

A SEVEN-WEEK CHALLENGE FOR THE BOOK OF ACTS WEEK THREE

Chapter Nine of the Book of Acts – An Enemy Meets the Messiah

Section One: Vocabulary Activities (including an analogy game and the Mean Meaning Game) for these words: Damascus, bind, vision, saint, instrument, sake, scale, havoc, confound, conspire, relate, associate, and garment.

Section Two: Questions to Investigate in Chapter Nine—

What happened when Saul met the risen Jesus on the road to Damascus?

What is the proof that this meeting really happened?

What were the huge changes in Saul/Paul?

What spectacular miracle happened in Joppa?



Chapter Ten of the Book of Acts – A Good Man Meets the Messiah

Section One: Vocabulary Activities (including an analogy game and a crossword puzzle) for these words: centurion, charitable, memorial, trance, creep, impure, hesitate, direct, apparel, perceive, favoritism, anoint, oppress, ordain, magnify.

Section Two: Questions to Investigate in Chapter Ten—

What was the meaning of Peter's vision of a sheet with animals, birds, and reptiles in it?

Why did Cornelius, an important military officer, send for Peter, who had been just a fisherman?

What happened in Cornelius's home after Peter arrived?

How did that event change many Christians' viewpoints?

Chapter Eleven of the Book of Acts – Peter's Defense to Fellow Christians

Section One: Vocabulary Activities (including the Odd Man Out game and a little tale) for these words: take issue, resemble, reptile, summon, cease, objection, tribulation, grace, exhort, wholeheartedly, inhabited, reign, and according to.

Section Two: Questions to Investigate in Chapter Eleven—

Why did some Christians disapprove of Peter's actions?

How did Peter defend his visit to Cornelius?

What strong church grew outside of Jerusalem?

How did the church with mostly Gentiles help the Jerusalem church with mostly Jews?

Chapter Twelve of the Book of Acts – The World's Power and God's Power

Section One: Vocabulary activities (including a crossword puzzle, the Odd Man Out game, and Tic Tac Toe) for these words: proceed, unleavened, squad, Passover, trial, cell, strike, of its own accord, come to oneself, expectation, lose one's mind, affirm, consternation, what becomes of, and mission.

Section Two: Questions to Investigate in Chapter Twelve—

What happened to James, one of the Twelve Disciples?

How did Peter escape from a prison guarded by four squads of soldiers?

Did the praying Christians believe the answer to their prayer?

Why did King Herod die because of worms?



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I. **Hidden Treasure: In Acts 9 below, mark the thirteen words listed in #2.** Also note these previous words: *threat, synagogue, persecute, authority, suffer, proclaim, bold, dispute, widow.*

(The apostle Paul was called Saul before he believed in Jesus.)

Acts 9:1-9, ¹ Saul, still breathing out threats to murder the Lord's disciples, went to the high priest ² and asked for letters from him to the synagogues in Damascus so that if he found any who belonged to the Way, whether men or women, he could bring them bound to Jerusalem. ³ As he was coming close to Damascus on his journey, suddenly a light from heaven shone around him. ⁴ He fell to the ground and heard a voice say, "Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting me?"

⁵ Saul asked, "Who are you, Lord?"

He answered, "I am Jesus whom you are persecuting, ⁶ but stand up and enter the city. You will be told what you must do."

⁷ The men who journeyed with Saul stood speechless, hearing the voice's sound, but seeing no one. ⁸ Then Saul stood up, but when he opened his eyes, he could see nothing. The men led him by the hand and brought him into Damascus. ⁹ He was without sight for three days, and neither ate nor drank.

Acts 9:10-19, ¹⁰ Now there was a certain disciple at Damascus, named Ananias. The Lord called to him in a vision: "Ananias."

He answered, "Here I am, Lord."

¹¹ The Lord said, "Get up and go to the street which is called Straight. Inquire at Judas' house for one named Saul from Tarsus. He has been praying ¹² and has seen a man named Ananias coming and laying his hands on him so that he may see again."

¹³ But Ananias answered, "Lord, I have heard about this man from many people, telling how much evil he did to your saints in Jerusalem. ¹⁴ And here, he has authority from the chief priests to seize all who call on your name."

¹⁵ But the Lord replied, "Go on your way, for he is my chosen instrument to carry my name before the Gentiles and kings and the people of Israel, ¹⁶ for I will show him how many things he must suffer for my name's sake."

¹⁷ Then Ananias left, and he went into the house. Laying his hands on Saul, he said, "Brother Saul, the Lord Jesus, who appeared to you on your journey, has sent me so that you may receive your sight and be filled with the Holy Spirit." ¹⁸ Immediately, something like scales fell from his eyes, and he received his sight. He got up and was baptized. ¹⁹ Then he ate, and he regained his strength.

Acts 9:19-31, ¹⁹ Saul was with the disciples in Damascus for quite a few days. ²⁰ Without delay, he proclaimed in the synagogues, "Jesus is the Son of God." ²¹ All who heard him were amazed and said, "Is not this the man who caused havoc in Jerusalem for those who called on this name? And did he not come here in order to take them as prisoners to the chief priests?" ²² But Saul increased all the more in strength and confounded the Jews who lived in Damascus, proving that Jesus is the Christ.

²³ When many days had gone by, the Jews conspired to kill him, ²⁴ but their plot became known to Saul. They watched the gates day and night so that they could kill him. ²⁵ But his disciples took him by night and let him down through [an opening in] the city wall by

lowering him in a basket.

²⁶ When Saul came to Jerusalem, he tried to join with the disciples there, but they were all afraid of him, not believing that he was a disciple. ²⁷ However, Barnabas brought him to the apostles and related how Saul had seen the Lord on his journey, that Jesus had spoken to him, and that Saul had preached boldly in the name of Jesus in Damascus. ²⁸ So Saul joined with them in Jerusalem, associating freely and ²⁹ preaching boldly in the name of the Lord. But when Saul disputed the views of the Greek-speaking Jews, they sought to kill him. ³⁰ When the brothers discovered this, they brought him down to Caesarea and sent him on to Tarsus.

³¹ So the church throughout all Judea, Galilee, and Samaria had peace. Their numbers continually increased as they were made stronger, walking in the fear of the Lord and in the comfort of the Holy Spirit.

This chapter also resumes an account of the apostle Peter's activities.

Acts 9:39-43, ⁹ Peter got up and went with them [the men who came for him]. When he arrived in Joppa, they brought him to the upper room. All the widows stood by him crying and showing him the long shirts and other garments that Dorcas made while she was with them. ⁴⁰ But Peter sent them all outside, and knelt and prayed. Turning to the body, he said, "Tabitha, get up." She opened her eyes, and when she saw Peter, she sat up. ⁴¹ He gave her his hand and raised her up. Then, calling the saints and widows, he presented her alive. ⁴² When it became known throughout all Joppa, many believed in the Lord. ⁴³ After that, Peter stayed many days in Joppa with a man named Simon, a tanner.

2. Read Acts 9 in your own language. Then play this quick matching game. Time yourself. Can you do it within three minutes?

- | | |
|----------------------------------|---|
| _____ 1. Damascus | A. For the purpose of someone or something's well-being |
| _____ 2. bind (past tense-bound) | B. A Christian (in the New Testament context) |
| _____ 3. vision | C. A tool or devise, often for detailed or musical purposes |
| _____ 4. saint | D. An important city in the Roman province of Syria and now Syria's capital |
| _____ 5. instrument | E. To spend time together, connect with, join with |
| _____ 6. sake | F. To confuse, stun, bewilder, throw off balance |
| _____ 7. scale | G. To tie up tightly |
| _____ 8. havoc | H. To tell what happened; to give an account or story |
| _____ 9. confound | I. Seeing something while in a dream-like state but awake |
| _____ 10. conspire | J. To plot together, secretly plan a wrong act together |
| _____ 11. relate | K. A piece of clothing |
| _____ 12. associate (verb) | L. Widespread disorder, turmoil, chaos |
| _____ 13. garment | M. One of small, stiff plates protecting the outside of fish |

(Answers are at the end.)

3. Try to use the new words to fill in the blanks without looking at #2 above.

- Saul 's persecution raised _____ among the Christians in Jerusalem.
- Saul gained permission to arrest Christians and take them _____ to Jerusalem.
- During Saul's journey to _____, Jesus spoke to him out of a brilliant light.
- Jesus also appeared to Ananias in a _____.
- When Ananias expressed fear, Jesus told him that Saul would be his chosen _____.
- Ananias put his hands on Saul, and immediately something like _____ came off Saul's eyes.

- g. Saul _____ the Jews in Damascus by using the prophecies to prove the gospel.
- h. The Jews became angry and _____ to kill Saul.
- i. Barnabas helped Saul _____ with the Christians in Jerusalem.
- j. He _____ how Saul had met Jesus on the road and had preached in Damascus.
- k. In the following years, Paul willingly suffered much for the _____ of Jesus' name.
- l. According to the New Testament usage, all true Christians are "_____."
- m. One of the saints was Tabitha, who made many _____ for the widows.

(Answers are at the end.)



