

WEEK 10: THE CHURCH LEARNED MANY LESSONS
DAY 1: THEY STOPPED CRITICISING AND STARTED PRAISING
Acts 11:1-18

1. Welcome to the last week of lessons in Acts, Part 1. In Week 9 we saw that many people believed as the disciples did miracles. We saw how Cornelius, a Gentile, believed in Jesus. We saw that Peter learned to preach to all men, not just Jews.

Why is Peter's visit to Cornelius important to us today? _____

2. This is important because it opened the way for us to hear about Jesus. Some people were very happy as Gentiles received Christ. But there were some who were not happy. Some Jewish Christians did not understand. They thought Peter was disobeying God until Peter explained to them. After Peter showed the believers what God did for the Gentiles,

- (1) They stopped criticising Peter.
- (2) They started praising God.

Take your Bible now and read Acts 11:1 to 5. Read verse 2 again. What did some of the believers in Jerusalem do when they heard about the Gentiles?

3. They criticised Peter. This was hard. When people outside the church made trouble, it was bad. But when people inside criticised, it must have been very hard for Peter. He could have rebuked them. He was only doing what God told him to do. But Peter did not rebuke them. Instead he explained what had happened.

Acts 11:2-4:

the circumcision party (or some of the believers) criticized him, saying, "Why did you go to uncircumcised men and eat with them?" But Peter began and explained to them in order.

Who criticised Peter? _____

4. It was some of the believers. It was people in the church. It was Jews who had received Christ. But they still wanted to trust in circumcision too. They still thought Gentiles were unclean. What a strange thing! In heaven there was rejoicing over the new Gentile Christians. But on earth there was criticising.

Whom did some of the believers in Jerusalem criticise? _____

5. They criticised Peter. Leaders must sometimes receive criticism when they obey God. Some people do not rejoice when others find Christ. We remember the story Jesus told about the son who ran away. He took his things and went to a far country. Soon he was sorry for what he had done. When he returned, his father forgave him. But the older brother was angry. He did not think the younger son should be forgiven. The believers in Jerusalem were like this older brother.

What did Peter do which made them stop criticising? _____

6. Peter explained to them. He did not speak harsh words back to them. He told them everything that had happened. Sometimes people just do not understand. People in our churches sometimes criticise what we do. If we speak harshly to them, it does not help. We must try to explain to them just what has happened.

Acts 11:4:

But Peter began and explained to them in order: "I was in the city of Joppa praying; and in a trance I saw a vision.

Who stopped criticising when Peter showed what God did for the Gentiles?

7. The believers in Jerusalem stopped criticising. They had been like the older brother. The older brother thought he was good. He thought the younger brother must be like him. The Jews obeyed many laws. They thought the Gentiles would have to do this before they could believe in Christ.

Acts 11:2:

The circumcision party criticized him, saying, "Why did you go to uncircumcised men and eat with them?"

What law do you think these Jews wanted the Gentiles to obey before they could receive Christ?

8. I think they wanted the Gentiles to be circumcised. They must become like Jews. In those days circumcision was a sign that a person was a Jew. But Peter explained something to them. He showed that God gave the Gentiles a more important sign.

Take your Bible now and read Acts 11:15 to 18. What gift did God give the Gentile believers which he had also given the Jewish believers?

9. He gave them the Holy Spirit. This was a more important sign than circumcision. Peter reminded the Jews about this. He showed that both Jews and Gentiles received this sign. This caused the Jewish believers to do two things.

Acts 11:18:

When they heard this they were silenced (or they stopped criticising Peter). And they glorified God.

What is the first thing they did?

(1) _____

(2) They started praising God.

10. First they stopped criticising Peter. They saw that this was a work of God. Perhaps they remembered these words of Jesus.

Luke 15:7:

I tell you, there will be more joy in heaven over one sinner who repents than over ninety-nine righteous persons who need no repentance.

What happens in heaven when someone repents and receives Christ?

11. There is joy. There is rejoicing. There is praise to God. It is wonderful when someone repents. There is joy in heaven and there should be rejoicing on earth.

What did the believers in Jerusalem do first after Peter showed what God had done for the Gentiles?

(1) _____

(2) They started praising God.

12. First they stopped criticising Peter. They saw what God had done. They saw that Peter was right.

Acts 11:17:

If then God gave the same gift to them as he gave to us when we believed in the Lord Jesus Christ, who was I that I could withstand God?"

Whom did the people begin to praise? _____

13. They did this to God. They had criticised Peter. But they did not try to criticise God. They were wise people. When they saw the truth, they received it.

Acts 11:18:

And they glorified God, saying, "Then to the Gentiles also God has granted repentance unto life."

After Peter showed what God had done, what is the second thing the believers in Jerusalem did?

(1) They stopped criticising Peter.

