SMITH FOR CHRIST

TEACHING THE WORD · WATCHING THE TIMES



DEEP DIVE

Acts

Chapter Eleven, Verses 1–30

To the Gentiles Also — a hard question in Jerusalem, a careful answer from Peter, and a new church in Antioch where the name "Christian" was born

NASB 1995 | VERSE BY VERSE | FOUR VOICES | WITH DIAGRAMS

Jewish believers take Peter to task for eating with Gentiles; he tells them, in order, what God did, and they fall silent and praise God. Then unnamed men from Cyprus and Cyrene preach to Greeks in Antioch, Barnabas sees the grace of God, Saul is brought from Tarsus, and the disciples are first called Christians. Read through four teachers — **David Guzik**, **R.C. Sproul**, **C.H. Spurgeon** and **Matthew Henry** — with the Greek behind Luke's key words.

THE PASSAGE

Acts 11:1–30

the charge · the gift · Antioch · Christians

THE METHOD

Verse by Verse

Color-coded by teacher

WHAT'S INSIDE

Contents

Four movements from Peter's report in Jerusalem to the relief sent from Antioch

—	**How to Read This Study** · *the four voices & their colors*	3
—	**Before the Passage** · *from Cornelius' house in Caesarea to the elders in Jerusalem*	3
I	**You Went to Uncircumcised Men** · *Acts 11:1–10 · the charge and the vision*	5
II	**Who Was I to Stand in God's Way?** · *Acts 11:11–18 · the same gift*	6
III	**The Hand of the Lord Was with Them** · *Acts 11:19–24 · Antioch and Barnabas*	8
IV	**First Called Christians** · *Acts 11:25–30 · the name and the gift*	10
V	**The Passage in the Whole Bible** · *cross-references*	12
†	**At a Glance** · *the four voices side by side*	14
†	**Key Insights & Questions for the Table** · *discussion*	14
†	**Sources** · *where each voice comes from*	16



"And the hand of the Lord was with them, and a large number who believed turned to the Lord." — Acts 11:21

SECTION I · THE PASSAGE

Acts 11:1–30

To the Gentiles Also — God grants repentance to the Gentiles — and a mixed church in Antioch learns to encourage, to teach and to give

† How to Read This Study

This study walks Acts 11 in 4 movements, in Luke's own order. Each movement opens with the full NASB 1995 text of those verses, marked with the Berean colors and shapes; then the Greek behind the key words; then the teachers, each in his own color — **David Guzik**, the pastor who walks the text verse by verse; **R.C. Sproul**, the theologian who presses every word for its doctrine; **C.H. Spurgeon**, the preacher who turns the doctrine into a call to the heart; and **Matthew Henry**, the Puritan commentator who gathers it into plain, practical counsel. The figures draw the passage so you can see where Luke is going. Read the Scripture first; then let each voice add its angle.

DAVID GUZIK · Enduring Word — R.C. SPROUL · Ligonier · St. Andrew's
C.H. SPURGEON · Metropolitan Tabernacle — MATTHEW HENRY · Commentary on the Whole Bible

HOW THIS STUDY IS MARKED △ God — His character & actions · Command / instruction · Key repeated word · Sin / warning · ☆ Promise / blessing · Time / place / contrast

KEY VERSE · ACTS 11:18

"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.""