4. An Analogy Game: Use ten of the vocabulary words to fill in the blanks.

- a. Fur is to dogs as _____ are to fish.
- b. Washington D.C. is to the U.S. capital as _____ is to Syria's capital.
- c. Chair is to furniture as shirt is to _____.
- d. Laugh is to cry as release is to _____.
- e. Calm is to peaceful as turmoil is to _____.
- f. Monet is to painters as Saul (Paul) is to _____.
- g. Sing is to song as _____ is to story.
- h. Create is to make as _____ is to plot.
- i. Textbook is to inform as an unsolvable riddle is to _____.
- j. Microwave is to appliance as violin is to _____.

(Answers are at the end.)

5. The Mean Meanings Route: See if you can recall the vocabulary word for each meaning.

Go step by step (square by square) from start to finish. Sounds simple, BUT each time you can't recall a word, you have to start over until you can do the whole route perfectly. (That's why it's mean.) 0-1 tries = Super Duper; 2-3 tries = Super; 4 tries = Excellent; 5 or more = Hmm.

START	a. To tell what happened	b. A piece of clothing	c. Confusion, turmoil	d. To tie up
				e. A term for a Christian
j. A dream-like state while awake	i. To confuse, stun, bewilder	h. Important Syrian city	g. For the well-being	f. Tiny plate on a fish
k. To spend time together				
l. A tool	m. To plot together		YOU HAVE ARRIVED!	

Answers for the Matching Game: 1-D, 2-G, 3-I, 4-B, 5-C, 6-A, 7-M, 8-L, 9-F, 10-J, 11-H, 12-E, 13-K

Answers for the fill-in-the-blank exercise: a.) havoc b.) bound c.) Damascus d.) vision e.) instrument f.) scales g.) confounded h.) conspired i.) associate j.) related k.) sake l.) saints m.) garments

Answers for the Analogy Game: a.) scales b.) Damascus c.) garment(s) d.) bind e.) havoc f.) saints g.) relate h. conspire i. confound j. instrument

Scripture quotations are from the American Standard Version, with the English updated to modern usage. The NET Bible® was consulted from time to time to confirm or adopt apt words or phrases.

Investigating Acts 9 An Enemy Meets the Messiah

I. The End of Saul's Persecution of Christians

Note: The apostle Paul was called Saul before he believed in Jesus.

Acts 9:1-9, ¹ Saul, still breathing out threats to murder the Lord's disciples, went to the high priest ² and asked for letters from him to the synagogues in Damascus so that if he found any who belonged to the Way, whether men or women, he could bring them bound to Jerusalem. ³ As he was coming close to Damascus on his journey, suddenly a light from heaven shone around him. ⁴ He fell to the ground and heard a voice say, "Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting me?"

⁵ Saul asked, "Who are you, Lord?"

He answered, "I am Jesus whom you are persecuting, ⁶ but stand up and enter the city. You will be told what you must do."

⁷ The men who journeyed with Saul stood speechless, hearing the voice's sound, but seeing no one. ⁸ Then Saul stood up, but when he opened his eyes, he could see nothing. The men led him by the hand and brought him into Damascus. ⁹ He was without sight for three days, and neither ate nor drank.

A. Why do you think Saul tried to destroy the church?

What sin did Saul think was worthy of the death penalty? (This is a key point!)

B. Christianity was called "the Way" in the beginning.

1. The Old Testament prophet wrote about the Messiah's kingdom: **Isaiah 35:8-10,** ⁸ **A highway will be there, and a way, and it will be called The Way of Holiness. The unclean will not pass over it . . . but those saved from bondage will walk there. ¹⁰ The ransomed of God will return that way and come with singing to Zion [Jerusalem's hill] . . . *** What do these verses say about the "Way" that match the Christian gospel?

2. Jesus said in **John 14:6,** "I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except by me." *

3. Before Saul saw Jesus, how would he have most likely felt about "the Way" being used as a name for the Christian faith?

C. Why did Jesus say that Saul was persecuting him (not his followers)?

D. What emotions do you think caused Saul not to eat or drink anything for three days?

II. The Evidence Saul's Experience Gives Us

Acts 9:10-19, ¹⁰ Now there was a certain disciple at Damascus, named Ananias. The Lord called to him in a vision: "Ananias."

He answered, "Here I am, Lord."

¹¹ The Lord said, "Get up and go to the street which is called Straight. Inquire at Judas' house for one named Saul from Tarsus. He has been praying ¹² and has seen a man named Ananias coming and laying his hands on him so that he may see again."

¹³ But Ananias answered, "Lord, I have heard about this man from many people, telling how much evil he did to your saints in Jerusalem. ¹⁴ And here, he has authority from the chief priests to seize all who call on your name."

¹⁵ But the Lord replied, “Go on your way, for he is my chosen instrument to carry my name before the Gentiles and kings and the people of Israel, ¹⁶ for I will show him how many things he must suffer for my name’s sake.”

¹⁷ Then Ananias left, and he went into the house. Laying his hands on Saul, he said, “Brother Saul, the Lord Jesus, who appeared to you on your journey, has sent me so that you may receive your sight and be filled with the Holy Spirit.” ¹⁸ Immediately, something like scales fell from his eyes, and he received his sight. He got up and was baptized. ¹⁹ Then he ate, and he regained his strength.

A. God wasn’t angry at Ananias’ objection. He gave Ananias more information. How had God prepared the way for Ananias? Can you recall a time he prepared the way for you to take a risk?

B. How can we tell from Luke’s account that Saul didn’t have just an emotional experience?

1. How does the timing of Saul’s healing from blindness help to show this?

How do the scales help to show this?

How does Ananias’ vision and his coming to Saul help to show this?

2. Saul’s life-changing experience either really happened or it was a lie. Remember: Luke, who recorded this, accompanied Paul during parts of Paul’s missionary journeys and stayed with him both times Paul became a Roman prisoner. Paul mentioned Luke in his letters, such as **Colossians 4:14, “Luke, the beloved physician, and Demas greet you”** and **II Timothy 4:11, “Only Luke is with me . . .”** This account cannot be a myth.

C. We have evidence in addition to Luke’s account in Acts 9. Paul himself definitely wrote the letter to the Galatian church (about 49 A.D.) **Galatians 1:10-16, ¹⁰ . . . If I were still pleasing men, I would not be a servant of Christ. ¹¹ For I tell you, brothers, that the gospel preached by me is not from man. ¹² . . . but through the revelation of Jesus Christ. ¹³ You have heard of my former manner of life in the Jews’ religion, how I persecuted the church of God beyond measure and caused havoc. ¹⁴ I advanced in the Jews’ religion beyond many countrymen of my age, being more highly zealous for the traditions of my ancestors. ¹⁵ But when it was the good pleasure of God . . . ¹⁶ to reveal his Son to me so that I might preach him among the Gentiles, I immediately . . . went away into Arabia and then returned to Damascus.**

Remembering how Saul/Paul felt about false teachers, is there any possibility that Paul and Luke would have made up this account of how he met Jesus on the way to Damascus? Why not?

Saul’s transformation from the enemy of Jesus to a devout follower is tremendous evidence for the truth of the Christian faith!

III. Saul in Damascus and Jerusalem

Acts 9:19-31, ¹⁹ Saul was with the disciples in Damascus for quite a few days. ²⁰ Without delay, he proclaimed in the synagogues, “Jesus is the Son of God.” ²¹ All who heard him were amazed and said, “Is not this the man who caused havoc in Jerusalem for those who called on this name? And did he not come here in order to take them as prisoners to the chief priests?” ²² But Saul increased all the more in strength and confounded the Jews who lived in Damascus, proving that Jesus is the Christ.

²³ When many days had gone by, the Jews conspired to kill him, ²⁴ but their plot became known to Saul. They watched the gates day and night so that they could kill him. ²⁵ But his disciples took him by night and let him down through [an opening in] the city wall by

lowering him in a basket.

²⁶ When Saul came to Jerusalem, he tried to join with the disciples there, but they were all afraid of him, not believing that he was a disciple. ²⁷ However, Barnabas brought him to the apostles and related how Saul had seen the Lord on his journey, that Jesus had spoken to him, and that Saul had preached boldly in the name of Jesus in Damascus. ²⁸ So Saul joined with them in Jerusalem, associating freely and ²⁹ preaching boldly in the name of the Lord. But when Saul disputed the views of the Greek-speaking Jews, they sought to kill him. ³⁰ When the brothers discovered this, they brought him down to Caesarea and sent him on to Tarsus.

³¹ So the church throughout all Judea, Galilee, and Samaria had peace. Their numbers continually increased as they were made stronger, walking in the fear of the Lord and in the comfort of the Holy Spirit.

How do you think Paul was able to “prove” to the Jews that Jesus was the Messiah?

IV. Peter’s Ministry in Lydda and Joppa

Acts 9:32-38 tells how Peter healed a man in Lydda named Aeneas, who had been paralyzed for eight years. Then Peter was called from Lydda to the nearby town of Joppa because a Christian named Tabitha, or Dorcas in the Greek language, had become sick and had died.

Acts 9:39-43, ⁹ Peter got up and went with them [the men from Joppa]. When he arrived in Joppa, they brought him to the upper room. All the widows stood by him crying and showing him the long shirts and other garments that Dorcas made while she was with them. ⁴⁰ But Peter sent them all outside, and knelt and prayed. Turning to the body, he said, “Tabitha, get up.” She opened her eyes, and when she saw Peter, she sat up. ⁴¹ He gave her his hand and raised her up. Then, calling the saints and widows, he presented her alive. ⁴² When it became known throughout all Joppa, many believed in the Lord. ⁴³ After that, Peter stayed many days in Joppa with a man named Simon, a tanner [of animal hides].

