

Acts 11:1-18

Peter defends his ministry to the Gentiles

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It's not a thing we do

1 Now the apostles and the brethren who were throughout Judea heard that the Gentiles also had received the word of God.

- The word spreads
 - *That the Gentiles also had received the word of God*
 - Did they also know that the Gentiles had received the Spirit?
- Impulsive response¹
 - *Those who were circumcised took issue with him*
 - This is a serious, personal disagreement
 - *“You went to uncircumcised men and ate with them”*
 - What was the center of the contention?
- Who were the “circumcised”?
 - These were most certainly Jewish Christians²
 - Verse 1 says “Apostles and brethren”

¹They are more concerned with the “who” than the “that”

²Are these the Judiazers that Paul dealt with in Galatians and Philippians?

Patterns of partiality

- Jesus identifies the Jewish partiality
 - Matthew 15:21-28 – the Canaanite woman
 - *“It is not right to take the children’s bread and toss it to the dogs”*
 - Is Jesus calling this woman a dog?
 - Luke 10:30-35 – the Good Samaritan
 - The priest and the Levite pass by on the other side
 - John 4:1-41 – the woman at the well
 - *“How is it that You, being a Jew, ask me for a drink since I am a Samaritan woman?”*
- Peter exemplifies Jewish partiality
 - Acts 10:9-16
 - *“By no means, Lord, for I have never eaten anything unholy and unclean”*
 - Galatians 2:11-14
 - Peter feared *the party of the circumcision*

From the top

4 But Peter began speaking and proceeded to explain to them in orderly sequence, saying,

- *Proceeded to explain – lit. to set outside*
 - See also Acts 7:21
 - The tone here doesn't seem to be defensive³
 - He continually emphasizes God's part in all this
- *"I was in the city of Joppa praying*
 - Recounts the vision he had
 - Says the same thing as Luke recounts in Acts 10⁴
- *"At that moment three men appeared at the house*
 - *"The Spirit told me to go with them without misgivings*
 - *Misgivings* means "to contend or strive with, dispute with"⁵

³notice the *orderly sequence*

⁴Luke probably heard it from Peter

⁵As Peter had just done in his vision

In the 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;’”*

- Peter says what Cornelius says the angel said to him
 - *“And he will speak words to you by which you will be saved, you and all your household.”*
 - Is Peter here describing what he understood Cornelius' words to be?⁶
- Peter tells what happened when he preached to them
 - *“The Holy Spirit fell upon them just as He did upon us at the beginning”*⁷
 - Peter is careful to note that the experience here was very similar to their experience at Pentecost⁸

⁶This part is not in the Acts 10 account

⁷Any significance to Peter using the term “beginning”?

⁸Thus, establishing veracity

Q.E.D

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.’”*

- *And I remembered the word of the Lord*
 - This event was not without prophetic precedent
 - Mark 1:8 – foretold by John the Baptist
 - Acts 1:4-5 – foretold by Jesus⁹
- Therefore...
 - *“If God gave to them the same gift as He gave to us also after believing in the Lord Jesus Christ”*¹⁰
 - Note that faith is the only conditional here
 - *“Who was I that I could stand in Gods way?”*

⁹This is probably the saying Peter had in mind
¹⁰if = since; first-class conditional

If that's the way it is

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."

- *When they heard this*
 - Is "this" the events, or Peter's words about the event?
- *They quieted down*
 - Implying they were worked up about this¹¹
- *[They] glorified God*
 - *God has granted to the Gentiles also the repentance that leads to life*
 - Are we to make anything of this phrasing?
- Even with this response, the issue was hardly settled
 - It was officially settled at the council of Jerusalem about a decade later (Acts 15)¹²

¹¹See Luke 23:56 & Acts 21:14

¹²and Christians today still struggle with this

So...now what?

- What are the implications of this event?
 - and does this have anything to do with the distinction between Israel and the Church?
- Why was Cornelius' conversion more significant than the Ethiopian eunuchs, seeing as how both were Gentiles?
- Why was this event different than the event in Acts 8:14-17?
 - In that event the Holy Spirit came after the apostles laid on hands.
- What does this say about how we should handle disagreements in the body?
 - and what authority do the leaders have in resolving it?