(2) _____

14. They started praising God. These believers were beginning to see the great truth Peter had learned.

Do you still remember it? _____ Say Acts 10:34-35 to yourself.

15. This is the great truth.

Acts 10:34-35:

And Peter opened his mouth and said: "Truly I perceive that God shows no partiality, but in every nation any one who fears him and does what is right is acceptable to him.

After Peter showed what God had done for the Gentiles, what did the believers in Jerusalem do?

(1) _____

(2) _____

16. They stopped criticising Peter. And they started praising God. They began to rejoice that the Gentiles could not repent and believe. Here is a great lesson for us. Sometimes we see people who have lived very hard lives. We see tribes who have been our enemies.

What should we do when these people receive the good news of Christ?

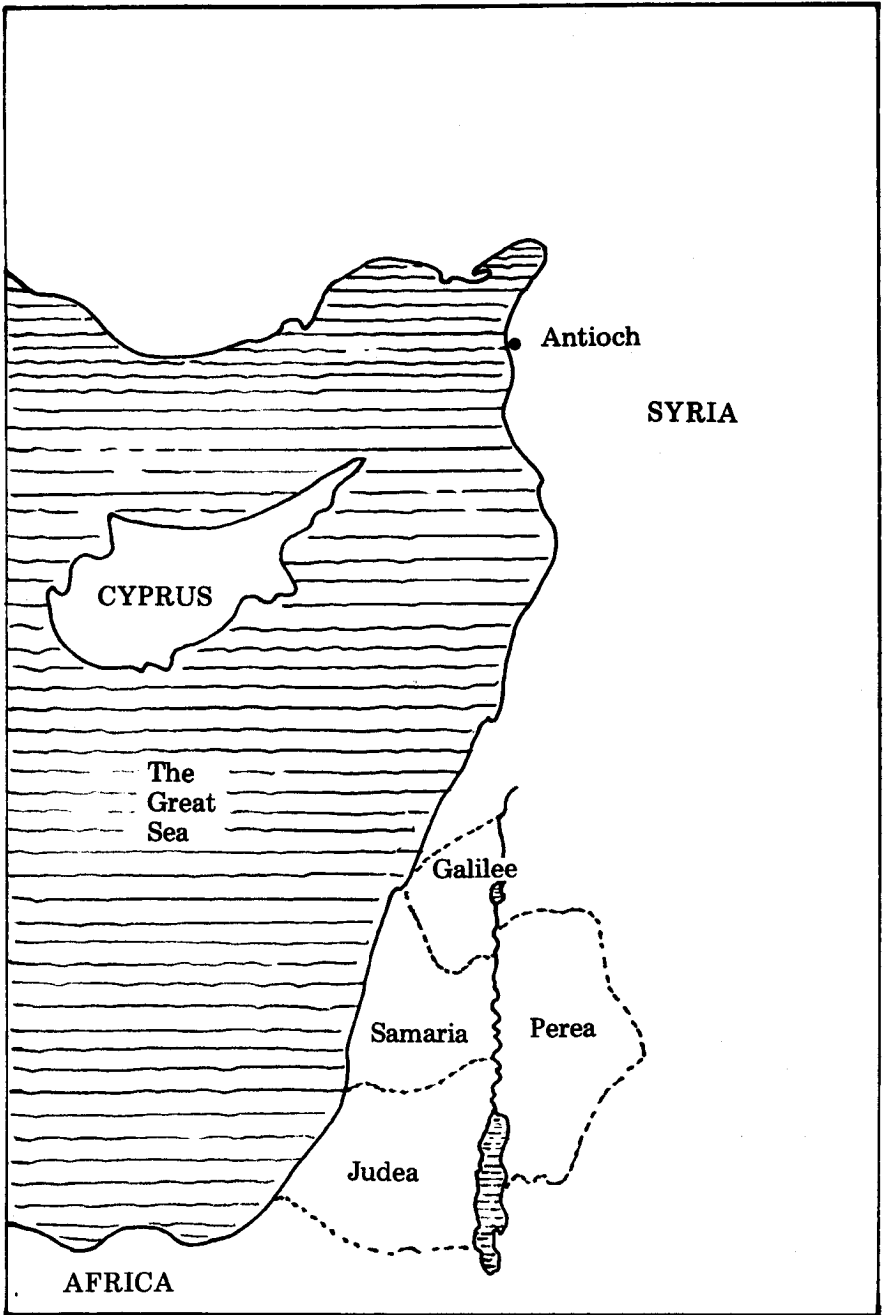
17. We should praise God. We should rejoice.

After Peter showed what God had done for the Gentiles, what did the believers in Jerusalem do?