A. Although the Christians in Joppa believed that raising the dead was possible, this account implies that they understood it was an unusual gift given to the apostles.

B. Peter’s procedure and words in raising Tabitha were very similar to those of Jesus when he raised a young girl from death (Mark 5:40-41). Peter had witnessed that miracle.

C. One of the Holy Spirit’s gifts is that of service. Tabitha had been used by God to help many people. The amazing miracle of being raised from death blessed many more people, persuading them that Jesus was the Son of God.

D. Peter stayed with a tanner, who had contact with dead animals, an “unclean” job to most Jews. Peter cared more about the person than the problem of being thought “unclean.”

V. Making Memories

What is a key truth from Acts 9 that you want to remember?

Mark one important verse in Acts 9 that will help you remember what took place in this chapter.

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Vocabulary Activities for Acts 10
Cornelius—A Good Man Meets the Messiah

1. **Hidden Treasure: In Acts 10 below, mark the fifteen words listed in #2.** Also note these previous words: *devout, vision, perplexed, inquire, accompany, associate, witness, charge, proclaim, and testify.*

Acts 10:1-8, ¹ There was a man in Caesarea named Cornelius, a centurion of the Italian military unit. ² He was a devout man who feared God, as did all his household. He gave many charitable gifts to the people and regularly prayed to God.

³ At about three o'clock one afternoon, Cornelius saw an angel of God coming to him in a vision. The angel said, "Cornelius."

⁴ Cornelius, frightened, stared at him and asked, "What is it, Lord?"

The angel answered, "Your prayers and gifts have gone up as a memorial before God." ⁵ Now send men to Joppa to bring back Simon, who is also called Peter. ⁶ He is staying with the tanner Simon, whose house is by the sea."

⁷ When the angel who spoke to him had departed, Cornelius called two of his household servants and a devout soldier from among those who served him. ⁸ Having repeated all these things to them, he sent them to Joppa.

Acts 10:9-23, ⁹ The next day at about noon, as they were on their journey and approaching the city, Peter went up on the housetop to pray. ¹⁰ He became hungry and wanted to eat, but while they prepared the food, he fell into a trance. ¹¹ He saw heaven opened and an object like a large sheet descending, being let down to earth by its four corners. ¹² All kinds of four-footed animals and creeping creatures of the earth and birds of the air were within it. ¹³ Then he heard a voice say, "Get up, Peter; kill and eat."

¹⁴ But Peter said, "No, Lord, for I have never eaten anything that is impure and unclean."

¹⁵ A voice came to him a second time: "What God has cleansed, do not call impure." ¹⁶ This was done three times, and then the object was immediately taken up into heaven.

¹⁷ Now while Peter remained perplexed about the meaning of the vision he had seen, the men sent by Cornelius stood before the gate after having inquired about the location of Simon's house. ¹⁸ They called out, asking whether Simon, also known as Peter, was staying there. ¹⁹ While Peter was still thinking about the vision, the Spirit said to him, "Look! Three men are seeking you. ²⁰ Stand up, go downstairs, and do not hesitate to go with them, for I have sent them."

²¹ Peter went down to the men and said, "I am the person you are seeking. Why have you come?" ²² They replied, "Cornelius, a centurion who is a God-fearing, righteous man and who is spoken well of by all the Jews, was directed by a holy angel to send for you and to hear your words." ²³ So Peter asked the men in to be his guests for the night.

Acts 10:23-48, ²³ The following day, Peter got up and went with the men, and some of the brothers from Joppa accompanied him. ²⁴ On the second day, they entered Caesarea. Cornelius was waiting for them, having called together his relatives and close friends.

²⁵ When Peter entered, Cornelius met him, and fell down at his feet and worshiped him. ²⁶ But Peter raised him up, saying, "Stand up. I myself also am merely a man." ²⁷ As he was talking with him, he went in and found many people had gathered. ²⁸ He said to them, "You yourselves know how it is unlawful for a Jew to associate with or visit a Gentile, and yet God has shown me that I should not call any person impure or

unclean. ²⁹ Therefore, when I was sent for, I came without any objection. I ask, therefore, why you sent for me.”

³⁰ Cornelius answered, “Four days ago, in the afternoon, I was keeping the three o’clock hour of prayer in my house, and amazingly, a man stood before me in bright apparel. ³¹ He said, ‘Cornelius, your prayer is heard, and your charitable gifts are remembered in the sight of God. ³² Send, therefore, to Joppa for Simon, who is also known as Peter. He is staying in the house of Simon, a tanner, by the sea.’ ³³ Therefore, I sent for you, and you have been kind to come. Now we are all present in the sight of God to hear all the things that you have been commanded by the Lord to say.”

³⁴ Peter said, “Truly, I perceive that God shows no favoritism,³⁵ but in every nation, whoever fears him and acts with righteousness is welcomed before him. ³⁶ I bring the message which he sent to the people of Israel, which is the good news of peace by Jesus Christ (he is Lord of all). ³⁷ You yourselves know what happened throughout all Judea, beginning from Galilee after the baptism which John preached, ³⁸ that God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Spirit and with power. He went around doing good and healing all who were oppressed by the devil, for God was with him. ³⁹ And we are witnesses of all the things which he did, both in the country of the Jews and in Jerusalem. They killed him by hanging him on a tree. ⁴⁰ But God raised him up on the third day and caused him to be seen, ⁴¹ not by all the people, but by us, the witnesses God chose beforehand, who ate and drank with him after he rose from the dead. ⁴² He charged us to preach to the people and to proclaim that he is the one ordained by God to be the judge of the living and the dead. ⁴³ All the prophets testify about him, that everyone who believes in him receives forgiveness of sins through his name.”

⁴⁴ While Peter was still speaking, the Holy Spirit fell on all those who heard the message. ⁴⁵ The circumcised believers [Jewish Christians] who had come with Peter were amazed because the gift of the Holy Spirit was also poured out on the Gentiles, ⁴⁶ for they heard them speaking in tongues and magnifying God. Peter asked, ⁴⁷ “Can anyone withhold water for baptizing these people who have received the Holy Spirit like us?” ⁴⁸ Then he gave orders to have them baptized in the name of Jesus Christ. After that they asked Peter to stay there for several days.

2. Read Acts 10 in your own language. Then play this quick matching game in 3 minutes.

- | | |
|----------------------|---|
| _____ 1. centurion | A. Mixed with bad material; sinful |
| _____ 2. charitable | B. To keep someone in subjection; to abuse, to treat harshly |
| _____ 3. memorial | C. A commander of 100 men in the Roman army |
| _____ 4. trance | D. To realize, understand, become aware of |
| _____ 5. creep | E. To hold back for a time from saying or doing something |
| _____ 6. impure | F. To set apart for a purpose |
| _____ 7. hesitate | G. To move slowly and quietly, often along the ground |
| _____ 8. direct | H. To praise, to bring glorious attention to; also to enlarge |
| _____ 9. apparel | I. To make a rule or choose for a task from a position of authority |
| _____ 10. perceive | J. Generosity and kindness that helps people in need |
| _____ 11. favoritism | K. To instruct or order someone to do something |
| _____ 12. anoint | L. A reminder of a person or event |
| _____ 13. oppress | M. Clothing |
| _____ 14. ordain | N. Giving unfair advantages to someone or to a group |
| _____ 15. magnify | O. A half-conscious state |

3. **Try to use the new words to fill in the blanks without looking at #2 above.**

- a. God heard the prayers of a generous, god-fearing _____.
- b. Cornelius had given many _____ gifts to the poor.
- c. An angel in bright _____ appeared to Cornelius.
- d. The angel told him that his good actions were a _____ before God.
- e. The angel then _____ Peter to send for Simon, who was staying in Joppa.
- f. Peter fell into a _____ and saw something like a sheet being let down from heaven.
- g. In the sheet, there were “unclean” animals and creatures that _____ on the ground.
- h. A voice told Peter not to call anything _____ that God had cleansed.
- i. After the vision, Peter did not _____ to accompany the three men to Caesarea.
- j. Peter had _____ that Gentiles could also be welcomed before God.
- k. He realized that God does not show _____ to one group of people.
- l. Peter reminded Cornelius that Jesus had healed people _____ by the devil.
- m. Peter also told the people that God had _____ Jesus with the Holy Spirit.
- n. He explained that Jesus is the one _____ to be every person’s judge.
- o. When Cornelius and the other Gentiles received the Holy Spirit, they _____ God.

(Answers are after the Analogy Game.)

4. **An Analogy Game: Use twelve of the vocabulary words to fill in the blanks.**

- a. Confuse is to puzzle as understand is to _____.
- b. Sleep is to dream as a _____ is to vision.
- c. Disappoint is to please as minimize is to _____.
- d. Water is to baptize as oil is to _____. *(These are symbols of spiritual happenings.)*
- e. Rome is to colosseum as Washington D.C. is to Lincoln’s _____.
- f. Employer is to employees as _____ is to 100 Roman soldiers.
- g. Yacht is to boats as silk shirt is to _____.
- h. Doubt is to believe as _____ is to proceed.
- i. A miser is to greedy as a generous person is to _____.
- j. Command is to commandments as _____ is to directions.
- k. Encourage is to counselor as _____ is to slavedriver.
- l. Run fast is to a racer as _____ is to a snail.