† Before the Passage

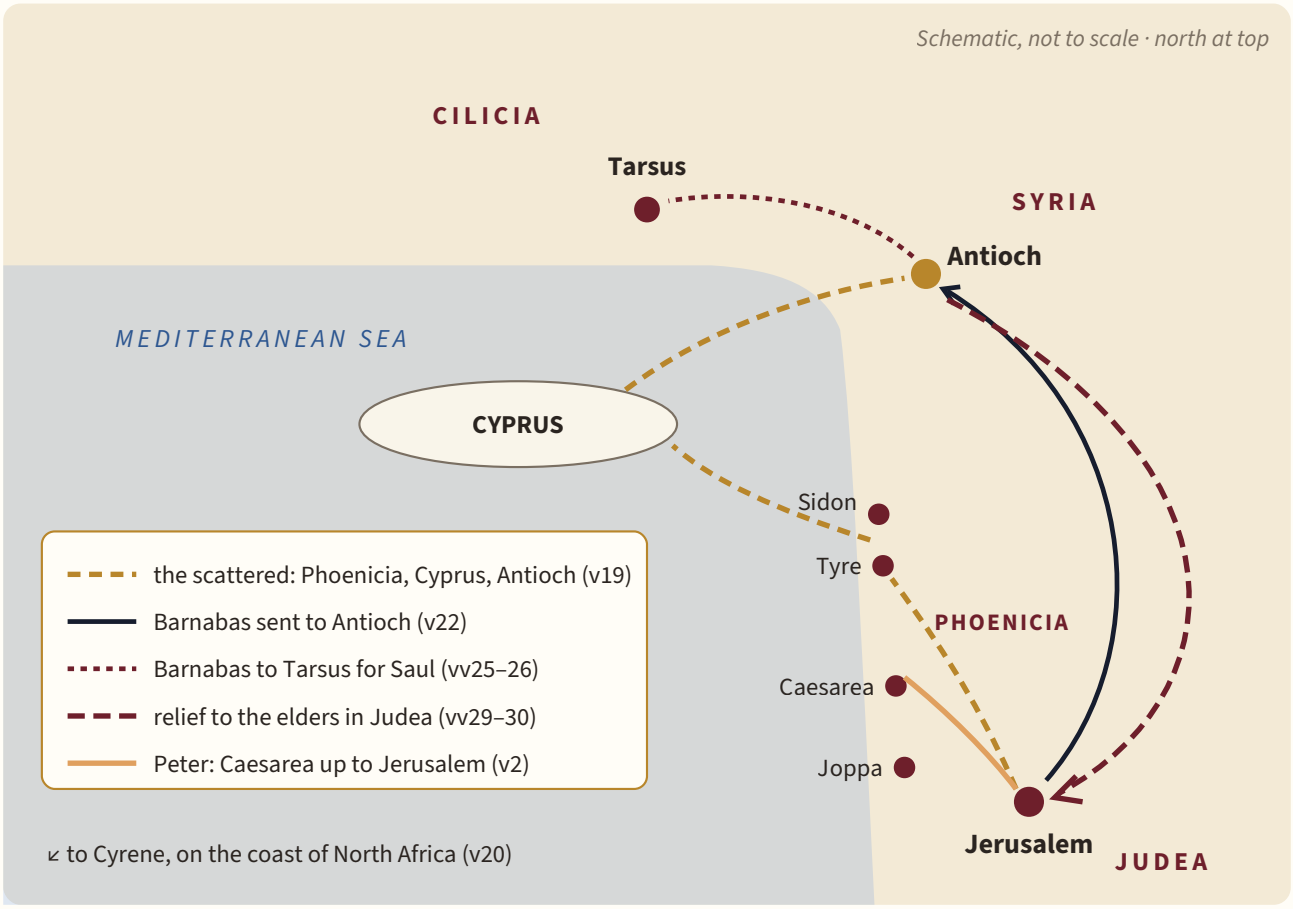
Acts 10 told how God opened the door: an angel sent Cornelius, a Roman centurion at Caesarea, to find Peter; a vision on a rooftop in Joppa taught Peter not to call unholy what God had cleansed; and while Peter was still preaching in Cornelius' house the Holy Spirit fell on the Gentiles who heard. Chapter 11 opens with the news reaching Jerusalem. Luke thinks this story matters so much that he tells it twice in full and has Peter refer to it again at the Jerusalem council (15:7–9).

The complaint is not that Peter preached to Gentiles but that he ate with them: "You went to uncircumcised men and ate with them" (v. 3). For a devout Jew, sitting at a Gentile table broke the food laws and the walls of a lifetime. Guzik: "At first, they were more concerned with what Peter did than with what God was doing with the Gentiles." Henry: "They charged it upon him as a crime that he went in to men uncircumcised, and did eat with them."

The second half of the chapter goes back to a thread Luke left in 8:1–4 — the believers scattered by the persecution after Stephen. They went up the coast to Phoenicia (Tyre and Sidon), across to Cyprus, Barnabas' home island (4:36), and north to Antioch on the Orontes, the great city of Syria. Sproul notes it "was founded and established in 300 BC by a man named Seleucus Nicator," and that "It became the headquarters for Paul on his future missionary journeys." Cyrene lay far to the west on the coast of North Africa; Tarsus, Saul's home city, lay across the gulf in Cilicia (9:30).

Acts 1:8 is unfolding: Jerusalem (chs. 1–7), Judea and Samaria (chs. 8–9), and now the first steps toward the remotest part of the earth. The word is "also": "the Gentiles also had received the word of God" (v. 1). Gentiles are added to the people of God; Israel is not erased (Romans 11). The famine of verse 28 came "in the reign of Claudius," emperor AD 41–54, and the relief trip of verse 30 brackets chapter 12, which steps back to tell what Herod was doing in Jerusalem meanwhile (12:25).

