

THE BOOK OF ACTS – CHAPTER 11 & 12

11:1-3

1. Did Peter return to Jerusalem right after meeting Cornelius?

2. Who were "those of the circumcision" (Acts 11:3)?

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3. Had God taken Peter to Cornelius to teach Cornelius?

4. What lent credibility to Peter's testimony to those in Jerusalem?

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12. What did Peter think was happening to him?

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13. Why did Rhoda not open the gate?

14. Who is the "James" Peter told them to inform?

12:19-25

15. How did Herod die?

16. What was Barnabas and Saul's ministry in Jerusalem, and to where did they return?

17. Whom did Barnabas and Saul/Paul take with them from Jerusalem?

ANSWERS

11:1-3

1. **Did Peter return to Jerusalem right after meeting Cornelius?**

If he had done that, the news wouldn't have beaten him to Jerusalem. Peter stayed with Cornelius in Caesarea **"a few days"** (Acts 10:48) as they asked him to.

2. **Who were "those of the circumcision" (Acts 11:3)?**

The Jewish Christians - **"brethren"** (Acts 11:1) - and may have included one or more of the other **"apostles"** (Acts 11:1) in Jerusalem.

11:4-18

3. **Had God taken Peter to Cornelius to teach Cornelius?**

Peter did teach Cornelius, but if teaching had been the main objective, the Lord probably would have waited until Peter had finished teaching to fall upon them. And instead of bringing Peter all the way from Jerusalem, He could have used Philip (see [Samaria](#)), who was already living in **"Caesarea"** (Acts 8:40 & 21:8) and therefore could teach him for more than just **"a few days"** (Acts 10:48).

4. **What lent credibility to Peter's testimony to those in Jerusalem?**

It was backed by the **"six brethren"** (Acts 11:12) - Jewish Christians - who had accompanied Peter **"from Joppa"** (Acts 10:23) to Cornelius' house.

11:19-24

5. **Does such persecution still take place today?**

More Christians have been martyred in the last 100 years than in the preceding 1,900 years combined and continue to be killed for their faith including in North Korea, Saudi Arabia, Afghanistan, Pakistan, Egypt and China.

6. **Why did the church in Jerusalem send Barnabas this time instead of Peter to check up on things?**

There are at least three reasons. First, the cultural wall between Jews and gentiles already had been breached, so Barnabas wasn't being sent on a controversial mission that required apostolic leadership. Second, [Barnabas](#) was a Greek Jew from **"Cyprus"** (Acts 4:36) and could interact easily with fellow Greek Jews,

including the "men from Cyprus" (Acts 11:20). Third, the leaders in Jerusalem knew Barnabas as "a good man, full of the Holy Spirit and of faith" (Acts 11:24) and the "Son of Encouragement" (Acts 4:36) who will put his gifts to good use, and he "encouraged them" (Acts 11:23).

7. **What did Barnabas see in Antioch that made him "glad" (Acts 11:23)?**

Barnabas undoubtedly saw much Christian activity - Christians praying, giving, evangelizing, holding meetings and activities, etc. - but he saw them not as the enabler but the manifestation of the enabling "grace of God" (Acts 11:23), which is what made him "glad."

11:25-30

8. **Why weren't the disciples called Christians before Antioch?**

Until the gentiles began to believe in Christ in large numbers in Antioch, the disciples were almost exclusively Jews and therefore could be identified as a segment of the Jews - simply as Jews "who were of the Way" (Acts 9:2). When the church began to include significant numbers of gentiles, however, the uniform trait shifted from Jewish heritage to following Christ.

9. **Did the prophecy about a "great famine" (Acts 11:27) come true?**

Even secular sources mention this multi-year famine which affected the entire Roman world and lasted from 44 AD to 48 AD during Claudius' reign of 41 AD to 54 AD. The Roman historian Suetonius wrote that the famine was so great even in Rome that mobs abused Claudius Caesar - *"When there was a scarcity of grain because of long-continued droughts, he was once stopped in the middle of the Forum by a mob and so pelted with abuse and at the same time with pieces of bread, that he was barely able to make his escape to the Palace by a back door; and after this experience he resorted to every possible means to bring grain to Rome, even in the winter season."* (*The Life of Claudius, Chapter 18*)

10. **Why would the "brethren dwelling in Judea" (Acts 11:29) need more help during this famine than the brethren in Antioch?**

At this time, the persecution of Christians was primarily by the Jewish authorities against those within their reach in Judea, who most likely lost their fields, property and homes before being imprisoned. The Roman persecution of

Wednesday, December 7, 2022

Christians didn't start until 66 AD, so the church in Antioch at this time had more resources to share with their suffering Christian brothers and sisters in Judea.

12:1-12

11. What is meant by "four squads of soldiers" (Acts 12:4)?

After putting Peter in prison, Herod Agrippa ordered him to be guarded with the maximum security arrangement at the time for a prisoner: four squads, each comprised of four soldiers, guarded Peter around the clock in shifts of three hours during the night and six hours during the day. During each shift, two soldiers were inside the prison cell and actually chained to Peter, while two soldiers stood guard outside the prison cell.

12. What did Peter think was happening to him?

Since he had been sleeping and **"did not know that what was done by the angel was real, but thought he was seeing a vision"** (Acts 12:9) until after the fact, he probably thought he was enjoying a good dream.

12:13-18

13. Why did Rhoda not open the gate?

"Because of her gladness" (Acts 12:14), not because those inside had told Rhoda to come and fetch them instead of opening the gate by herself for anyone.

14. Who is the "James" (Acts 12:17) Peter told them to inform?

This obviously wasn't the James who already had been killed by Herod. This James was the half-brother of Jesus who had come to believe in Him after [His resurrection](#) and who had since become one of the leaders of the church in Jerusalem.

12:19-25

15. How did Herod die?

"An angel of the Lord struck him, because he did not give glory to God" (Acts 12:23). This passage should encourage all Christians and especially pastors to

take a moment to ponder if they have or are receiving any glory due God. **"he was eaten by worms and died"** (Acts 12:23).

16. What was Barnabas and Saul's ministry in Jerusalem, and to where did they return?

They brought the **"relief"** (Acts 11:29) from Antioch, where they **"returned"** (Acts 12:25).

17. Whom did Barnabas and Saul/Paul take with them from Jerusalem?

"John whose surname was Mark" (Acts 12:25), who was **"the cousin of Barnabas"** (Colossians 4:10) and the son of **"Mary"** (Acts 12:12) on whose gate Peter had knocked after his escape. If Paul and Barnabas had been among those praying at the house of Barnabas' aunt, Peter's escape and visit would have been a valuable lesson in faith orchestrated by the Lord, who was about to send them out on their first missionary journey.

SOURCES:

1. <http://www.bibleversestudy.com/>
2. Life Application Study Bible – NIV
3. Life In The Spirit Study Bible- NIV