(Answers are below, before the crossword puzzle, which is on the following page.)

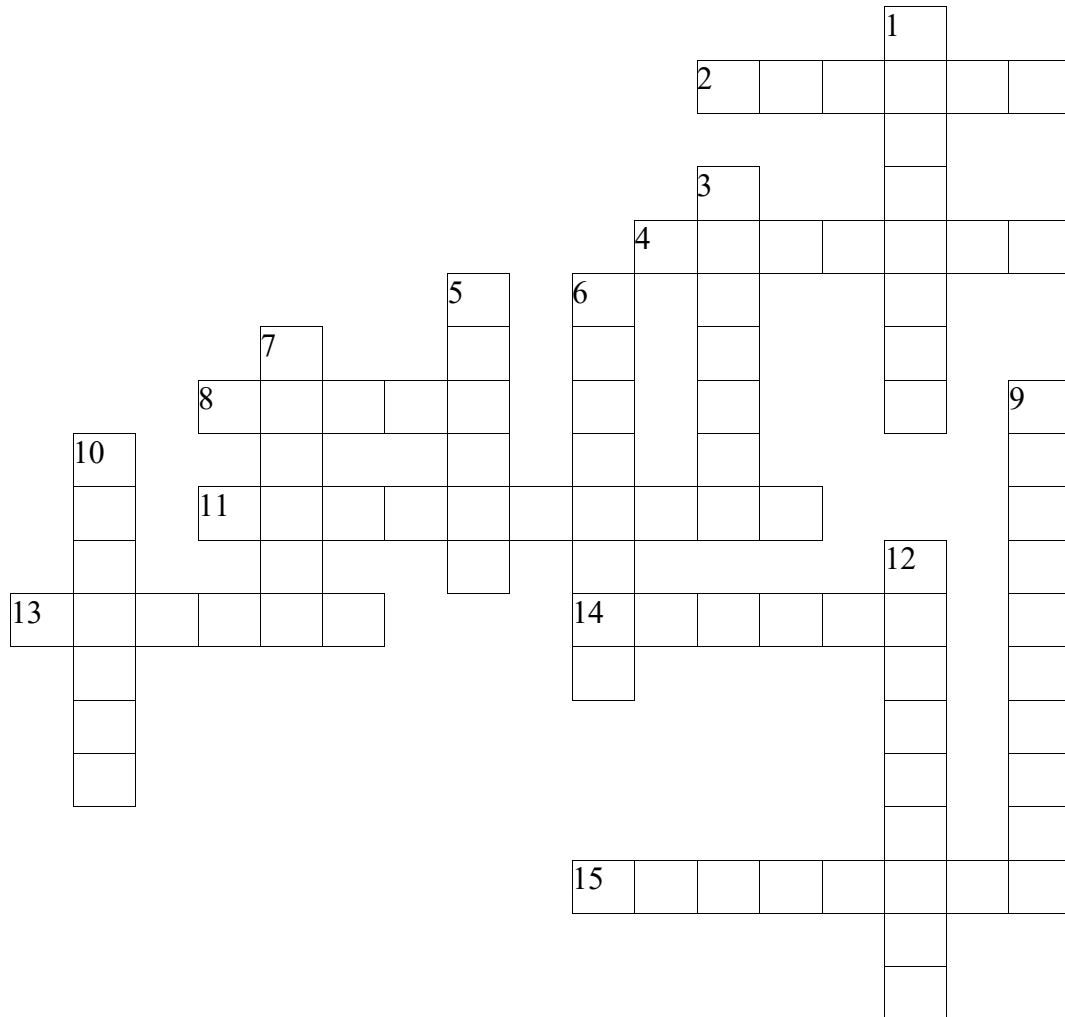
Answers for the Matching Game: 1-C, 2-J, 3-L, 4-O, 5-G, 6-A, 7-E, 8-K, 9-M, 10-D, 11-N, 12-F, 13-B, 14-I, 15-H

(If you matched the words within 3 minutes, you need not hesitate to use these words! 😊)

*Answers for the fill-in-the-blank exercise: a.) centurion b.) charitable c.) apparel
d.) memorial e.) directed f.) trance g.) crept h.) impure i.) hesitate j.) perceived
k.) favoritism l.) oppressed m.) anointed n. ordained o. magnified*

*Answers for the Analogy Game: a.) perceive b.) trance c.) magnify d.) anoint e.) memorial
f.) centurion g.) apparel h. hesitate i. charitable j. direct k. oppress l. creep*

4. Use the vocabulary words to fill in this crossword puzzle.



Across

- 2. To instruct to do something
- 4. Clothing
- 8. To move slowly and quietly
- 11. Giving of unfair advantages
- 13. To set apart for a purpose
- 14. A half-conscious state
- 15. To realize, understand

Down

- 1. An object for remembrance
- 3. To keep in subjection, treat harshly
- 5. Mixed with bad material; sinful
- 6. To hold back from doing something
- 7. To order or choose with authority
- 9. Generous help for people in need
- 10. To praise; enlarge
- 12. A commander in the Roman army

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Scripture quotations are from the American Standard Version, with the English updated to modern usage. The NET Bible® was consulted from time to time to confirm or adopt apt words or phrases.

**Investigating Acts 10
A Good Man Meets the Messiah**

I. Cornelius' vision

Acts 10:1-8, ¹ There was a man in Caesarea named Cornelius, a centurion of the Italian military unit [a part of the Roman army]. ² He was a devout man who feared God, as did all his household. He gave many charitable gifts to the people and regularly prayed to God.

³ At about three o'clock one afternoon, Cornelius saw an angel of God coming to him in a vision. The angel said, "Cornelius."

⁴ Cornelius, frightened, stared at him and asked, "What is it, Lord?"

The angel answered, "Your prayers and gifts have gone up as a memorial before God. ⁵ Now send men to Joppa to bring back Simon, who is also called Peter. ⁶ He is staying with the tanner Simon, whose house is by the sea."

⁷ When the angel who spoke to him had departed, Cornelius called two of his household servants and a devout soldier from among those who served him. ⁸ Having repeated all these things to them, he sent them to Joppa.

A. What did Cornelius' good actions show about his heart? Jesus named some blessed types of people in his Sermon on the Mount. Which one describes Cornelius the best? **Matthew 5:3-6,** ³ "Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. ⁴ Blessed are the ones who mourn, for they will be comforted. ⁵ Blessed are the meek, for they will inherit the earth. ⁶ Blessed are they who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they will be filled."

B. What information from the angel shows that Cornelius didn't have just a natural dream?

II. Peter's Vision

Acts 10:9-23, ⁹ The next day at about noon, as they were on their journey and approaching the city, Peter went up on the housetop to pray. ¹⁰ He became hungry and wanted to eat, but while they prepared the food, he fell into a trance. ¹¹ He saw heaven opened and an object like a large sheet descending, being let down to earth by its four corners. ¹² All kinds of four-footed animals and creeping creatures of the earth and birds of the air were within it. ¹³ Then he heard a voice say, "Get up, Peter; kill and eat."

¹⁴ But Peter said, "No, Lord, for I have never eaten anything that is impure and unclean [according to the Old Testament rules]."

¹⁵ A voice came to him a second time: "What God has cleansed, do not call impure." ¹⁶ This was done three times, and then the object was immediately taken up into heaven.

¹⁷ Now while Peter remained perplexed about the meaning of the vision he had seen, the men sent by Cornelius stood before the gate after having inquired about the location of Simon's house. ¹⁸ They called out, asking whether Simon, also known as Peter, was staying there. ¹⁹ While Peter was still thinking about the vision, the Spirit said to him, "Look! Three men are seeking you. ²⁰ Stand up, go downstairs, and do not hesitate to go with them, for I have sent them."

²¹ Peter went down to the men and said, "I am the person you are seeking. Why have you come?"

²² They replied, "Cornelius, a centurion who is a God-fearing, righteous man and who is spoken well of by all the Jews, was directed by a holy angel to send for you and to hear

your words.”²³ So Peter asked the men in to be his guests for the night.

A. Eating certain types of food was not a sin problem, like murder or adultery. This Old Testament rule was meant to keep the Jews healthy and to identify them as God’s people. In Acts 2, we saw **Jeremiah 31:31-34,³¹ “Indeed, the days will come,” declares the Lord, “when I will make a new covenant [agreement] with the people of Israel and Judah,³² not like the old covenant which I made with their ancestors . . . I will put my law within them and write it on their hearts . . . For I will forgive their sin, and I will no longer call it to mind.”** Once the new agreement began, the believers’ basis for identity and “cleanliness” no longer depended on following the Mosaic Law. What does a Christian’s identity and forgiveness depend on now?

