



## *ACTS - Living in the Promises of Jesus*

Acts 11,12

### Lesson 9

In Acts 10 Peter watched the glorious conversion of Gentiles. He no sooner returned to Jerusalem when he was met by members of the strong legalistic party in the church of Judea who rebuked him for fellowshiping with Gentiles. The church continued to grow as we will see Barnabas and Saul teaming up to minister together. But, *about that time*, efforts to squelch the church were also occurring – this time through king Herod. Acts 12 begins with Herod in his glory and ends with Herod's demise for retaining glory that only belongs to God. May we grasp the lessons God has for us in these chapters.

#### **OBSERVATION: Read Acts 11,12**

1. Read through this week's verses using both your Observation Worksheet (the last page of this homework) and another Bible translation or paraphrase. After reading through these verses, what would you say to someone if they asked you what they are about?
2. Key words help us to better understand the verses. We have listed below key words. Mark each one in a distinctive way (either with a symbol, highlighting, or some form of boxing, circling, or underlining). Mark each of the key words each time they are used in the text. Remember to mark any personal pronouns that refer to *God, Jesus, Holy Spirit, the angel*, or any people that have been designated as key words.  
  
Acts 11 Key Words: *God, Jesus, Holy Spirit, Peter, Barnabas/Saul, and believed/saved*  
  
Acts 12 Key Words: *God, Jesus (Lord), angel, Peter, and Herod*
3. The contrasting word *but* was used six times in Acts 11 and eight times in Acts 12. Mark each time the word is used. Choose one of those times (in each chapter) and record what is being contrasted.

4. The term of conclusion, *therefore*, was used in Acts 11:17 and in Acts 12:5. Mark each time the word is used. Choose one of those times and record the conclusion and what it was based upon.

### **PETER RECOUNTS HIS VISION: Read Acts 11:1-18**

1. What news quickly reached the ears of the apostles and other believers?
  - a. Notice the word *received* in verse 1. Share in your own words what it means to *receive the word of God*.
  - b. Review the words of Peter to those at Cornelius' house in Acts 10:34-43. List the truths Peter told them about Jesus.
2. Acts 11:2,3 tell us that *those of the circumcision contended with Peter*. What did they say to him?
  - a. Although the Jews were learning about grace, giving up certain religious rituals were difficult for them. What are some examples of beliefs that some Christians have today that they think exclude others from God's favor?
  - b. Share an example (if you have one) of someone coming to faith in Jesus that you thought was beyond His grace.
3. If you were one of the believers listening to Peter recount what happened that day in Caesarea, what statements from Acts 11:4-17 would have revealed that Peter's actions were divinely directed?
4. According to Acts 11:18, what was the response of the apostles and believers to Peter's story?

- a. What is your reaction when you pause to consider what it would be like for you if *God had not granted to you the privilege of repenting* of your sins?

### **PAUL AND BARNABAS IN ANTIOCH: Read Acts 11:19-30**

1. *Then the news of these things came to the ears of the church in Jerusalem...* (Acts 11:22). What *news* is Luke referring to? see verses 19-21
2. Who did the church of Jerusalem *send out*?
  - a. What has been revealed about Barnabas so far in the book of Acts?  
Acts 4:36,37  
  
Acts 9:26-28  
  
Acts 11:23,24
  - 1.) Using these three references, describe Barnabas.
3. *Then Barnabas departed for Tarsus...* (Acts 11:25). Who did Barnabas *seek*?
  - a. Barnabas and Saul went to Antioch. What did they do there? verse 26
  - 1.) Prior to this time, believers were referred to as the *Way*. What were they called for the *first* time in Antioch?
    - a.) What are some other positive words that refer to Christians?
4. A prophet named Agabus came to Antioch. According to verse 28, what did he prophesy?
  - a. Record the response of the believers in verse 29,30.

1.) What does it mean to give *according to his ability*?

a.) How does this speak to our calling to give even when finances are tight?

**PETER IMPRISONED: Read Acts 12:1-4**

1. According to verses 1,2 what did King Herod *stretch out his hand* to do?

a. These actions *pleased the Jews*. What did Herod do to Peter? verses 3,4

1.) In what ways can desires to *please* others corrupt our decisions?

2.) What did Herod *intend* to do with Peter?

**PETER SET FREE: Read Acts 12:5-19**

1. What did the church do while Peter was in prison?

a. How is this an example for us in times of crisis?