(1) _____

(2) _____

A Good Church Grew at Antioch



WEEK 10: THE CHURCH LEARNED MANY LESSONS
DAY 2: A GOOD CHURCH GREW AT ANTIOCH
Acts 11:19-30

1. After Peter showed what God had done for the Gentiles, what did the believers in Jerusalem do?

(1) _____

(2) _____

2. They stopped criticising Peter. And they started praising God. Peter's visit to Cornelius opened the door for the Gentiles. The apostles were glad for the way the gospel was spreading. But Christ had told them to go to the ends of the earth. Today we will learn how a good church began in the Gentile city of Antioch. We will learn three important things about this church.

(1) They were Gentiles.

(2) They were growing.

(3) They were giving.

Take your Bible now and read Acts 11:19 to 30. Read verse 20 again. To whom did the men of Cyprus and Cyrene preach in Antioch?

3. They preached to Greeks. Believers were still being scattered by persecution. Some went as far as the island of Cyprus. But they preached only to Jews. Some of the believers went north to Antioch and began preaching. But their preaching was different. They began preaching to the Greeks. The Greeks were not Jews. So a Gentile church began here.

Acts 11:20:

And the hand of the Lord was with them, and a great number that believed turned to the Lord.

In what chapter of Acts do we read of the starting of the Gentile church in Antioch?

4. We read this in Acts 11. The city of Antioch in Syria was very important. At one time it was the most important city to the Romans, after Rome and Alexandria. It was important because many wise leaders of the Greeks lived there. It became important to the church also. All of Paul's missionary journeys began and ended there.

Find Antioch on the map facing this page. Draw a line under the name Antioch on the map. What kind of people were in the new church in Antioch? Were they Jews or Gentiles?

=====

5. These new believers were Gentiles. They were Greeks and not Jews. People came to this city from many parts of the world. There they saw God working in a new church. The church became a light to the dark countries of the Gentiles. It was very important that there should be a church here of Gentiles and not Jews.

In what city was the first Gentile church started? _____

=====

6. This city was Antioch. A big church grew here. The people were not Jews.

What is the first important thing about the church in Antioch?

- (1) _____
 - (2) They were growing.
 - (3) They were giving.
- =====

7. The people in the church at Antioch were Gentiles. This church was also a growing church. Perhaps you think the gospel was received slowly here. These people did not know the prophecies of the Jews. This church was not started by the apostles. We might think it would grow slowly, but this is not true.

Acts 11:21:

And the hand of the Lord was with them, and a great number that believed turned to the Lord.

From this verse, how many believed and turned to the Lord? _____

=====

8. It was a great number. Sometimes we think churches must be small. We think they must grow slowly. We think few people want to receive Christ. But the church at Antioch was growing very fast. It was a very important church.

What is the first important thing about the church in Antioch?

- (1) _____
- (2) They were growing.
- (3) They were giving.

9. First, they were Gentiles. And they were growing very fast. It was not the apostles who started this church. It was started by believers who were driven from Jerusalem. We do not even know their names. It is good to think about this. God does not always use the people who are known by everyone. He often uses common people. But these people must be ready and filled with the Holy Spirit.

In what city was the church growing very quickly at this time? _____

10. It was in Antioch. The church in Jerusalem heard of God's work in Antioch. They sent Barnabas to help. Barnabas was a man from Cyprus like some of those preaching in Antioch. He saw the work of God in these believers. He was glad and encouraged them.

Acts 11:24:

for he was a good man, full of the Holy Spirit and of faith. And a large company was added to the Lord.

Was the church staying the same size, or was it growing? _____

11. It was growing. Like the church in Judea and Galilee, it was growing stronger and bigger. It needed teachers. There was too much for Barnabas to do. So he went and got Saul. Saul became a great teacher. But without the help of Barnabas, he might never have started.

Acts 11:25-26:

So Barnabas went to Tarsus to look for Saul; and when he had found him, he brought him to Antioch. For a whole year they met with the church, and taught a large company of people.

What was growing in the city of Antioch? _____

12. It was the church. There were so many believers that the people of the city began to see them. They saw that they were different. They saw that they followed Christ.

Acts 11:26:

and in Antioch the disciples were for the first time called Christians.

What is the second important thing about the church in Antioch?

(1) They were Gentiles.

(2) _____

(3) They were giving.

13. The church in Antioch was growing. It grew so much that the people of the city gave the believers a special name. They called them Christians. The believers were learning to be like Christ. Barnabas and Saul taught them for a whole year.

Then word came of a great famine that was coming. Those who would suffer most were those in Jerusalem. They had already suffered much in persecution. The church in Antioch decided to gather money for the church in Jerusalem.

Think carefully. Was the church in Antioch giving to Gentiles like themselves, or were they giving to Jews?

14. They were giving to Jews. The church in Antioch was very young. But God had taught them much. Their lives had been changed. They no longer cared only about themselves. They gathered money for Jews in Jerusalem. They sent Barnabas and Saul to take their gift to the mother church.