B. Why was the vision given three times? (See Acts 10:19.)

III. Peter at Cornelius' House

Acts 10:23-48,²³ The following day, Peter got up and went with the men, and some of the brothers [Christians] from Joppa accompanied him.²⁴ On the second day, they entered Caesarea. Cornelius was waiting for them, having called together his relatives and close friends.²⁵ When Peter entered, Cornelius met him, and fell down at his feet and worshiped him.²⁶ But Peter raised him up, saying, “Stand up. I myself also am merely a man.”²⁷ As he was talking with him, he went in and found many people had gathered.²⁸ He said to them, “You yourselves know how it is unlawful for a Jew to associate with or visit a Gentile [a non-Jew], and yet God has shown me that I should not call any person impure or unclean.²⁹ Therefore, when I was sent for, I came without any objection. I ask, therefore, why you sent for me.”

³⁰ Cornelius answered, “Four days ago, in the afternoon, I was keeping the three o’clock hour of prayer in my house, and amazingly, a man stood before me in bright apparel.³¹ He said, ‘Cornelius, your prayer is heard, and your charitable gifts are remembered in the sight of God.³² Send, therefore, to Joppa for Simon, who is also known as Peter. He is staying in the house of Simon, a tanner, by the sea.’³³ Therefore, I sent for you, and you have been kind to come. Now we are all present in the sight of God to hear all the things that you have been commanded by the Lord to say.”

³⁴ Peter said, “Truly, I perceive that God shows no favoritism,³⁵ but in every nation, whoever fears him and acts with righteousness is welcomed before him.³⁶ I bring the message which he sent to the people of Israel, which is the good news of peace by Jesus Christ (he is Lord of all).³⁷ You yourselves know what happened throughout all Judea, beginning from Galilee after the baptism which John preached,³⁸ that God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Spirit and with power. He went around doing good and healing all who were oppressed by the devil, for God was with him.³⁹ And we are witnesses of all the things which he did, both in the country of the Jews and in Jerusalem. They killed him by hanging him on a tree.⁴⁰ But God raised him up on the third day and caused him to be seen,⁴¹ not by all the people, but by us, the witnesses God chose beforehand, who ate and drank with him after he rose from the dead.⁴² He charged us to preach to the people and to proclaim that he is the one ordained by God to be the judge of the living and the dead.⁴³ All the prophets testify about him, that everyone who believes in him receives forgiveness of sins through his name.”

⁴⁴ While Peter was still speaking, the Holy Spirit fell on all those who heard the message.⁴⁵ The circumcised believers [Jewish Christians] who had come with Peter were

amazed because the gift of the Holy Spirit was also poured out on the Gentiles,⁴⁶ for they heard them speaking in tongues and magnifying God. Peter asked,⁴⁷ “Can anyone withhold water for baptizing these people who have received the Holy Spirit like us?”⁴⁸ Then he gave orders to have them baptized in the name of Jesus Christ. After that they asked Peter to stay there for several days.

A. Why did Cornelius fall at the feet of Peter, a lowly fisherman? How is this different from the Jewish religious leaders when Jesus was teaching on earth?

B. What are some key facts about Jesus in Peter’s message?

C. Peter’s message gives us more reasons to know that Jesus was truly the Messiah:

1. In verses 37-38, Peter says that Cornelius _____ what Jesus had done in Israel, i.e., teaching and _____ people. Jesus’ words and miracles were widely known, even by non-Jews.
2. In verses 39-40, Peter says that they are _____ of Jesus’ resurrection and that they even ate and drank with Jesus after he rose from the dead.

D. Speaking in tongues was the sign to the Jewish Christians that these non-Jews were really able to become Christians, had received the Holy Spirit, and belonged to the same spiritual body. Remember that Peter acted as God’s messenger when God gave the Holy Spirit to the new Jewish believers and to the Samaritans (half-Jews). The sign of speaking in tongues accompanied those times also. This sign was not necessary after the first time each type of people received the Holy Spirit. (Notice that Peter did not lay his hands on the people this time.)

E. Did the people receive the Holy Spirit before or after they were baptized with water?

F. God sent an angel to Cornelius. Why didn’t the angel tell Cornelius the gospel?

(Think about this analogy: A child is supposed to do his homework. However, whenever the child says he is tired, the mother does it for him, and she does it quickly and perfectly. What may happen more and more in the future?)

G. Think about these “surprises” as God was building his Church: The Holy Spirit came with foreign languages and a sound of wind; Peter felt led to heal a lame man, so a crowd gathered and then a trial resulted; persecution forced the Christians to scatter; Philip was sent from Samaria to a desert road; Paul, the enemy, was transformed; Peter was called by Cornelius.

How was this “strategy” for building the Church developing? What did it depend on? Our ideas of how God should work may fall short—almost like putting God in a box. But if we are available and depend on him, God will work through us, and we may be surprised.

IV. Making Memories

What is a key truth from Acts 10 that you want to remember?

Mark one important verse in Acts 10 that will help you remember what took place in this chapter.

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Vocabulary Activities for Acts 11
Peter's Defense and the Antioch Church

1. **Hidden Treasure: In Acts 11 below, mark the thirteen words listed in #2.** Also note these previous words: *circumcised (uncircumcised), trance, vision, impure, hesitate, accompany, resist, grant, repent, famine, and elders.*

Acts 11:1- 18, ¹ Now the apostles and the brothers who were in Judea heard that the Gentiles also had received the word of God. ² So when Peter went up to Jerusalem, the circumcised [Jewish] believers took issue with him, ³ saying, "You went to uncircumcised persons and ate with them." ⁴ But Peter explained his actions to them in an orderly manner, saying, ⁵ "I was in the city of Joppa praying, when in a trance, I saw a vision in which an object resembling a large sheet was coming down from above, being let down by its four corners, and it came to me. ⁶ I stared at it and saw four-footed animals of the earth, wild beasts, reptiles, and birds. ⁷ And I also heard a voice say to me, 'Rise, Peter; kill and eat.' ⁸ But I replied, 'No, Lord, for nothing impure or unclean has ever entered my mouth.' ⁹ But the voice spoke a second time from heaven and told me, 'What God has cleansed, do not call unclean.' ¹⁰ This took place three times, and then all was taken up again into heaven. ¹¹ At that very time, three men appeared at the house where we were staying, having been sent to me from Caesarea. ¹² The Spirit told me not to hesitate to go with them. These six brothers also accompanied me, and we entered into the man's house. ¹³ He told us how he had seen an angel standing in his house and saying, 'Send to Joppa, and summon Simon, whose name is also Peter. ¹⁴ He will speak the message by which you and all your household will be saved.' ¹⁵ As I began to speak, the Holy Spirit fell on them, just as he had on us at the beginning. ¹⁶ At that time, I remembered the Lord's words, how he had said, 'John indeed baptized with water, but you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit.' ¹⁷ If then God gave them the same gift as he gave us when we believed in the Lord Jesus Christ, who was I to resist God?"

¹⁸ When they heard these things, they ceased their objections and praised God, saying, "Then God has granted the repentance that leads to life even to the Gentiles!"

Acts 11:19-26, ¹⁹ Those who were scattered as a result of the tribulation that arose over Stephen traveled as far as Phoenicia, Cyprus, and Antioch, speaking the message only to the Jews. ²⁰ But when some of them, men of Cyprus and Cyrene, came to Antioch, they spoke to the Greeks also, preaching the good news of the Lord Jesus. ²¹ The hand of the Lord was with them, and a great number believed and turned to the Lord. ²² The church in Jerusalem heard the report about them, and they sent Barnabas to Antioch. ²³ When he arrived and saw the grace of God, he was glad. He exhorted all of them to wholeheartedly remain faithful to the Lord, ²⁴ for he was a good man, full of the Holy Spirit and faith, and many people were led to the Lord. ²⁵ Then Barnabas went to Tarsus to look for Saul. ²⁶ When he found him, he brought him to Antioch. For a whole year, they met together with the church and taught many people. The disciples were called Christians first in Antioch.

Acts 11:27-30, ²⁷ Now in those days, some prophets from Jerusalem came to Antioch. ²⁸ One of them named Agabus stood up and predicted by the Spirit that there would be a great famine over all the inhabited world, which took place in the reign of Claudius. ²⁹ The

disciples, each according to his ability, decided to send relief to the brothers who lived in Judea. ³⁰ They did this, sending their financial help to the elders by Barnabas and Saul.

2. **Read Acts 11 in your own language. Then play this quick matching game in 2 minutes.**

- | | |
|--------------------------|---|
| _____ 1. take issue | A. Send for; also, order someone to come |
| _____ 2. resemble | B. Great suffering; hardship; painful difficulties |
| _____ 3. reptile | C. With complete sincerity and without holding back |
| _____ 4. summon | D. A place, area, or environment that is being lived in |
| _____ 5. cease | E. To strongly encourage or urge someone to do something |
| _____ 6. objection | F. To come to an end; to stop |
| _____ 7. tribulation | G. A class of cold-blooded creatures that includes snakes, etc. |
| _____ 8. grace | H. To look or seem like something; to be the same in some way |
| _____ 9. exhort | I. In agreement with; also, as someone said |
| _____ 10. wholeheartedly | J. A reason for not agreeing with something |
| _____ 11. inhabited | K. To argue against something; to criticize; to find fault |
| _____ 12. reign | L. To rule as king or queen; the period of time someone rules |
| _____ 13. according to | M. Kindness that is not earned or deserved |

(Answers are at the end.)