2. Summarize what happened in Acts 12:6-10

a. Peter was not sure if this was really happening or if he was having a *vision*. When *Peter had come to himself* who did he *know God had delivered him from*? verse 11

- b. God *delivered* Peter from prison, but He did not *deliver* James, the brother of John, from death. In what ways does an "unanswered" prayer discourage you from praying?

- 1.) Although there is much that we do not understand about God's *deliverances*, what are some reassuring things that you do know? Challenge: use Scripture to support your answer.

- 3. What did Peter do when he realized God had *delivered* him? verse 12

- a. Summarize this event that followed. verses 13-18 Note: James (verse 17) is Jesus' brother.

- 4. Why are we sometimes surprised when God answers our prayers?

- 5. After executing the apostle James, and attempting to do so to Peter, who were Herod's next victims? verse 19

### **THE DEATH OF HEROD: Read Acts 12:20-24**

- 1. Using Acts 11:20, describe the relationship between Herod and the people of Tyre and Sidon.
- 2. What was the reaction of the people to Herod's speech?
- 3. What was the reaction of Herod to the people's reaction?

4. What was God's reaction to Herod's reaction to the people's reaction?
  - a. Why did God *strike* Herod?
5. Using 1 Chronicles 29:11-13, record the words of another king (David) as he stood before the people.
  - a. As you consider our glorious God who demands that we give Him glory, what are some of your favorite words of praise to Him?

**REVIEW: Read Acts 11,12**

1. In what ways have you been challenged to be less like the *circumcised* believers in your acceptance of others?
2. How does the example of the church praying for Peter encourage you to pray for those who serve in difficult situations?
3. What do you want to remember next time you are in a place of suffering?
4. In what ways have you been challenged or encouraged by this lesson?

*Glory in His holy name;  
Let the hearts of those rejoice who seek the LORD!  
- 1 Chronicles 16:10*

## Observation Worksheet

### Acts 11:1-30

<sup>1</sup> Now the apostles and brethren who were in Judea heard that the Gentiles had also received the word of God. <sup>2</sup> And when Peter came up to Jerusalem, those of the circumcision contended with him, <sup>3</sup> saying, "You went in to uncircumcised men and ate with them!" <sup>4</sup> But Peter explained it to them in order from the beginning, saying: <sup>5</sup> "I was in the city of Joppa praying; and in a trance I saw a vision, an object descending like a great sheet, let down from heaven by four corners; and it came to me. <sup>6</sup> When I observed it intently and considered, I saw four-footed animals of the earth, wild beasts, creeping things, and birds of the air. <sup>7</sup> And I heard a voice saying to me, 'Rise, Peter; kill and eat.' <sup>8</sup> But I said, 'Not so, Lord! For nothing common or unclean has at any time entered my mouth.' <sup>9</sup> But the voice answered me again from heaven, 'What God has cleansed you must not call common.' <sup>10</sup> Now this was done three times, and all were drawn up again into heaven. <sup>11</sup> At that very moment, three men stood before the house where I was, having been sent to me from Caesarea. <sup>12</sup> Then the Spirit told me to go with them, doubting nothing. Moreover these six brethren accompanied me, and we entered the man's house. <sup>13</sup> And he told us how he had seen an angel standing in his house, who said to him, 'Send men to Joppa, and call for Simon whose surname is Peter, <sup>14</sup> who will tell you words by which you and all your household will be saved.' <sup>15</sup> And as I began to speak, the Holy Spirit fell upon them, as upon us at the beginning. <sup>16</sup> Then I remembered the word of the Lord, how He said, 'John indeed baptized with water, but you shall be baptized with the Holy Spirit.' <sup>17</sup> If therefore God gave them the same gift as He gave us when we believed on the Lord Jesus Christ, who was I that I could withstand God?" <sup>18</sup> When they heard these things they became silent; and they glorified God, saying, "Then God has also granted to the Gentiles repentance to life." <sup>19</sup> Now those who were scattered after the persecution that arose over Stephen traveled as far as Phoenicia, Cyprus, and Antioch, preaching the word to no one but the Jews only. <sup>20</sup> But some of them were men from Cyprus and Cyrene, who, when they had come to Antioch, spoke to the Hellenists, preaching the Lord Jesus. <sup>21</sup> And the hand of the Lord was with them, and a great number believed and turned to the Lord. <sup>22</sup> Then news of these things came to the ears of the church in Jerusalem, and they sent out Barnabas to go as far as Antioch. <sup>23</sup> When he came and had seen the grace of God, he was glad, and encouraged them all that with purpose of heart they should continue with the Lord. <sup>24</sup> For he was a good man, full of the Holy Spirit and of faith. And a great many people were added to the Lord. <sup>25</sup> Then Barnabas departed for Tarsus to seek Saul. <sup>26</sup> And when he had found him, he brought him to Antioch. So it was that for a whole year they assembled with the church and taught a great many people. And the disciples were first called Christians in Antioch. <sup>27</sup> And in these days prophets came from Jerusalem to Antioch. <sup>28</sup> Then one of them, named Agabus, stood up and showed by the Spirit that there was going to be a great famine throughout all the world, which also happened in the days of Claudius Caesar. <sup>29</sup> Then the disciples, each according to his ability, determined to send relief to the brethren dwelling in Judea. <sup>30</sup> This they also did, and sent it to the elders by the hands of Barnabas and Saul.

