

Acts 9:32-12:24.

God Opens the Door of Faith for the Gentiles

Things to keep in mind as Jesus Began to call the Gentiles.	The Holy Spirit was carrying out God and Jesus' orders from heaven to people on earth.	The church outside Jerusalem.	Peter's mission outside Jerusalem in Palestine	11:1-18. Peter prepared the "apostles and brothers throughout Judea" to accept the Gentiles.
The Lord was on the "second leg" of His evangelism program. 1:8.	The apostles were baptized with the Holy Spirit, 1:5; 2:4. Others filled, 6:3.	The church outside Jerusalem .	9:32-35. He healed Aeneas and preached in Lydda and Sharon. A church was co-built with Jesus. 9:36-43. He raised a dead woman named Tabitha (Dorcas) and many people believed in Joppa.	11:19-26. Church at Antioch. Jews only had been taught.
Jesus is reigning at the right hand of God. 2:36; 7:56.	Miraculous signs, healing, driving out evil spirits, 5:12-16	The eunuch went home to Ethiopia as a Christian, 8:39.	10:9-16. God prepared Peter to associate with Gentiles. God used a vision to make His point. "Do not call anything impure God has made clean."	Later, preachers from off-shore taught Greeks.
God is fulfilling promises to: Abraham, Moses, David. 2:16, 34; 3:22-26.	Angels and the Spirit guided Philip, 8:26, 39. Language problems eliminated, 2:6-8. Gave message, 4:8.	Ananias, a Christian, was already in Damascus when Saul arrived, 9:10.	10:17-26. The Holy Spirit intervened to guide Peter to Cornelius' house in Caesarea. The first scene we see is a Roman Centurion falling at a fisherman's feet. "Stand up," Peter said, "I am only a man myself." 10:26.	Barnabas and Saul arrived in Antioch. Taught one year. Great numbers called Christians.
The Jewish rulers were resisting Jesus' as Prince and Savior. They flogged the apostles, 5:40. Stephen was stoned to death, 7:57-59. Disciples were put in prison, 8:3. Still the number of the saved increased to thousands: In Jerusalem, 6:7. In Judea, Galilee, Samaria, 9:31.	Believers who had their sins removed in the processes of the new birth had fellowship and help of the Holy Spirit - if they remained faithfully obedient. See 2:38, 39; 4:31; 5:32. Two people lied to the Holy Spirit. They both died instantly, 5:1-11. One tried to buy the apostles' gift, 8:18-24. Told to repent and pray.	Jews from many nations heard Peter and the apostles preach Jesus on Pentecost. 2:5ff. Many were converted before they were scattered, 2:41; 8:1. Saul preached Jesus was the Christ in Damascus and Arabia for three years (Acts 9:22; Gal. 1:17, 18). Then he was sent home to Tarsus, 9:30. He taught in Cilicia and Syria. Gal. 1:21-23.	10:27-48. Peter spoke after Cornelius said, "Now we are all here in the presence of God to listen to everything the Lord has commanded you to tell us." Note: Peter's message was from Jesus Christ via the Holy Spirit. He was not Reverend Peter, or a holy man, cardinal or a pope. The message: Point one. "God does not show favoritism but accepts men from every nation who fear Him and do what is right." Vs. 34, 35. Point two. "You know." The audience knew every thing about Jesus' life ministry. Peter finished the rest of the story for them. The Jews killed Jesus but God raised Him up as judge of the living and dead. The Holy Spirit manifested His presence to assure everyone present of God's approval. Point three. "Can anyone keep these people from being baptized with water? V. 47.	12:1-19. The persecution of the church was now from King Herod. James, the apostle, was put to death. Peter was put in prison. Jesus sent an angel to free him 12:19-25. Jesus sent an angel to strike Herod dead with worms. "The word of God continued to increase and spread." 12:24.