3. **Try to use the new words to fill in the blanks without looking at #2 above.**

- When Peter returned to Jerusalem, some circumcised believers _____ with him.
- These believers had _____ to Peter's visit in a Gentile's home.
- Peter told how an object _____ a sheet had been lowered from heaven in his vision.
- The object had held animals, _____, and birds that Peter thought were wrong to eat.
- An angel had told Cornelius to _____ Peter to visit his home.
- Because God had clearly accepted the Gentiles, the Jews _____ objecting.
- Many Christians had fled from Jerusalem because of the _____ related to Stephen.
- Barnabas was glad to see the _____ of God had resulted in believers in Antioch.
- A church had begun in Antioch, and Barnabas _____ the believers to remain faithful.
- He urged the Christians to be _____ devoted to God.
- A prophet predicted a famine would take place in the whole _____ world.
- This happened during the _____ of the Roman emperor Claudius.
- The Christians in Antioch contributed money for relief _____ their ability.

(Answers are at the end.)

4. **Odd Man Out Game**

Three words in each set have almost the same meaning. The Odd Man Out has a different meaning and does not belong to the set. Find all the words that are Odd Men Out without looking at the definitions in #2. You may use your dictionary if needed.

- Take issue, condemn, argue, criticize
- Resemble, be like, be similar to, be near to
- Reptile, snake, frog, lizard,
- Summon, call, commission, send for
- Cease, hinder, end, stop
- Objection, protest, difficulty, dissent
- Tribulation, hardship, suffering, penalty

- h. Exhort, urge, encourage, scold
- i. Wholeheartedly, persistently, sincerely, enthusiastically
- j. Inhabited, administered, settled, populated
- k. Reign, rule, govern, delegate

(Answers are at the end.)

5. Use each of the new words to complete this little tale.

- a. The Brown family had a cat named Buffy, who killed a grass snake that had dared enter the house. After killing the _____, Buffy acted as if he should _____ over the household. A puppy named Fido also _____ the home. The peace-loving pup always came when _____, but Buffy ignored the family's calls.
- b. Soon Buffy began secretly eating Fido's dogfood and hissing at him. Of course, Fido _____ with the cat's behavior. He barked at Buffy, _____ the cat to behave, but the Browns scolded Fido for disturbing the cat. Fido tucked in his tail and moped, for he couldn't see a way to end his _____.
- c. However, Buffy was soon overweight. Mrs. Brown was perplexed because she always had fed the cat _____ his ideal size. One of the Browns' friends joked that Buffy _____ a sausage. Finally, the family saw the cat eating Fido's dogfood and understood Fido's _____. Buffy's "reign of terror" _____ because Fido was fed inside the house, and Buffy was kept outside in the daytime and in the garage at night for the next few weeks. After the family's decision to show the greedy cat some _____, he was allowed inside again. I'm glad to report that Buffy had learned his lesson and _____ behaved better. It also probably helped that Fido had grown bigger. It would have taken a cat braver than Buffy to bully a growing German Shepherd.

(Answers are at the end.)

Answers for the Matching Game: 1-K, 2-H, 3-G, 4-A, 5-F, 6-J, 7-B, 8-M, 9-E, 10-C, 11-D, 12-L, 13-I (If you matched the words within 2 minutes, you can wholeheartedly use these words! 😊)

Answers for the fill-in-the-blank exercise: a.) took issue b.) objections c.) resembling d.) reptiles e.) summon f.) ceased g.) tribulation h.) grace i.) exhorted j.) wholeheartedly k.) inhabited l.) reign m.) according to

Answers for the Odd Man Out Game: a.) condemn b.) be near to c.) frog d.) commission e.) hinder f.) difficulty g.) penalty h.) scold i.) persistently j.) administered k.) delegate

Answers for the little tale: a.) reptile, reign, inhabited, summoned. b.) took issue, exhorting, tribulation. c.) according to, resembled, objection, ceased, grace, wholeheartedly.

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Investigating Acts 11 Peter's Defense and the Antioch Church

I. Peter's Defense

Acts 11:1- 18, ¹ Now the apostles and the brothers who were in Judea heard that the Gentiles also had received 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 persons and ate with them." ⁴ But Peter explained his actions to them in an orderly manner, saying, ⁵ "I was in the city of Joppa praying, when in a trance, I saw a vision in which an object resembling a large sheet was coming down from above, being let down by its four corners, and it came to me. ⁶ I stared at it and saw four-footed animals of the earth, wild beasts, reptiles, and birds. ⁷ And I also heard a voice say to me, 'Rise, Peter; kill and eat.' ⁸ But I replied, 'No, Lord, for nothing impure or unclean has ever entered my mouth.' ⁹ But the voice spoke a second time from heaven and told me, 'What God has cleansed, do not call unclean.' ¹⁰ This took place three times, and then all was taken up again into heaven. ¹¹ At that very time, three men appeared at the house where we were staying, having been sent to me from Caesarea. ¹² The Spirit told me not to hesitate to go with them. These six brothers also accompanied me, and we entered into the man's house. ¹³ He told us how he had seen an angel standing in his house and saying, 'Send to Joppa, and summon Simon, whose name is also Peter. ¹⁴ He will speak the message by which you and all your household will be saved.' ¹⁵ As I began to speak, the Holy Spirit fell on them, just as he had on us at the beginning. ¹⁶ At that time, I remembered the Lord's words, how he said, 'John indeed baptized with water, but you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit.' ¹⁷ If then God gave them the same gift as he gave us when we believed in the Lord Jesus Christ, who was I to resist God?" ¹⁸ When they heard these things, they ceased their objections and praised God, saying, "Then God has granted the repentance that leads to life even to the Gentiles!"

A. Peter showed point by point how his actions had been planned by God. Let's review:

1. First, he told how the Lord had spoken to him in the heavenly _____.
2. He pointed out how he had refused to go against the Old Testament _____ at first.
3. He quoted the command not to call anything _____ that God himself cleansed.
4. The vision had been repeated _____ times right before the three men arrived.
5. An _____ had met with Cornelius to set up the visit.
6. Proof had been given of the Gentile's salvation and the gift of God's _____.
7. Saul had already been with the apostles, and he had probably shared his former teacher's warning to the council: Acts 5:39, "**But if it is of God, you will not be able to overthrow them and could be found fighting even against God.**" Peter's final point echoed Gamaliel's words. No one would have wanted to be stiff-necked like the council.

B. It is difficult today to understand how hard it was for the Jews at the time of Acts to realize that Gentiles didn't have to become Jews before accepting Jesus as their Savior. The Greeks and Romans were largely worshipers of false gods, and their customs also did not follow true moral standards. Yet God saved both Jews and non-Jews by his grace alone. Peter's time with Cornelius and his explanation began the process of uniting these believers in Christ. Jesus said in John 10:16, ¹⁶ "I have other sheep which are not from this sheepfold. I must bring them also. They will hear my voice; and they will become one flock with one shepherd."

II. The Church at Antioch

A. The first major outreach to non-Jews happened in Antioch.

Acts 11:19-26, ¹⁹ Those who were scattered as a result of the tribulation that arose over Stephen traveled as far as Phoenicia, Cyprus, and Antioch, speaking the message only to the Jews. ²⁰ But when some of them, men of Cyprus and Cyrene, came to Antioch, they spoke to the Greeks [Gentiles] also, preaching the good news of the Lord Jesus. ²¹ The hand of the Lord was with them, and a great number believed and turned to the Lord. ²² The church in Jerusalem heard the report about them, and they sent Barnabas to Antioch. ²³ When he arrived and saw the grace of God, he was glad. He exhorted all of them to wholeheartedly remain faithful to the Lord, ²⁴ for he was a good man, full of the Holy Spirit and faith, and many people were led to the Lord. ²⁵ Then Barnabas went to Tarsus to look for Saul. ²⁶ When he found him, he brought him to Antioch. For a whole year, they met together with the church and taught many people. The disciples were called Christians first in Antioch.

1. Antioch in Syria was about 300 miles north of Jerusalem. It was located on a major trade route and was one of the largest cities in the Roman Empire.
2. What were some reasons from this passage that God used Barnabas so greatly?
3. “Christians” means “Christ-ones.” What does this name imply about the Antioch church?

B. The Antioch believers helped their fellow Christians in Jerusalem.

Acts 11:27-30, ²⁷ Now in those days, some prophets from Jerusalem came to Antioch. ²⁸ One of them named Agabus stood up and predicted by the Spirit that there would be a great famine over all the inhabited world, which took place in the reign of Claudius. ²⁹ The disciples, each according to his ability, decided to send relief to the brothers who lived in Judea. ³⁰ They did this, sending their financial help to the elders by Barnabas and Saul.

1. A large number of the Christians in Antioch were Gentiles, and most of the Christians in Jerusalem were Jews. What does the church’s decision show?
2. Paul’s later ministry was supported partly by his tent making and partly by the new churches. Here is what he wrote while imprisoned in Rome to the Christians in Philippi: **Philippians 4:18-19,** ¹⁸ . . . I have enough, having received from Epaphroditus what you sent, a sweet smell, a sacrifice acceptable, well-pleasing to God. ¹⁹ And my God will supply your every need according to his riches in glory in Christ Jesus.
 - a. If we are generous, “according to our ability,” what did Paul say God will do?
 - b. This is a wonderful promise, yet what should be a Christian’s main reason for giving? Paul also wrote, **I Corinthians 13:3,** ³ If I give all I own to the poor, and if I give my body to flames in order to boast, but do not have love, I gain nothing.