FIGURE · FROM JERUSALEM TO ANTIOCH



Follow the gold dashes as the scattered believers go up the coast, over to Cyprus and on to Antioch; then see Barnabas sent north, his trip to Tarsus for Saul, and the relief carried back to Judea.

I
MOVEMENT

ACTS 11:1–10

You Went to Uncircumcised Men

The news reaches Jerusalem, the circumcised take issue, and Peter begins at the beginning

1 *Now the apostles and the brethren who were throughout Judea heard that the Gentiles also had received the word of God.* 2 *And when Peter came up to Jerusalem, those who were circumcised took issue with him,* 3 *saying, "You went to uncircumcised men and ate with them."* 4 *But Peter began speaking and proceeded to explain to them in orderly sequence, saying,* 5 *"I was in the city of Joppa praying; and in a trance I saw a vision, an object coming down like a great sheet lowered by four corners from the sky; and it came right down to me,* 6 *and when I had fixed my gaze on it and was observing it I saw the four-footed animals of the earth and the wild beasts and the crawling creatures and the birds of the air.* 7 *"I also heard a voice saying to me, 'Get up, Peter; kill and eat.'* 8 *"But I said, 'By no means, Lord, for nothing unholy or unclean has ever entered my mouth.'* 9 *"But a voice from heaven answered a second time, 'What God has cleansed, no longer consider unholy.'* 10 *"This happened three times, and everything was drawn back up into the sky.*

ACTS 11:1–10

διακρίνω

DIAKRINŌ · "TAKE ISSUE / HESITATE" · G1252

Literally "to judge between, to separate." In the middle voice it can mean to dispute with someone or to be divided in oneself, to waver. Luke uses it twice in this report. In verse 2 the circumcised believers *diekrinonto* — they "took issue" with Peter. In verse 12 the Spirit told Peter to go "without misgivings," *mēden diakrinanta* (KJV "nothing doubting"; the ESV renders it "making no distinction"). The brethren made a distinction; the Spirit told Peter not to. At the council God Himself is the subject of the same verb: He "made no distinction" between Jew and Gentile (15:9).

καθεξῆς

KATHEXĒS · "IN ORDERLY SEQUENCE" · G2517

"One after another, in order." Only Luke uses it in the New Testament — five times — and the first is his promise to Theophilus to write an orderly account (Luke 1:3). Here Peter does what Luke does: he does not pull rank or raise his voice; he tells the events in the order they happened and lets them speak. Boice, cited by Guzik: "Peter did not flaunt his apostolic authority." Sometimes the best defense of what God has done is simply to tell it straight.

DAVID GUZIK · Enduring Word

Guzik notes that the critics were believers, "those of the circumcision," and that the rub was the table: "This offended these Christian Jews, so they contended with Peter." He thinks they missed the bigger picture: "At first, they were more concerned with what Peter did than with what God was doing with the Gentiles." Peter's answer is a condensed retelling of Acts 10, and Guzik, quoting Boice, admires its tone: "Peter did not flaunt his apostolic authority." He simply rehearsed the vision — the sheet let down three times, the voice, "What God has cleansed" — and let his hearers weigh it.

C.H. SPURGEON · Metropolitan Tabernacle

Spurgeon opened "Repentance unto Life" (No. 44, 23 September 1855) right here, with the Jewish believers' reluctance. They had been raised to think salvation belonged to Israel alone: "It was with difficulty they could allow the supposition" that Gentiles could share it, and "they could not bring themselves to the thought that Jesus had come to be the Saviour of all nations." Spurgeon does not sneer at them; he marvels that grace overcame so deep a prejudice, so that men who began by contending ended by glorifying God (v. 18).

MATTHEW HENRY · Commentary on the Whole Bible

Henry is frank about the brethren: "They charged it upon him as a crime that he went in to men uncircumcised, and did eat with them." He warns how quickly a censure hardens — "Some people, when they have fastened a censure upon a person, will stick to it" — and comforts pastors: "Christ's ministers must not think it strange if they be censured and quarrelled with." Of Peter fixing his gaze on the sheet he writes, "If we would be led into the knowledge of divine things, we must fix our minds upon them, and consider them."

II
MOVEMENT

ACTS 11:11–18

Who Was I to Stand in God's Way?

Three men, an angel, the Spirit falling — and repentance that leads to life

11 *"And behold, at that moment three men appeared at the house in which we were staying, having been sent to*
me from Caesarea. 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."