## Acts 12:1-25

<sup>1</sup> Now about that time Herod the king stretched out his hand to harass some from the church. <sup>2</sup> Then he killed James the brother of John with the sword. <sup>3</sup> And because he saw that it pleased the Jews, he proceeded further to seize Peter also. Now it was during the Days of Unleavened Bread. <sup>4</sup> So when he had arrested him, he put him in prison, and delivered him to four squads of soldiers to keep him, intending to bring him before the people after Passover. <sup>5</sup> Peter was therefore kept in prison, but constant prayer was offered to God for him by the church. <sup>6</sup> And when Herod was about to bring him out, that night Peter was sleeping, bound with two chains between two soldiers; and the guards before the door were keeping the prison. <sup>7</sup> Now behold, an angel of the Lord stood by him, and a light shone in the prison; and he struck Peter on the side and raised him up, saying, "Arise quickly!" And his chains fell off his hands. <sup>8</sup> Then the angel said to him, "Gird yourself and tie on your sandals"; and so he did. And he said to him, "Put on your garment and follow me." <sup>9</sup> So he went out and followed him, and did not know that what was done by the angel was real, but thought he was seeing a vision. <sup>10</sup> When they were past the first and the second guard posts, they came to the iron gate that leads to the city, which opened to them of its own accord; and they went out and went down one street, and immediately the angel departed from him. <sup>11</sup> And when Peter had come to himself, he said, "Now I know for certain that the Lord has sent His angel, and has delivered me from the hand of Herod and from all the expectation of the Jewish people." <sup>12</sup> So, when he had considered this, he came to the house of Mary, the mother of John whose surname was Mark, where many were gathered together praying. <sup>13</sup> And as Peter knocked at the door of the gate, a girl named Rhoda came to answer. <sup>14</sup> When she recognized Peter's voice, because of her gladness she did not open the gate, but ran in and announced that Peter stood before the gate. <sup>15</sup> But they said to her, "You are beside yourself!" Yet she kept insisting that it was so. So they said, "It is his angel." <sup>16</sup> Now Peter continued knocking; and when they opened the door and saw him, they were astonished. <sup>17</sup> But motioning to them with his hand to keep silent, he declared to them how the Lord had brought him out of the prison. And he said, "Go, tell these things to James and to the brethren." And he departed and went to another place. <sup>18</sup> Then, as soon as it was day, there was no small stir among the soldiers about what had become of Peter. <sup>19</sup> But when Herod had searched for him and not found him, he examined the guards and commanded that they should be put to death. And he went down from Judea to Caesarea, and stayed there. <sup>20</sup> Now Herod had been very angry with the people of Tyre and Sidon; but they came to him with one accord, and having made Blastus the king's personal aide their friend, they asked for peace, because their country was supplied with food by the king's country. <sup>21</sup> So on a set day Herod, arrayed in royal apparel, sat on his throne and gave an oration to them. <sup>22</sup> And the people kept shouting, "The voice of a god and not of a man!" <sup>23</sup> Then immediately an angel of the Lord struck him, because he did not give glory to God. And he was eaten by worms and died. <sup>24</sup> But the word of God grew and multiplied. <sup>25</sup> And Barnabas and Saul returned from Jerusalem when they had fulfilled their ministry, and they also took with them John whose surname was Mark.