III. Making Memories

What is a key truth from Acts 11 that you want to remember?

Underline or highlight one important verse in Acts 11 that will help you remember what took place in this chapter.

*Scripture quotations are from the American Standard Version, with the English updated to modern usage. The NET Bible® was consulted from time to time to confirm or adopt apt words or phrases.

1. **Hidden Treasure: Mark the fifteen vocabulary words and phrases listed in #2.** Also note these previous words: *earnestly, bind (bound), garment, vision, relate, and apparel.*

Acts 12:1-4, ¹Now about that time, King Herod made an effort to harm the church. ²He had James the brother of John killed with a sword. ³When he saw that it pleased the Jews, he proceeded to arrest Peter also. This took place during the feast of Unleavened Bread. ⁴When Herod had arrested Peter, he put him in prison and assigned four squads of soldiers to guard him, planning to bring him before the people [in a trial] after the Passover.

Acts 12:5-11, ⁵Peter, therefore, was kept in the prison, but the church prayed earnestly to God for him. ⁶The night before Herod was going to bring him to trial, Peter was sleeping between two soldiers, bound with two chains, and guards were at the prison door.

⁷Suddenly, an angel of the Lord stood by him, and a light shone in the cell. The angel struck Peter on his side and woke him, saying, "Get up quickly." Peter's chains fell off his wrists. ⁸The angel said to him, "Fasten your belt, and put on your sandals." Peter did so. Then the angel said, "Wrap your outer garment around you and follow me."

⁹Peter followed the angel out. He did not know an angel was truly bringing him out of prison, but thought he saw a vision. ¹⁰When they were past the first and second guards, they came to the iron gate that led into the city. It opened for them of its own accord. They went through it and walked down one narrow street. At that time, the angel left him.

¹¹When Peter had come to himself, he said, "Now I know the Lord has truly sent his angel and rescued me out of Herod's hand and from all the Jewish people's expectation."

Acts 12:12-19, ¹²After Peter realized this, he went to the house of Mary, the mother of John Mark, where many people had gathered and were praying. ¹³When he knocked at the door of the outer gate, a maid named Rhoda came to answer. ¹⁴When she recognized Peter's voice, she was so full of joy she did not open the gate, but ran and told those gathered that Peter stood at the gate. ¹⁵They answered her, "You have lost your mind." But she confidently affirmed that it was so. Then they said, "It is his angel." ¹⁶But Peter continued knocking. When they opened the gate and saw him, they were amazed. ¹⁷Gesturing with his hand for them to be quiet, Peter related how the Lord had brought him out of the prison. He said, "Tell these things to James and the brothers," and then he left and went to another place.

¹⁸Now as soon as it was day, there was great consternation among the soldiers over what had become of Peter. ¹⁹After Herod searched for him and did not find him, he questioned the guards and commanded that they be put to death. Then he went down from Judea to Caesarea, and stayed there.

Acts 12:20-25, ²⁰Now Herod was highly displeased with the people of Tyre and Sidon. They joined together and came before him. Having made Blastus, the king's personal attendant, their friend, they asked for peace because their country's food was supplied by the king's country. ²¹On a set day, Herod clothed himself in royal apparel, and while sitting on the throne, made a speech to them. ²²The crowd shouted, "The voice of a god, and not of a man."

²³ Immediately, an angel of the Lord struck him because he did not give the glory to God, and he was eaten by worms and died.

²⁴ But the word of God spread and multiplied. ²⁵ Barnabas and Saul returned from Jerusalem when they had fulfilled their mission, taking John Mark with them.

2. **Read Acts 12 in your own language. Then play this quick matching game.** Time yourself. Can you do it in 3 minutes?

- | | |
|----------------------------------|--|
| _____ 1. proceed | A. A hearing before a judge to decide if one is guilty |
| _____ 2. unleavened | B. An important assignment; also, a purpose |
| _____ 3. squad | C. To think or act normally again |
| _____ 4. Passover | D. To hit with a strong force |
| _____ 5. trial | E. To become insane, crazy |
| _____ 6. cell | F. To go forward; advance |
| _____ 7. strike (struck, struck) | G. Made without yeast resulting in a flat bread |
| _____ 8. of its own accord | H. To declare, to state a fact as being true |
| _____ 9. come to oneself | I. Fear and anxiety; distress |
| _____ 10. expectation | J. A belief about what will happen or will be true |
| _____ 11. lose one's mind | K. A small group of people having the same assignment |
| _____ 12. affirm | L. Where someone/something had disappeared to |
| _____ 13. consternation | M. To act by its own choice or power |
| _____ 14. what had become of | N. A small room where a prisoner is locked up |
| _____ 15. mission | O. The Jewish yearly celebration of God's protection |

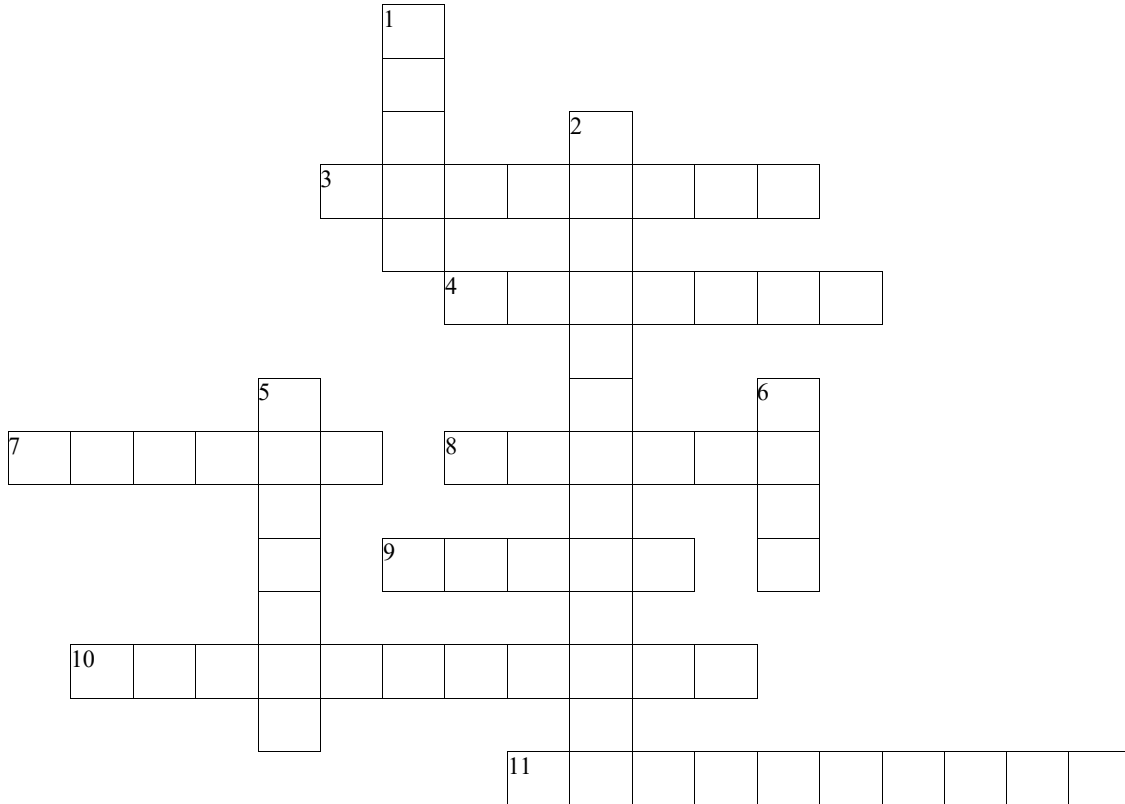
(Answers are at the end.)

3. **Try to use the new words to fill in the blanks without looking at #2 above.**

- During the days of the _____ and the feast of Unleavened Bread, many Jews came to Jerusalem to worship.
- After James was killed, King Herod _____ to arrest Peter.
- Peter was arrested during the feast of _____ Bread.
- King Herod ordered that four _____ of soldiers guard Peter so he wouldn't escape.
- The king planned to bring Peter to _____ at the end of the Passover celebration.
- The night before the trial, an angel appeared in Peter's _____.
- Peter was asleep, so the angel _____ his side to wake him.
- When the angel led Peter out of the prison, the iron gate opened _____.
- It took Peter a few minutes to _____ and realize he was out of prison.
- Then he knew God had rescued him from the unbelieving Jews' _____.
- The Christians in the prayer meeting thought the maid had _____.
- The maid _____ the truth of her report about Peter.
- In the morning, Peter's disappearance caused great _____ at the prison.
- The guards had no idea _____ Peter.
- When Paul and Barnabas finished their _____, they returned to Antioch.