ACTS 11:11–18

> *"for John baptized with water, but you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit not many days from now."*
>
> ACTS 1:5

> *"It will come about after this That I will pour out My Spirit on all mankind; And your sons and daughters will prophesy, Your old men will dream dreams, Your young men will see visions."*
>
> JOEL 2:28

FIGURE · PETER'S ORDERLY ACCOUNT

PETER'S ORDERLY ACCOUNT · ACTS 11:4–17 · SIX THINGS GOD DID

1 · A VISION, THREE TIMES	2 · THREE MEN, THAT MOMENT	3 · THE SPIRIT SAID GO
vv5–10 "What God has cleansed, no longer consider unholy" (v9)	v11 sent from Caesarea, arriving at the very house where he stayed	v12 "without misgivings" — and six brethren went as witnesses
4 · AN ANGEL TO CORNELIUS	**5 · THE SPIRIT FELL**	**6 · THE LORD'S WORD**
vv13–14 "Send to Joppa … he will speak words by which you will be saved"	v15 "just as He did upon us at the beginning"	v16 "John baptized with water, but you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit"

"who was I that I could stand in God's way?" (v17)

→ "they quieted down and glorified God" (v18)

Peter does not argue; he lists, in order, six things God did — and lets the list ask the question in the dark bar.

κωλύω

KŌLYŌ · "STAND IN THE WAY, HINDER" · G2967

"To hinder, prevent, forbid." Peter's question in verse 17 — literally "who was I, able to hinder God?" — uses the verb he had already used in Cornelius' house when he asked whether anyone could refuse the water of baptism to these Gentiles (10:47), and that the Ethiopian used on the desert road ("what prevents me from being baptized?" 8:36). Jesus used it of children: do not hinder them (Luke 18:16). Henry draws the lesson: "Those who hinder the conversion of souls withstand God."

μετάνοια

METANOIA · "REPENTANCE" · G3341

A change of mind that turns a life around. Here it is something God "has granted" (v. 18) — the same language Peter used of Israel: God exalted Jesus "to grant repentance to Israel, and forgiveness of sins" (5:31; compare 2 Timothy 2:25). "Leads to life" is literally "unto life" (*eis zōēn*). Spurgeon: "'Repentance,' my dear friends, is the gift of God." Henry: "Repentance, if it be true, is unto life." Repentance is not the price of life; it is the first breath of it.

DAVID GUZIK · Enduring Word

Guzik points out how much of the story was outside Peter's control: the timing of the three men, the Spirit's command, the angel in Cornelius' house. "If it was permitted for an angel of God to go into Cornelius' house, it must be permitted for Peter also." The Spirit falling "as on us at the beginning" settled it: "It showed that God's stamp of approval was on this work towards the Gentiles." Peter's closing question carries the whole argument — "If God was reaching out to the Gentiles, who was Peter that he could withstand God?" — and the critics answered with praise: God "has also granted to the Gentiles repentance to life."

R.C. SPROUL · Ligonier · St. Andrew's

Sproul's "The Holy Spirit to the Gentiles" (25 July 2004, Acts 10:44–11:18) calls this the Gentile Pentecost. "Notice how Luke tells us that when the Spirit fell, it fell upon all those gentile believers." As at Pentecost, no one was left out: "All the believers at the household of Cornelius received the Spirit." From that he argues against dividing Christians into haves and have-nots, and insists that the Spirit is given to every believer at conversion — though "Baptism of the Holy Spirit is not the same thing as regeneration." "That is the significance of the gentile Pentecost, that we are all brought into the body of Christ." (Pentecostal and charismatic believers read a later baptism of the Spirit in Acts; Sproul answers that reading directly.)

C.H. SPURGEON · Metropolitan Tabernacle

In the body of "Repentance unto Life" Spurgeon separates true repentance from its counterfeits — trembling under a sermon, being "almost persuaded," humbling oneself for a while like Ahab: "you may humble yourselves for a time, and yet never repent before God." True repentance is "a hatred of sin, and a forsaking it," and "No man ever repents of sin without having some kind of sorrow with it." Above all, it is God's work: "Is it not a stupendous act of divine mercy that he actually makes them willing?" And the place it grows is the cross: "a man cannot, under God's Holy Spirit, contemplate the cross of Christ without a broken heart."

MATTHEW HENRY · Commentary on the Whole Bible

Henry admires Peter's method — reasons given, not authority claimed — and his conclusion: "Those who hinder the conversion of souls withstand God." On the food laws he notes, "It was not the design of Christ to abridge us in the use of our creature-comforts," and on Peter's caution, "In things of this nature we must act according to our present light." When the brethren glorified God he finds the doctrine of the chapter: "Repentance, if it be true, is unto life," and "Repentance is God's gift; it is not only his free grace that accepts it, but his mighty grace that works it in us."

