



CAPITOL COMMISSION™

The Nations are Granted Repentance to Life!

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Acts 11:1-18 *“Now the Apostles and the brethren throughout Judea heard that also the Heathen (Nations/Gentiles) received for themselves the Word of God. 2) But when Peter went up to Jerusalem, those of the Circumcision were continually expressing disapproval toward him. 3) saying that, ‘You entered to uncircumcised men and you ate with them!’ 4) But Peter explained to them from the beginning in order saying, 5) ‘I myself was in the city of Joppa praying, and I saw in a vision, a certain vessel coming down as a great sheet, being let down by four kingdoms (rulers) out of heaven and it came up to me, 6) gazing into it, I was observing and I saw the four footed beasts of the earth and the wild beasts and the reptiles and the birds of heaven. 7) Now I also heard a voice saying to me, ‘Rise up, Peter, slay and eat!’ 8) But I said, ‘Certainly not, Lord! Because anything common or unclean has never entered into my mouth!’ But a voice answered a second time out of heaven, ‘Anything God has cleansed, you yourself do not regard as common!’ 10) Now this happened on three occasions and everything was drawn up again into heaven. 11) And Behold! Immediately three men stood at the door of the house in which we were dwelling, having been sent from Caesarea to me. 12) And the Spirit told me to go with them, disapproving nothing. But with me also came these six brethren, and we entered into the house of the man. 13) And he reported to us how he saw the angel in his house, standing and saying, ‘Send to Joppa and summon Simon, surnamed Peter, 14) Who shall speak to you words by which you yourself and all your household may be saved.’ 15) But as I began speaking, the Holy Spirit fell upon them, as also upon us as in the beginning. 16) And I remembered the Word of the*

Lord, how He was saying, ‘John indeed baptized with water, but ye shall be baptized in the Holy Spirit.’ 17) If therefore God equally gave the gift to them, as also to us, who was I to be able to refuse God?’ 18) But hearing these things, they kept silent and glorified God saying, ‘Then even to the Heathen (Nations) God has granted repentance to life!’”

“THE NEWS THAT THE HATED GENTILES WERE INCLUDED IN THE CHURCH REACHED JERUSALEM BEFORE PETER DID, SINCE HE HAD REMAINED IN CAESAREA FOR A FEW DAYS (ACTS 10:48). THAT NEWS SENT SHOCK WAVES THROUGH THE HEBREW CHRISTIAN COMMUNITY.”

JOHN MACARTHUR

Who in the Old Testament dared defy God to avoid preaching to the Gentiles? Was it God’s compassion upon the Heathen that made those in Jesus’ hometown want to kill Him? What two Gentiles had greater faith than everyone in Israel? Would Peter have responded exactly the same as those who were contending with him in Jerusalem? Is this the first time that bitter prejudice turned to rejoicing in the grace of God?

FOCUS ON FUTURE BIBLE STUDIES:

- FEBRUARY 4: SELECTED SCRIPTURES A BIBLE STUDY FROM ALEX CRAIN
- FEBRUARY 11: SELECTED SCRIPTURES A MESSAGE FROM ALEX CRAIN

There was no one more indignant and defiant against the compassion of God upon the Heathen than the man who was made to preach to Nineveh. He was so defiant that he is the only prophet who directly disobeys God and runs in the opposite direction. Jonah is so furious with God that he not only tried to commit suicide (1:12), but later asked to die rather than see God’s mercy upon the Ninevites! (4:1-3) Today Jonah is read on the Day of

BIBLE STUDIES

THURSDAY @ 6:30 AM –PRAYER MEETING – GAB 3RD FLOOR EAST CONFERENCE ROOM

THURSDAY @ 7:00 AM –BIBLE STUDY – GAB 3RD FLOOR EAST CONFERENCE ROOM

Virginia

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Atonement each year in the synagogues around the world, and the unanimous response is “We are Jonah!” Yet when Jesus told those who had known Him from boyhood about God’s mercy upon the Heathen, they tried to kill Him (Luke 4:16-30). Even Jesus’ own disciples suggested that they call down fire upon the half-breed Samaritans (Luke 9:51-56). The attitude of Jesus is the opposite and He congratulates the Gentile Centurion by saying that he had greater faith than anyone in Israel (Matthew 8:10) and a Gentile woman is also granted great faith (Matthew 15:28). Peter had already been instructed about God cleansing all foods (Matthew 15:11, 15) and he had understood (Mark 7:19). But He had never put this understanding to practice until now, maybe because his father’s name was “Jonah” (Matthew 16:17).

“PETER IS CALLED LATER ‘THE APOSTLE OF THE CIRCUMCISION.’” (GALATIANS 2:8)
ARNO GABELEIN

I. THE PRAYER TIME VISION ACTS 11:1-10

Peter’s willingness to stay with Cornelius, the Centurion of the special force in the Roman capitol of Caesarea, stirs up such a scandal that word of his flagrant violation of Jewish tradition reaches Jerusalem before he does. What should have been cause for rejoicing in that they had “*heard that also the Heathen received for themselves the Word of God,*” now became a means of criticism and accusation in the mouths of the Jewish Christians. They exclaimed indignantly, “*You entered to uncircumcised men and you ate with them!*” Notice Peter does not act like a pope, but defends himself to his brothers by presenting only the facts in precise order. He was praying and he saw a vision including unclean animals, he refused the command to eat them, and is rebuked by God for doing so every time, three times in a row! Three times is sufficient to persuade Peter, as Jesus had done in the past, and he had been given “*the keys to the kingdom.*”

“IF THE GENTILES HAD NOT BEEN RECEIVED INTO THE CHURCH AS THEY WERE ... THE CHURCH OF JESUS CHRIST WOULD NEVER HAVE BECOME THE UNIVERSAL MISSIONARY FORCE IT HAS PROVED ITSELF TO BE THROUGHOUT THE LONG CENTURIES OF CHURCH HISTORY.” JAMES MONTGOMERY BOICE

II. THE PROVIDENTIAL TIMING ACTS 11:11-13

Peter presented the evidence that this entire work was God’s choice, not his. With the three-fold vision, there were immediately three men standing at the door asking for Peter to come with them to Caesarea. Peter sensed that God was about to do something very significant, so he acquired six witnesses to go with him (seven was all that was necessary to prove a case in an Egyptian court). Amazingly, the Spirit told Peter to go, “*disapproving nothing,*” using the same word describing the attitude of Peter’s accusers “*expressing disapproval.*” It was necessary that Peter go to give the Gospel that they “*may be saved.*”

“WHOEVER CALLS ON THE NAME OF THE LORD SHALL BE SAVED.” ROMANS 10:13

III. THE PENTECOST OF THE GENTILES ACTS 11:15-18

This final presentation of evidence is overwhelming to these Jews with thousands of years of prejudice. Peter had just begun his message, only having introduced the essentials of the Gospel and these earnest listeners had all immediately believed and the Holy Spirit had suddenly come upon them “*as also upon us in the beginning.*” The event was verified by Christ, the Word of God (Acts 1:5). Then Peter reasoned, “*If therefore God **equally** gave the gift (the Holy Spirit) to them, as also to us, who was I to be able to refuse God?*” These saved Jews then glorified God saying, “*Then even to the Nations God has given repentance to life!*”

Questions to Ponder:

- 1) What are the prejudices of your past that may need to be changed by embracing the “*equally*” of this passage?
- 2) Do you express disapproval when God blesses that one you don’t expect and would not wish Him to bless?
- 3) Have you received Jesus Christ as your Lord and do you share the Gospel even with those opposing or above you?