Questions for Discussion

A. The first three vertical columns in this chart are for review information. Acts can be read as a simplistic story if we are merrily seeking to enjoy a Bible story. Some Christians have sought to create their concept of what is a church by gathering facts from Acts. However, as we have witnessed, there are forces empowering the dynamics of this story. By doing the following activity we may refresh our minds, so we can appreciate the complications of God adding thousands of Gentiles to the body of Christ (Eph. 1:22, 23).

1. According to the "Travels in Acts," Part II, Lesson Two, how many years did Jesus, as king, evangelize only the Jews?
2. According to Stephen's heavenly vision, how should we view Jesus and His Father during the "seeking and saving" of physical Israel campaigns?
3. List two languages we may have heard spoken when these Jewish, or Jewish proselyte, churches met to worship, fellowship and evangelize.
4. Describe the communications system Jesus used to direct the church He was building from heaven.
5. How did the Father and the Son make their presence know with each individual member?
6. God was fulfilling promises to Abraham, Moses and David. How would this affect the Jewish Christians' minds and hearts?
7. The forces of Satan are always opposing God's goals to rescue all people who are lost from their identity as His children. Who did he use as his "pawns" in Luke's narrative?
8. Even though Luke had confined his story of Jesus' evangelism to the Jews in Israel, what were the possibilities of churches being built in other places? Name one place.

9. In spite of God's grace and love being manifested in abundance, how did God let the church witness how faithful He is to His decree that wilful sinners deserve death? See Rom. 1:32.

B. Jesus' second big evangelism effort to "go to the Jew first" was taking place in Judea, Galilee and Samaria.

1. Where did Peter go after he served in the big gospel campaign in Jerusalem?
2. What were some of the miracles he performed in order to assure the people he was an apostle of the Messiah they had been waiting to come?
3. What was the big story that was heard all over Joppa?
4. How did Jesus begin to prepare Peter for the evangelism of the Gentiles?

C. The door of faith opened to the Gentiles.

1. While Jesus was preparing Peter to open His campaign to evangelize the Gentiles, He was also preparing a Gentile family to receive the gospel of His kingdom. Please name the family.
2. Although miracles were being performed by Deity in the preparation for taking the gospel of the kingdom "to the ends of the earth," what natural thing had to happen to "open the door of faith" for each individual Gentile?
3. What was the guiding principle for the new membership of the church, Peter had to learn?
4. Describe the person Jesus chose to be the first Gentile Christian.
5. How did Jesus persuade him to invite Peter to his house?
6. According to Peter's opening remarks in his first sermon to a Gentile group, how well does it appear Cornelius and his family had been following the story of Jesus?

7. The foregoing is another narrative where Luke related many minute details; such as line after line of their conversations. Why might this have been important "to open the door of faith for the Gentiles" as this campaign became full blown?
8. As Peter got into the body of his sermon in the house of Cornelius please note the sequence of his points. For instance:

Please fill in the blank spaces.

- a. "You know the message God sent to His people of Israel, telling the good news of _____ through Jesus Christ."
- b. "How God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the _____ and power?"
- c. "He went about doing good and healing all who were under the power of the _____."
- d. Please follow on through the sermon in this way for class discussion and your own understanding, if you are not a Christian.
- e. "While Peter was speaking these words, the _____ came on all who heard the message."
- f. How did the circumcised believers react when this happened?
- g. What did the members of Cornelius' household begin to do that astonished the Jews who were present?
- h. Were the members of Cornelius' household Christians at this point? That is, had they been born again?
- i. What may have been the purpose for the manifestation of the Holy Spirit's presence?
- j. Peter asked, "Can anyone keep these people from being _____ with _____?"
- k. If Peter accepted their invitation to stay a few days what other subjects might he taught?
9. What convinced the Jewish church members in Jerusalem that God had, indeed, "granted even the Gentiles repentance unto life?" Acts 11:18
10. As Jesus evangelism of the Gentiles became more widespread the center of activity shifted from Jerusalem. Where was the new center?
11. Who were the two Christian men who took the lead in this city?
12. Who became a new source of tribulation for the church? See Acts chapter twelve.