III
MOVEMENT

ACTS 11:19–24

The Hand of the Lord Was with Them

Unnamed men preach to Greeks, a great number turn, and Barnabas sees the grace of God

> 19 *So then those who were scattered because of the persecution that occurred in connection with Stephen made their way to Phoenicia and Cyprus and* ↻ *Antioch*, ◷ *speaking the word to no one except to Jews alone*. 20 *But there were some of them, men of Cyprus and Cyrene, who came to* ↻ *Antioch and* ▤ *began speaking to the Greeks also, preaching the Lord Jesus*. 21 *And* △ *the hand of the Lord was with them, and a large number who believed* ▤ *turned to the Lord*. 22 *The news about them reached the ears of the church at Jerusalem, and they sent Barnabas off to* ↻ *Antioch*. 23 *Then when he arrived and* △ *witnessed the grace of God, he rejoiced and began to encourage them all with resolute heart to* ▤ *remain true to the Lord*; 24 *for* ☆ *he was a good man, and full of the Holy Spirit and of faith. And considerable numbers were brought to the* ↻ *Lord*.
>
> ACTS 11:19–24

> *"Therefore, those who had been scattered went about preaching the word."*
>
> ACTS 8:4

> *"Now Joseph, a Levite of Cyprian birth, who was also called Barnabas by the apostles (which translated means Son of Encouragement),"*
>
> ACTS 4:36

Ἑλληνιστάς

HELLĒNISTAS · "GREEKS" · G1675 (VARIANT G1672)

The manuscripts differ in verse 20. Many read *Hellēnistas*, "Greek-speakers," the word used of Greek-speaking Jews in 6:1 and 9:29; others read *Hellēnas* (G1672), "Greeks." The NASB and most translations read "Greeks," because Luke sets these hearers against "Jews alone" in verse 19 — something new is happening. Henry, reading the KJV's "Grecians," took them as Hellenist Jews; Guzik reads Gentiles. The flow of Acts 10–11 supports Gentiles: the door Peter opened in Caesarea is now open in a great city.

παρακαλέω · προσμένω

PARAKALEŌ · PROSMENŌ · "ENCOURAGE · REMAIN TRUE" · G3870, G4357

Barnabas, the "Son of Encouragement" (4:36), does what his name says: he "began to encourage" (*parekalei*, imperfect — he kept at it). His message: *prosmenein*, to stay with, keep on, remain — "with resolute heart," literally "with purpose of heart" (KJV). Paul and Barnabas give the same charge in 13:43 — to continue in the grace of God. Henry: "To cleave to the Lord Jesus is to live a life of dependence upon him and devotedness to him."

DAVID GUZIK · Enduring Word

Guzik notes the change: "At first, Christians scattered over the Roman Empire preached only to Jews." Then some men from Cyprus and Cyrene spoke to Greeks, and he honors them: "These unnamed disciples from Cyprus and Cyrene are genuine heroes." The fruit was God's, not theirs: "A ministry can't turn people to the Lord unless the hand of the Lord is with them." When Jerusalem sent Barnabas, he did not inspect and criticize; he rejoiced and encouraged — "Barnabas rightly focused on his main job as a leader of the congregation."

R.C. SPROUL · Ligonier · St. Andrew's

Sproul's "The Team of Barnabas and Saul" (1 August 2004) starts with the persecution that backfired: "Wherever they went as they fled persecution from the city of Jerusalem, they took the gospel with them." "When God puts His hand upon a missionary outreach and evangelistic enterprise of the church, growth happens" — though he warns that numbers alone never prove God's approval; a crowd danced around the golden calf. On Barnabas: "When it says Barnabas was a good man, his goodness was a gift of the Holy Ghost," and "Barnabas's name means "son of encouragement."" He sets that generosity against the envy and fault-finding that break the tenth commandment.

C.H. SPURGEON · Metropolitan Tabernacle

Spurgeon preached verse 21 as "Conversions Desired." He names the goal — real faith in Christ and a real turning from sin to God, for "Faith is nothing unless it brings with it a willing mind" — and the power behind it: the Lord's hand on the preachers themselves and on the hearers' hearts. "There is a power abroad as potent as that by which the worlds were made." So he urges ordinary workers on: "Sow, brother, for God has ploughed," and, "The Holy Spirit will move them by first moving you."

MATTHEW HENRY · Commentary on the Whole Bible

Henry sees persecution turned into a sowing: “Those that fled from persecution did not flee from their work.” The hand of the Lord meant power to reach hearts, “to bring that home to the hearts and consciences of men which they could but speak to the outward ear,” and “These were not apostles, but ordinary ministers, yet they had the hand of the Lord with them, and did wonders.” Of Barnabas: “We must be glad to see the grace of God in others, and the more when we see it where we did not expect it,” and “Those we have comfort in we should exhort.”

