit lit a fire under Peter to lead the church in a new direction, and it worked.
- ❖ What was their response upon hearing Peter's full account of the story?
- ❖ According to **11:18**, who was the initiator for the work of the Gentiles' lives? What two things were granted?
- When God's power is the undercurrent of our actions, we need only obey God's voice. The Gentiles repented and turned to eternal life in Jesus because God had granted them this gift. And the Jews could not argue with that.

Acts 11:19-30 – The Church in Antioch

¹⁹ Now those who had been scattered by the persecution that broke out when Stephen was killed traveled as far as Phoenicia, Cyprus and Antioch, spreading the word only among Jews. ²⁰ Some of them, however, men from Cyprus and Cyrene, went to Antioch and began to speak to Greeks also, telling them the good news about the Lord Jesus. ²¹ The Lord's hand was with them, and a great number of people believed and turned to the Lord.

²² News of this reached the church in Jerusalem, and they sent Barnabas to Antioch. ²³ When he arrived and saw what the grace of God had done, he was glad and encouraged them all to remain true to the Lord with all their hearts. ²⁴ He was a good man, full of the Holy Spirit and faith, and a great number of people were brought to the Lord.

²⁵ Then Barnabas went to Tarsus to look for Saul, ²⁶ and when he found him, he brought him to Antioch. So, for a whole year Barnabas and Saul met with the church and taught great numbers of people. The disciples were called Christians first at Antioch.

²⁷ During this time some prophets came down from Jerusalem to Antioch. ²⁸ One of them, named Agabus, stood up and through the Spirit predicted that a severe famine would spread over the entire Roman world. (This happened during the reign of Claudius.) ²⁹ The disciples, as each one was able, decided to provide help for the brothers and sisters living in Judea. ³⁰ This they did, sending their gift to the elders by Barnabas and Saul.

Review 11:19-30.

- While some of the Jewish believers glorified God because of this door opened to the Gentiles, the excitement was not universal. As we've seen previously, persecution of followers of the Way had reached a fever pitch.
- However, in trying to extinguish this "sect" by driving out its members, the persecutors of the church failed to account for the power of the Holy Spirit. Their plan was foiled before it began.

❖ Review 11:19-21.

- ❖ Look up the word scattered in a Bible dictionary. What does Luke's use of the word for "scattered" (used of sowing seed) suggest about how God views suffering and displacement?
<https://biblehub.com/greek/1289.htm>
- ❖ Who did the disciples preach to in Antioch?
- ❖ Why do you think some shared about Jesus only with other Jews?

Review 11:22-24.

- ❖ What was the exact count of believers added to their numbers at this time?
 - The exact number is not recorded; the text only says a “great many” were added. It seems the church was growing so fast, they stopped counting. By their best estimate it was *a lot*.
- ❖ What caused the church to grow at such a rate?
 - a. Persecution
 - b. The hand of the Lord
 - c. Both
- While the tormentors were pushing them out of Jerusalem and Judea, the hand of God was on these men and women. In trying to rid the region of Jesus followers. They actually sent light out into the darkness to impact more people to the kingdom.
- ❖ How did Barnabas exhort the believers? In which of your current circumstances does this encourage you to be persistent and faithful?