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Beyond the Walls – Acts 11

Acts 11:1-30
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Using This Study

❶ EXAMINE His Word

What does God SAY? Open your time with prayer. The words God uses to communicate matters, so go back and pay close attention to the details that are emphasized or repeated in the passage.

❷ EXPLORE His Word

What does God MEAN? Asking questions of the text helps surface how the details relate to the message God wants to communicate.

❸ EMBRACE His Word

Why does it MATTER to me? Embrace God by responding to what you discover in His word in faith and obedience.



In Acts 11, Peter has to explain his actions toward Cornelius to the Jewish Christians in Jerusalem. God has made it clear to him the message of the gospel of Jesus Christ is not just for the Jews, but also for the Gentiles. The Jews that became Christians were still practicing the law and living as Jews. They even try to force the early Gentile believers to live as Jews. But here in this chapter, we see that God is extending the grace of Jesus Christ to all people. Ultimately, we are not saved by the law, but by grace; this was a hard adjustment for the early Jews.



EXAMINE His Word (Observation)

What does God SAY? Prayerfully note significant details and terms emphasized in these passages.

Read Acts 11:1-30 (NET)

¹ Now the apostles and the brothers who were throughout Judea heard that the Gentiles too had accepted the word of God. ² So when Peter went up to Jerusalem, the circumcised believers took issue with him, ³ saying, "You went to uncircumcised men and shared a meal with them." ⁴ But Peter began and explained it to them point by point, saying, ⁵ "I was in the city of Joppa praying, and in a trance I saw a vision, an object something like a large sheet descending, being let down from heaven by its four corners, and it came to me. ⁶ As I stared I looked into it and saw four-footed animals of the earth, wild animals, reptiles, and wild birds. ⁷ I also heard a voice saying to me, 'Get up, Peter; slaughter and eat!' ⁸ But I said, 'Certainly not, Lord, for nothing defiled or ritually unclean has ever entered my mouth!' ⁹ But the voice replied a second time from heaven, 'What God has made clean, you must not consider ritually unclean!' ¹⁰ This happened three times, and then everything was pulled up to heaven again. ¹¹ At that very moment, three men sent to me from Caesarea approached the house where we were staying. ¹² The Spirit told me to accompany them without hesitation. These six brothers also went with me, and we entered the man's house. ¹³ He informed us how he had seen an angel standing in his house and saying, 'Send to Joppa and summon Simon, who is called Peter, ¹⁴ who will speak a message to you by which you and your entire household will be saved.' ¹⁵ Then as I began to speak, the Holy Spirit fell on them just as he did on us at the beginning. ¹⁶ And I remembered the word of the Lord, as he used to say, 'John baptized with water, but you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit.' ¹⁷ Therefore if God gave them the same gift

as he also gave us after believing in the Lord Jesus Christ, who was I to hinder God?" ¹⁸ When they heard this, they ceased their objections and praised God, saying, "So then, God has granted the repentance that leads to life even to the Gentiles." ¹⁹ Now those who had been scattered because of the persecution that took place over Stephen went as far as Phoenicia, Cyprus, and Antioch, speaking the message to no one but Jews. ²⁰ But there were some men from Cyprus and Cyrene among them who came to Antioch and began to speak to the Greeks too, proclaiming the good news of the Lord Jesus. ²¹ The hand of the Lord was with them, and a great number who believed turned to the Lord. ²² A report about them came to the attention of the church in Jerusalem, and they sent Barnabas to Antioch. ²³ When he came and saw the grace of God, he rejoiced and encouraged them all to remain true to the Lord with devoted hearts, ²⁴ because he was a good man, full of the Holy Spirit and of faith, and a significant number of people were brought to the Lord. ²⁵ Then Barnabas departed for 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 a significant number of people. Now it was in Antioch that the disciples were first called Christians. ²⁷ At that time some prophets came down from Jerusalem to Antioch. ²⁸ One of them, named Agabus, got up and predicted by the Spirit that a severe famine was about to come over the whole inhabited world. (This took place during the reign of Claudius.) ²⁹ So the disciples, each in accordance with his financial ability, decided to send relief to the brothers living in Judea. ³⁰ They did so, sending their financial aid to the elders by Barnabas and Saul.

1. Who is involved in the text? Author, audience, main characters.

13. Peter had spent 3 years under the teaching of Jesus and now God was revealing new understanding toward the Gentiles. Even the Apostle Peter had to continue to grow his understanding and change his actions. When have you found it hard to grow and even change your understanding of God?

14. When the Christian Jews learned that God intended the gospel message for the Gentiles as well, they understood that they were hindering God (verses 17 & 18) and ceased their objections. Are there areas today that Christians hinder the work of God because of a false understanding?

Summarize your thoughts on the passage:

Write about what God wants you to **KNOW**, to **FEEL**, and to **DO**...

SERMON NOTES