IV
MOVEMENT

ACTS 11:25–30

First Called Christians

Barnabas finds Saul, a year of teaching, a new name, and a famine answered with giving

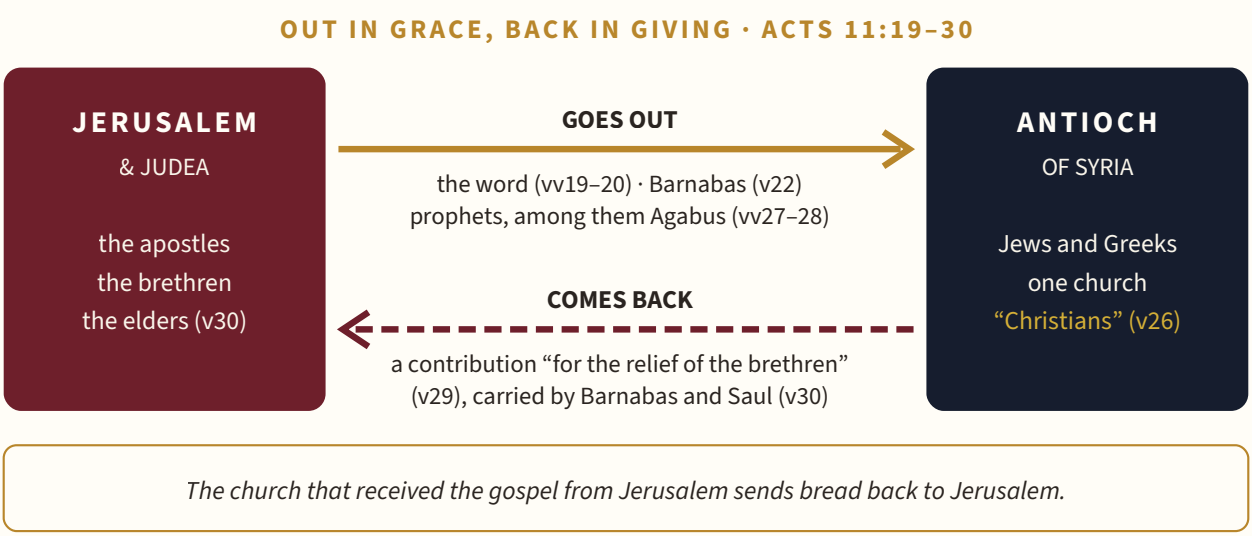
25 And he left for Tarsus to look for Saul; 26 and when he had found him, he brought him to Antioch. And for an entire year they met with the church and taught considerable numbers; and the disciples were first called Christians in Antioch. 27 Now at this time some prophets came down from Jerusalem to Antioch. 28 One of them named Agabus stood up and began to indicate by the Spirit that there would certainly be a great famine all over the world. And this took place in the reign of Claudius. 29 And in the proportion that any of the disciples had means, each of them determined to send a contribution for the relief of the brethren living in Judea. 30 And this they did, sending it in charge of Barnabas and Saul to the elders.

ACTS 11:25–30

“They only asked us to remember the poor—the very thing I also was eager to do.”

GALATIANS 2:10

FIGURE · OUT IN GRACE, BACK IN GIVING



The top arrow carries the word and the teachers north; the bottom arrow carries the famine relief south — the young church gives back to the mother church.

Χριστιανός · χρηματίζω

CHRISTIANOS · CHRĒMATIZŌ · "CHRISTIAN · WERE CALLED" · G5546, G5537

Christianos occurs only three times in the New Testament: here; on King Agrippa's lips, "you will persuade me to become a Christian" (26:28); and in Peter's letter, "if anyone suffers as a Christian" (1 Peter 4:16). The Latin-style ending *-ianus* marked a man's party or household — Guzik: "In Latin, the ending ian meant "the party of."" Sproul: "Christian was a derisive term." The verb *chrēmatizō* usually means to be divinely instructed (10:22); here it means to bear a name in public. Henry notes the name came from Christ's office, not His personal name.

διακονία

DIAKONIA · "RELIEF, SERVICE, MINISTRY" · G1248

The word behind "deacon." The Antioch disciples sent a *diakonia* for the brethren (v. 29) — the interlinear glosses it "ministry" — and when Barnabas and Saul had "fulfilled their mission" in 12:25 the word is the same. Carrying a famine offering was ministry, not a detour from it. Verse 30 also brings the first mention of church "elders" (*presbyteroi*, G4245) in Acts; the gift went to them, not to individuals.