(Answers are at the end)

4. **Use eleven of the vocabulary words to complete this crossword puzzle.**



Across

- 3. The Jewish celebration of God's protection
- 4. An important assignment
- 7. To state a fact as being true
- 8. To hit forcefully
- 9. A hearing before a judge to decide if guilty
- 10. A belief about the future
- 11. Not containing yeast in the bread

Down

- 1. A small group with the same task
- 2. Fear and anxiety
- 5. To go forward
- 6. A small room for a prisoner

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5. **Odd Man Out Game**

Three words in each set have almost the same meaning. The Odd Man Out does not belong to the set. Do not look at the definitions in #2. You may use your dictionary if needed.

- a. Strike, hit, whack, fight
- b. Consternation, argument, distress, anxiety
- c. Mission, purpose, assignment, research
- d. Proceed, advance, obtain, go forward
- e. Affirm, tell, declare, confirm
- f. Passover, Christmas, Feast of Unleavened Bread, Pentecost
- g. Squad, team, club, crew
- h. Come to oneself, be satisfied, think normally, understand correctly

(Answers are at the end)

6. Copy this tic, tac, toe game and play it with a friend (or even by yourself to test your memory). Instead of using X or O, write the vocabulary word in the square that matches the meaning. The words have to be written correctly from memory. Three in a row wins the game, but even one mistake makes the other person win.

To hit forcibly	Fear and anxiety	A small group with a task
Insane, crazy	The celebration of God's protection	To firmly state that something is true
Bread made without yeast	To act by itself	To think or act normally again

Answers for the Matching Game: 1-F, 2-G, 3-K, 4-O, 5-A, 6-N, 7-D, 8-M, 9-C, 10-J, 11-E, 12-H, 13-I, 14-L, 15-B (If you matched the words within three minutes, your excellence as an English speaker is affirmed!)

Answers for the fill-in-the-blank exercise: a.) Passover b.) proceeded c.) Unleavened d.) squads e.) trial f.) cell g.) struck h.) of its own accord i.) come to himself j.) expectation(s) k. lost her mind l. affirmed m. consternation n. what had become of o. mission

Answers for the Odd Man Out Game: a.) fight b.) argument c.) research d.) obtain e.) tell f.) Christmas (The others are all Jewish holidays) g.) club h.) be satisfied

Scripture quotations are from the American Standard Version, with the English updated to modern usage. The NET Bible® was consulted from time to time to confirm or adopt apt words or phrases.

I. James' Death and Peter's Imprisonment

Acts 12:1-4, ¹Now about that time, King Herod made an effort to harm the church. ²He had James the brother of John killed with a sword. ³When he saw that it pleased the Jews, he proceeded to arrest Peter also. This took place during the feast of Unleavened Bread. ⁴When Herod had arrested Peter, he put him in prison and assigned four squads of soldiers to guard him, planning to bring him before the people [in a trial] after the Passover.

A. This Herod, who oversaw the renewed persecution of the Christians, was Herod Agrippa I, the nephew of Herod Antipas, who had killed John the Baptist and mocked Jesus during his trial, and he was the grandson of Herod the Great, who slaughtered the babies in Bethlehem. We know James' death and Peter's arrest took place in or before 44 A.D. because King Herod died in that year.

B. James and John had asked for a special place for themselves in Jesus' kingdom.

Mark 10:35-40, ³⁵Then James and John, the sons of Zebedee, came to Jesus and said, "Teacher, we are requesting that you do for us what we ask of you." ³⁶Jesus answered, "What do you want me to do for you?" ³⁷They replied, "Grant that one of us may sit on your right hand and the other on your left hand in your glory." ³⁸But Jesus said, "You do not know what you are asking. Are you able to drink the cup that I drink? Or be baptized with the baptism that I am baptized with?" ³⁹They responded, "We are able." Then Jesus said, "You will drink the cup that I drink and be baptized with the baptism I am baptized with, ⁴⁰but to sit on my right hand or on my left hand is not mine to give; but it is for those for whom it has been prepared."

When Jesus was crucified, the brothers saw how terrible the "cup" could be that Jesus had foretold for them. Neither one gave up his testimony. Also, even when James was killed, John and the others of the original twelve disciples (except for Judas) continued proclaiming Jesus as the Messiah and his resurrection.

II. Peter's Rescue from Prison

Acts 12:5-11, ⁵Peter, therefore, was kept in the prison, but the church prayed earnestly to God for him. ⁶The night before Herod was going to bring him to trial, Peter was sleeping between two soldiers, bound with two chains, and guards were at the prison door.

⁷Suddenly, an angel of the Lord stood by him, and a light shone in the cell. The angel struck Peter on his side and woke him, saying, "Get up quickly." Peter's chains fell off his wrists. ⁸The angel said to him, "Fasten your belt, and put on your sandals." Peter did so. Then the angel said, "Wrap your outer garment around you and follow me."

⁹Peter followed the angel out. He did not know an angel was truly bringing him out of prison, but thought he saw a vision. ¹⁰When they were past the first and second guards, they came to the iron gate that led into the city. It opened for them of its own accord. They went through it and walked down one narrow street. At that time, the angel left him.

¹¹When Peter had come to himself, he said, "Now I know the Lord has truly sent his angel and rescued me out of Herod's hand and from all the Jewish people's expectation."

A. Peter was chained between two soldiers. His trial was the next day. What does his ability to sleep show about his state of mind? How had he changed from the time Jesus was killed?

Here's what Peter wrote later: **I Peter 3:14-15,** ¹⁴ **But even if you suffer for doing what is right, you are blessed. Do not fear them, neither be troubled,** ¹⁵ **but set Christ apart as Lord in your hearts. . .** Having seen his resurrected Lord, Peter could have full confidence in life after death.

B. In the same chapter, one apostle is killed and one is rescued. In God's eyes, death is not a tragedy when a person's mission is completed; it is a promotion and far better. While he was waiting his own trial, Paul wrote from prison: **Philippians 1:21-24,** ²¹ **For to me, to live is Christ, and to die is gain . . .** ²³ **But I am having trouble choosing between the two, having the desire to depart and be with Christ, for that is very much better.** ²⁴ **Yet for me to remain in the body is more needed for your sake.**

C. The power of the Roman Empire was the strongest in history. What does Acts 12:5-10 tell us about the contrast between the world's power and God's power?

God opened an "iron gate." What type of thing could be described as an "iron gate" in our lives?

III. The Answer to Prayer

Acts 12:12-19, ¹² **After Peter realized this, he went to the house of Mary, the mother of John Mark, where many people had gathered and were praying.** ¹³ **When he knocked at the door of the outer gate, a maid named Rhoda came to answer.** ¹⁴ **When she recognized Peter's voice, she was so full of joy she did not open the gate, but ran and told those gathered that Peter stood at the gate.** ¹⁵ **They answered her, "You have lost your mind." But she confidently affirmed that it was so. Then they said, "It is his angel."** ¹⁶ **But Peter continued knocking. When they opened the gate and saw him, they were amazed.** ¹⁷ **Gesturing with his hand for them to be quiet, Peter related how the Lord had brought him out of the prison. He said, "Tell these things to James and the brothers," and then he left and went to another place.**

¹⁸ **Now as soon as it was day, there was great consternation among the soldiers over what had become of Peter.** ¹⁹ **After Herod searched for him and did not find him, he questioned the guards and commanded that they be put to death. Then he went down from Judea to Caesarea, and stayed there.**

A. What might be some reasons the prayer group did not realize at first that God had answered their prayers?

One reason could have been that they were praying for God to act in a different way. What might they have been praying?

What does this incident show us about prayer?

B. When Christians are faced with great difficulty, the FIRST thing to do is to pray and seek God's wisdom. **Philippians 4:6,7,** ⁶ **Be worried about nothing, but in everything by prayer and petition with thanksgiving, make your requests known to God.** ⁷ **And the peace of God, which passes all understanding, will guard your hearts and your thoughts in Christ Jesus.** When trouble surrounds Christians, God can be trusted to win the battle.

C. Peter didn't take risks unnecessarily. What are two ways he was careful after his release?

D. Peter's escape is a miracle, carefully recorded by Luke.

1. What are some details in the account that point to eyewitness accounts not only of the escape itself but also of the responses to Rhoda inside the house?
2. Luke traveled with Paul and met Peter years later, so we can assume that Luke heard about Peter's escape from Peter himself. Also, the prayer meeting was in the home of John Mark's mother. Colossians 4 tells us both John Mark and Luke were together with Paul in Rome.

IV. Herod

Acts 12:20-23, ²⁰ Now Herod was highly displeased with the people of Tyre and Sidon. They joined together and came before him. Having made Blastus, the king's personal attendant, their friend, they asked for peace because their country's food was supplied by the king's country. ²¹ On a set day, Herod clothed himself in royal apparel, and while sitting on the throne, made a speech to them. ²² The crowd shouted, "The voice of a god, and not of a man."

²³ Immediately, an angel of the Lord struck him because he did not give the glory to God, and he was eaten by worms and died.

Herod Agrippa, claiming to represent the Jews, should have been careful not to look like he was worshiping false gods, and he certainly should have corrected the crowd when they worshiped *him*. He knew that was wrong!

Acts 12:24-25, ²⁴ But the word of God spread and multiplied. ²⁵ Barnabas and Saul returned from Jerusalem when they had fulfilled their mission, taking John Mark with them.

V. Making Memories

What is a key truth from Acts 12 that you want to remember?

Mark one important verse in Acts 12 that will help you remember what took place in this chapter.

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