

Priorities or Preferences?

Acts 11:1-18
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Brady Bassett

The Big Idea: The complaint raised in Acts 11 is ultimately a doctrinal and salvation issue. The Jewish Christians in Acts 11 did not fully understand that what happened in Acts 10 was the fulfillment of God's promises for centuries of bringing the nations into the family of God. Cultural and societal differences will be insignificant in eternity.

Acts 9:1-18 (NASB95)

12 "The Spirit told me to go with them without misgivings. These six
brethren also went with me and we entered the man's house. 13 "And
he reported to us how he had seen the angel standing in his house,
and saying, 'Send to Joppa and have Simon, who is also called Peter,
brought here; 14 and he will speak words to you by which you will be
saved, you and all your household.' 15 "And as I began to speak, the
Holy Spirit fell upon them just as *He did* upon us at the beginning. 16
"And I remembered the word of the Lord, how He used to say, 'John
baptized with water, but you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit.' 17
"Therefore if God gave to them the same gift as *He gave* to us also
after believing in the Lord Jesus Christ, who was I that I could stand in
God's way?" 18 When they heard this, they quieted down and glorified
God, saying, "Well then, God has granted to the Gentiles also the
repentance *that leads* to life."

Pointing Backwards

- The complaint raised in Acts 11 is ultimately a salvation issue.
- Circumcision was a distinguishing mark to highlight that the Jews had been set apart by God.
- Summary of the issue: Is salvation by faith for everyone? Or is it by faith plus works for some?
- The Holy Spirit fell on the Gentiles just like He did on the apostles in Acts 2.
- No one can stand in the way of a sovereign, all-powerful God who works all things to His good pleasure.
- In Ephesians 3, Paul says that it was not fully revealed or understood by the Jews on how Gentiles would become fellow heirs and members of the People of God.
- There is to be one people of God in the place of two.
- God spoke through the prophets to point to the certainty that the nations would be brought in through the accomplished work of the Messiah.

Pointing to the Present

- Every man, woman, and child that comes to faith in Christ is our brother and sister in the faith.
- There are secondary preferences that we must lay aside in order to embrace Scriptural priorities.
- The most important thing that a Christian can pursue is holiness.
- The way that we once lived must be challenged.

Pointing Forward

- Acts 11 points to the reality that all believers will be gathered to worship the Lord for all eternity.
- Christians from every corner of the globe will sing one common song of one common salvation (Revelation 7:9-10).
- There will not be a single Christian in heaven that will not contribute the whole of their salvation to the work and grace of Jesus Christ.
- What minor issues do you need to address knowing that we are one body in Christ Jesus?

"Every redeemed soul is born out of the same spiritual life as ever other redeemed soul and partakes of the divine nature in exactly the same way. Each one is thus made a member of the Christian community and a sharer in everything which that community enjoys. This is the true communion of saints."

-A.W. Tozer