DAVID GUZIK · Enduring Word

Guzik pictures Barnabas remembering "the precious brother Saul, and how he was sent to Tarsus for his own protection (Acts 9:28-30)." On the name, he explains, "In Latin, the ending ian meant "the party of,"" and quotes Gaebelein: "Antioch was famous for its readiness to jeer and call names; it was known by its witty epigrams." A nickname became a badge — as for the martyr Sanctus in Eusebius, who answered every question with "I am a Christian." He cites Bruce that Claudius' reign "was marked by a succession of bad harvests and consequent scarcity," and Boice on the relief: "As far as I know, this is the first charitable act of this nature in all recorded history."

R.C. SPROUL · Ligonier · St. Andrew's

Sproul imagines the scene: "Barnabas inquired of the people in Antioch, "Where's Saul of Tarsus?"" Barnabas had stood by Saul in Jerusalem when others were afraid of him, and now he brings him into the work, and they teach together for a year. As for the new name, Sproul does not soften it: "Christian was a derisive term." The outsiders meant it as a sneer; the church wore it. His sermon closes with the reading of verses 27–30 — "Then the disciples, each according to his ability, determined to send relief to the brethren dwelling in Judea."

MATTHEW HENRY · Commentary on the Whole Bible

Henry praises Barnabas' humility: "Barnabas brought Saul to Antioch, though it might be the lessening of himself." On the name: "Hitherto those who gave up their names to Christ were called disciples, learners, scholars," but now they took a name "not from the name of his person, Jesus, but of his office, Christ-anointed," and he presses it home: "Are we Christians? Then we ought to think, and speak, and act, in every thing as becomes Christians." On the relief: "Charitable people are traders with what God has given them," and "Many a good motion of that kind is made and commended, but is not prosecuted, and so comes to nothing."

V
THEME

CROSS-REFERENCES

The Passage in the Whole Bible

From the promise to the nations to one body in Christ

> *"It is too small a thing that You should be My Servant To raise up the tribes of Jacob and to restore the preserved ones of Israel; I will also make You a light of the nations So that My salvation may reach to the end of the earth."*
>
> ISAIAH 49:6

> *"but you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be My witnesses both in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and even to the remotest part of the earth."*
>
> ACTS 1:8

> *"and that repentance for forgiveness of sins would be proclaimed in His name to all the nations, beginning from Jerusalem."*
>
> LUKE 24:47

> *"He is the one whom God exalted to His right hand as a Prince and a Savior, to grant repentance to Israel, and forgiveness of sins."*
>
> ACTS 5:31

> *"For He Himself is our peace, who made both groups into one and broke down the barrier of the dividing wall,"*
>
> EPHESIANS 2:14

> *"But when Cephas came to Antioch, I opposed him to his face, because he stood condemned. For prior to the coming of certain men from James, he used to eat with the Gentiles; but when they came, he began to withdraw and hold himself aloof, fearing the party of the circumcision."*
>
> GALATIANS 2:11–12

> *"but if anyone suffers as a Christian, he is not to be ashamed, but is to glorify God in this name."*
>
> 1 PETER 4:16

> *"For you know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though He was rich, yet for your sake He became poor, so that you through His poverty might become rich."*
>
> 2 CORINTHIANS 8:9

DAVID GUZIK · Enduring Word

Guzik, citing Boice, calls the Antioch offering perhaps "the first charitable act of this nature in all recorded history" — the first time one church gave to rescue another.

MATTHEW HENRY · Commentary on the Whole Bible

Henry reads Agabus' famine as a word of judgment on a land that would not bear fruit: "They were barren, and did not bring forth to God, and therefore God made the earth barren to them."

SECTION II · STUDY HELPS

At a Glance

Four voices, one chapter

Four teachers, one chapter. Guzik walks the text and gathers the historians; Sproul presses the doctrine — the Spirit given to all believers, growth as God's hand; Spurgeon preaches repentance and conversion to sinners; Henry turns every verse into counsel. They differ in places — Henry reads the "Grecians" of v20 as Greek-speaking Jews, Guzik as Gentiles — and agree on the large thing: God grants life to the nations.

