

# ACTS

## Chapter 11

### Note from Kathy

*Sometimes our actions can be misunderstood. If we are listening to the promptings of the Holy Spirit, we need not fear giving an explanation. New forms of outreach are quite often met with a bit of opposition. We need not get angry because of this opposition. Like Peter, we should take time to explain and share the results.*

#### Acts 11:1-3

*"The apostles and the believers throughout Judea heard that the Gentiles also had received the word of God.<sup>2</sup> So, when Peter went up to Jerusalem, the circumcised believers criticized him<sup>3</sup> and said, 'You went into the house of uncircumcised men and ate with them.'"*

#### Acts 11:7-8

*"Then I heard a voice telling me, 'Get up, Peter. Kill and eat.'<sup>8</sup> I replied, 'Surely not, Lord! Nothing impure or unclean has ever entered my mouth.'"*



### Observation

This chapter begins with a bit of the same information as the last, but do not rush through it. The Lord has much treasure to share, if we are diligent students of his word.

1. Peter returned to Jerusalem, but when he arrived instead of cheers of joy from his friends, some began to criticize him. What were they upset about?
2. Peter did not allow this misunderstanding to ruin his relationship with the believers at Jerusalem; he simply shared the events that led to his breaking certain Jewish dietary laws. Where did Peter say he had been, and what was he doing when the vision came to him?

What truth had God revealed to him?

3. Peter was told to "kill and eat." At first, he refused. Do you remember why he did not want to eat what was before him?

**9** **Mark 7:18-23**

*“Don’t you see that nothing that enters a person from the outside can defile them?<sup>19</sup> For it doesn’t go into their heart but their stomach, and then out of the body.” (In saying this Jesus declared all foods clean.)<sup>20</sup> He went on: “What comes out of a person is what defiles them.<sup>21</sup> For it is from within, out of a person’s heart, that evil thoughts come—sexual immorality, theft, murder,<sup>22</sup> adultery, greed, malice, deceit, lewdness, envy, slander, arrogance and folly.<sup>23</sup> All these evils come from inside and defile a person.”*

**10** **Mark 11:17-18**

*“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?” 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.”*

**11** **Acts 11:25-26**

*“Then Barnabas went to Tarsus to look for Saul,<sup>26</sup> 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.”*

Jesus tried to explain this new freedom to his disciples in Mark 7:18-23, but they had not totally understood what Jesus was saying. What was their confusion? How did Jesus say a man is defiled?

4. What important conclusion did Peter come to in Acts 11:17 that changed his way of thinking?
5. Acts 10:23 said that some of the believers (brothers) from Joppa had gone with Peter to Caesarea to see Cornelius. In Acts 11:12 Peter points to the six men that had gone with him. They could corroborate all that Peter shared. What was the response of the Jerusalem brothers when Peter shared the details of Cornelius’ vision and Peter’s own vision?

What results convinced the Jerusalem believers that their objections were incorrect?

What conclusion did they come to after hearing all the facts?

6. Once again, we read about the match that ignited the fire of rage against the believers in Jerusalem--the stoning of Stephen. Men like Saul were fierce in their hatred. They saw this good news about Jesus as opposition to the Law of Moses. Use the map on page 45, “Key Places in the book of Acts” to locate Phoenicia, Cyprus, Antioch and Tarsus. How far had the persecution of the believers taken them?
7. News travels fast among the believers of the early church. The gospel was being successfully shared in Antioch. Who was sent from the church in Jerusalem to help with this great work in verse 11:22?

8. What did this man see and do when he arrived in Antioch?

9. After a while Barnabas went to Tarsus to look for a friend. Who was he looking for? \_\_\_\_\_

What did he want his friend to do?

10. According to verse 26, how long did these two men remain in Antioch sharing the good news of Jesus Christ with all who would listen?

**Acts 11:26**  
*"The disciples were called Christians first at Antioch."*

11. Believers in Jesus were given a nickname that has stuck with us throughout the generations. When they were given this name, it was a bit of a derogatory remark. According to verse 26, what name were they given?

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## Application

1. How we deal with being misunderstood says a great deal about us. Think back on the last time you were misunderstood. How did you feel?

What did you want to do?

What did you do?

2. Like Peter there are times when we think we know the mind of God on a subject only to discover we were very wrong. Briefly describe a time your perception of God was changed after spending a bit of time in His word?

3. In all meaningful relationships it is crucial to strive for a deeper understanding of another's true character. Make a list of some of God's character qualities. Start with the one's you have personally experienced.

4. Take a few minutes to thank God for His qualities that mean the most to you. Briefly share with your small group why these qualities mean so much to you.

5. In Acts 1:5, when the Lord said, "For John baptized with water, but you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit," the disciples did not understand exactly what Jesus meant—later they would. Have you ever experienced something like this: you read a familiar section of scripture, and it was as if you were seeing it for the first time? At that moment, you understood what you were reading so much better than you ever had before. What section of scripture was it?

What do you believe was the catalyst for your understanding?

**1 John 4:16**  
*"We have come to know and have believed the love for which God has for us, God is love, and the one who abides in love abides in God, and God abides in him."*

**Acts 11:21**

*"The Lord's hand was with them, and a great number of people believed and turned to the Lord."*

**2 Corinthians 9:6-11**

*"Remember this: Whoever sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and whoever sows generously will also reap generously. <sup>7</sup> Each of you should give what you have decided in your heart to give, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver. <sup>8</sup> And God is able to bless you abundantly, so that in all things at all times, having all that you need, you will abound in every good work. <sup>9</sup> As it is written: They have freely scattered their gifts to the poor; their righteousness endures forever. <sup>10</sup> Now he who supplies seed to the sower and bread for food will also supply and increase your store for seed and will enlarge the harvest of your righteousness. <sup>11</sup> You will be enriched in every way so that you can be generous on every occasion, and through us your generosity will result in thanksgiving to God."*

6. Several times we have seen the faithfulness of these believers on display as they share the gospel, despite the persecution and hardships they were enduring. Over and over we read how God blessed their faithfulness as they carried out the great commission. Read Acts 11:21. What was the two-part reward for their faithfulness?
7. How do you believe God will respond to believers today who faithfully share the good news of salvation and forgiveness?
8. New believers need Christian friends. If you are a new believer, joining a Bible study was a very good idea. This will help you dig into God's word, and these new friends can point you in the right direction. What else are you doing that will help you grow in your walk of faith?
9. Everyone needs a Barnabas in their life. Barnabas was a cheerful man, an encourager and a man of strong faith. This is just the kind of person I want to minister alongside—someone to cheer me on when things get tough. Someone to speak words of encouragement when life has gotten rough. Do you have someone in your life like this?  
  
Are you this kind of friend to others?  
  
If not, what might need to change to be this kind of friend?
10. We read that there was a time of famine in the land of Israel. Serious shortages can cause even strong believers to falter. Take a moment to read 2 Corinthians 9:6-11. What do you believe is the duty of Christian brothers and sisters in times of disaster?
11. Discuss in your small group ways you might participate in relieving suffering and being a help to those around you?

# Key Places in the Book of Acts

