

DELIVERANCE FROM DEATH

Acts 12

EXTENSION OF THE GOSPEL TO THE GENTILES

10:1-11:30

SALVATION OF CORNELIUS 10:1-48

While Peter was in Caesarea, the Lord simultaneously spoke to Peter and Cornelius to bring them together.

Cornelius was a centurion who sought to please the Lord.

Peter was sent to tell him about Jesus.

- * Cornelius would have been a candidate for proselyting to Judaism.
- * God demonstrates to him (and through him to other candidates) that He has established a new way to come to God—a new plan—through the church, rather than through Judaism.

God used supernatural evidence to demonstrate the Spirit had come on the hearers and that He had opened the door of salvation to the Gentiles.

Peter was shocked, but God's revelation was too clear to doubt.

Again God uses Peter to declare on earth what He has determined in heaven. (Compare Matt 18-19; John 20)

When word of Peter's activities came to Jerusalem to the apostles they were stunned.

Peter had gone too far this time.

They called a meeting to discuss his activities (11:1-18).

DEFENSE FROM PETER 11:1-18

The accusation 11:1-3

The accusation that he had gone to the house of Gentiles was presented.

The answer 11:4-17

Peter answered by explaining how God had revealed His plan to him

The whole story was retold.

The acceptance 11:18

When the evidence of the Spirit's coming was described, they were convinced.

The coming of the Spirit on the Gentiles could not be denied without denying their own experience.

If God had done for the Gentiles the same as He had done for them, then He must be accepting them also.

Therefore, tongues was a sign to Jewish Christians to demonstrate that God had accepted pagan Gentiles also.

GROWTH OF GENTILE MINISTRY 11:19-30

Once God's confirmation of the acceptance of Gentiles into the people of God was recognized, the door opened wide for witness to Gentiles.

Work in Antioch 11:19-21

Introduction to Barnabas 11:22-30

When work in Antioch began to develop, the apostles sent Barnabas to investigate.

Inspection of work 11:22-24

Barnabas was excited about what God was doing.

Inclusion of Paul 11:25-26

He went to get Paul, the man God named to carry on this ministry in the future.

Paul became his disciple until he was ready to assume responsibility for ministry.

Involvement in famine relief 11:27-30

When a prophetic message predicted famine in the Roman world, an offering was collected to help needy brethren throughout Judea.

Barnabas and Saul were asked to take the offering to the elders.

SALVATION FROM PERSECUTION BY HEROD 12:1-25

At about this time a period of persecution broke out under Herod.

What differences are noted between James' and Peter's experiences?

DEATH OF JAMES 12:1-2

He killed James and, discovering a positive popular response among the Jews, decided to try again.

IMPRISONMENT OF PETER 12:3-6

DELIVERANCE OF PETER 12:7-11

Herod arrested Peter (12:3-6)

but God freed him (12:7-11).

What do we learn from the difference between what happened to James and to Peter? (Compare Heb. 11:32-35a & 35b-39)

RESPONSE OF THE CHURCH 12:12-17

How did the church respond to Peter's deliverance? –their unbelief

Note vss. 11-12—even Peter was surprised!

The church was not expecting such a dramatic answer to their prayers.

Nevertheless they praised God for His mighty act.

RESULTS OF PERSECUTION 12:18-25

What were the results of this conflict for Herod?

For Herod 12:18-23

What were the results for the church?

For the church 12:24-25

The final result of the persecution was judgment against Herod and triumph for the word of God.

The word was spread and the church strengthened as people saw what God had done.

What lessons should we learn from these results?

WHAT ARE THE IMPLICATIONS OF THIS PASSAGE FOR US?

If God could control history and protect His people,
He can protect us,
if we're faithful to proclaim the gospel, also.