THE MOVEMENT	GUZIK · the text	SPROUL · the doctrine	SPURGEON · the heart	HENRY · the counsel
I · The charge	More concerned with what Peter did than with what God was doing.	— (no Sproul sermon on these verses sourced here)	Grace overcame a deep prejudice; contenders became worshipers.	A censure, once fastened, sticks; ministers must expect it.
II · The same gift	God's stamp of approval; who was Peter to withstand God?	The Gentile Pentecost: all received the Spirit; one body.	True repentance hates and forsakes sin; it is God's gift.	Those who hinder conversions withstand God; repentance is unto life.
III · Antioch	Unnamed heroes; no conversions without the hand of the Lord.	God's hand brings growth — but numbers alone prove nothing.	Sow, for God has ploughed; the Spirit moves them by moving you.	Ordinary ministers did wonders; be glad of grace where unexpected.
IV · Christians	A jeering nickname became a badge; the first church charity.	Barnabas fetches Saul; "Christian" began as derision.	— (no Spurgeon sermon on these verses sourced here)	Named for Christ's office; then live as becomes Christians.

ACTS 11:1–30 · A COMPARATIVE READING

† Key Insights to Carry

- **The complaint was about the table.** "You went to uncircumcised men and ate with them" (v3). Guzik: they were "more concerned with what Peter did than with what God was doing." Religious people can miss a revival while arguing about the menu. GUZIK
- **Tell it in order.** Peter answered with *kathexēs* — the events one after another (v4), the same word Luke uses for his own Gospel (Luke 1:3). A plain, orderly testimony of what God did is hard to argue with. THE GREEK
- **They made a distinction; the Spirit said not to.** The verb behind "took issue" (v2) is the verb behind "without misgivings" (v12): *diakrinō*. At the council God Himself "made no distinction" (15:9). THE GREEK
- **The same gift.** "God gave to them the same gift as He gave to us" (v17). Sproul: "All the believers at the household of Cornelius received the Spirit." There is no second-class Christian at God's table. SPROUL
- **Repentance is a gift, not a fee.** "God has granted … the repentance that leads to life" (v18). Spurgeon: it "is the gift of God." Henry: "his mighty grace that works it in us." SPURGEON
- **Silence, then praise.** The critics "quieted down and glorified God" (v18). Good men can be wrong, hear the evidence, and change their minds — and that is cause for worship, not embarrassment. THE TEXT
- **Persecution became a sowing.** Henry: "Those that fled from persecution did not flee from their work." Stephen's death scattered the seed as far as Antioch (v19; 8:4). HENRY
- **Unnamed men changed history.** Not apostles but "men of Cyprus and Cyrene" first preached the Lord Jesus to Greeks in Antioch (v20). Guzik: "genuine heroes." GUZIK

- **An encourager sees grace first.** Barnabas "witnessed the grace of God" and "rejoiced" (v23). Henry: be glad of grace "where we did not expect it." Then he fetched Saul, "though it might be the lessening of himself." HENRY
- **A nickname, a badge, a gift.** "Christian" began as a jeer (Sproul) and became the church's name (1 Pet 4:16). The first thing the Christians at Antioch did with the name was send relief to Judea (v29). THE TEXT

† Questions for the Table

1 **The Jerusalem believers objected to who Peter ate with. Whose table would I be uncomfortable sitting at — and what does that reveal about me?**

More concerned with what Peter did than with what God was doing (Guzik).

11:2-3; Gal 2:11-12

2 **Peter answered criticism with an orderly account of what God had done, not with his title. How do I usually respond when my walk with God is questioned?**

Peter did not flaunt his apostolic authority (Boice, in Guzik).

11:4-17

3 **"Who was I that I could stand in God's way?" Where might I be standing in the way of what God is doing in someone else?**

Those who hinder the conversion of souls withstand God (Henry).

11:17; 10:47

4 **If repentance is a gift God grants, how should that change the way I pray for the men I love who are still far from Him?**

Repentance is God's gift (Henry; Spurgeon).

11:18; 2 Tim 2:25

5 **Barnabas looked for the grace of God before he looked for problems. When I walk into a church, a group or a man's life, what do I look for first?**

Be glad to see the grace of God where we did not expect it (Henry).

11:23-24

6 **The name "Christian" started as an insult. What would people around me need to see for that name to fit me — and what did the Antioch church do first?**

Live as becomes Christians (Henry).

11:26-30; 1 Pet 4:16

Acts 11 is the day the church found out how big God's grace is. Good men argued, heard the evidence, went quiet and praised God; ordinary men crossed a line and preached Jesus to Greeks; an encourager saw grace and fetched a forgotten brother; and a brand-new church answered a famine with an offering. If God has granted you repentance that leads to life, don't stand in His way — be glad of His grace in others, and give.

Teaching the Word. Watching the Times. — Smith For Christ

† Sources

Each teacher's section summarizes the pages below in our own words; short quotations are verbatim from them. Matthew Henry (1662–1714) completed his *Commentary* himself through the Gospels and Acts. Henry's Commentary and C.H. Spurgeon (1834–1892) are in the public domain; Guzik and Sproul are summarized — consult each author's own work.

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