Acts 11:29:

And the disciples determined, every one according to his ability, to send relief to the brethren who lived in Judea; and they did so.

Is it important or not so important for a church to give? _____

15. It is important for a church to give. It shows our love to God. It shows our love to others. The believers in Antioch were Gentiles. Those in Jerusalem were Jews. The church in Antioch showed that they had grown in love and obedience.

What is the third important thing about the church in Antioch?

16. They were giving.

What are the first two important things about the church in Antioch?

(1) _____

(2) _____

17. The church in Antioch were Gentiles. And they were growing.

What is the third important thing about them? _____

18. They were also giving. Our churches can be like the church in Antioch. We are Gentiles. We can grow. We can give. We can also start new churches like the one in Antioch. It does not take apostles like Peter to start new churches. It only takes clean, Spirit filled Christians. It takes men and women like us. Perhaps there is a Saul among us who needs to get started working for God.

Your people need to hear this. Prepare a sermon to preach from today's lesson. On another paper write the big things you will say. Preach the sermon if you can. Bring your paper to class.

19. From Acts 11, write three important things about the church in Antioch, where believers were first called Christians.

(1) _____

(2) _____

(3) _____

WEEK 10: THE CHURCH LEARNED MANY LESSONS
DAY 3: THEY BROUGHT GLORY TO GOD BY DEATH AND LIFE
Acts 12:1-11

1. Yesterday we learned about the good church in Antioch.

From Acts 11, write three important things about this church, where believers were first called Christians.

(1) _____

(2) _____

(3) _____

2. The church in Antioch were Gentiles. They were growing. And they were giving. Today and tomorrow we will study Acts 12. We will see three people: James, Peter, and Herod. We will see what was happening to the apostles. Peter was kept alive. But James, the brother of John, was killed for Christ. This is what we will learn.

In Acts 12, the apostles brought glory to God in two ways:

(1) By dying

(2) By living

Take your Bible now and read Acts 12:1 to 11. Who began to persecute the church at this time?

3. It was Herod who did this. The leaders of the Jews had tried to stop the church. But they would not do it. The church was still growing. All of the apostles were still living and preaching. But now the king sent by Rome tried to stop the church. We will learn more about King Herod tomorrow.

Acts 12:1-2:

About that time Herod the king laid violent hands upon some who belonged to the church. He killed James the brother of John with the sword.

Who was the first of the apostles to bring glory to God by dying?

4. James was the first of the apostles to be killed. Remember that Stephen was a deacon, not an apostle. The king did not like the Christians. He began to persecute the apostles. This made the leaders of the Jews very happy. They wanted to stop the church. They had killed some believers and driven many away. Now the king was helping them.

Acts 12:3:

and when he saw that it pleased the Jews, he proceeded to arrest Peter also.

What king killed James and caused him to bring glory to God by dying?

5. Herod did this. We know that God has all power. Even kings can do only what God lets them do. Pilate tried to make Jesus talk at his trial. He asked Jesus if he knew that he could let him go or crucify him. Jesus answered that Pilate had no power except what God gave him. Big men often make the mistake of thinking they have great power. They do not know that power comes from God. God allowed Herod to kill James. But it is not bad for a Christian to die. He goes to a better life. And it brings glory to God when a Christian dies with strong faith.

In his death, what did James bring to God? _____

6. He brought glory to God. This does not mean that God kills people. It means that he allows some to be killed and go to him. We do not know why some Christians live short lives and some live long lives. But all can bring glory to God.

What is the first way disciples brought glory to God in Acts 12?

(1) _____

(2) By living

7. James brought glory to God by dying. He had been faithful in his work. He kept on preaching and helping the church. This made Herod angry and he killed him.

We remember how Jesus prayed before his death. He asked that God's will, not his, be done. Jesus knew that God sometimes uses evil men to work out his plan. He knew that God would allow Pilate to crucify him. It was God's plan from the beginning of the world to let Christ die. Sometimes it is very hard for us to understand why God lets people be killed. But we can accept it as his will.

When Christians die for their faith, what do they bring to God?

8. They bring glory to God. But sometimes God has another plan. He wants people to go on living. This was his plan for Peter. He still wanted Peter to go on working for him for a while. Herod killed James. This pleased the Jews. So he arrested Peter.

Acts 12:4:

And when he had seized him, he put him in prison, and delivered him to four squads (or groups) of soldiers to guard him.

Whom did God want to glorify him by living? _____

9. He wanted Peter to do this. Perhaps Peter thought he would die. If we are doing God's will we are bring glory to him. We can do this by living or by dying. If we are his children and obey him, we do not need to be afraid. We can rest in peace no matter where we are, or what is happening.

Whether we live or die, to whom can we bring glory? _____

10. We can bring glory to God. James was killed by King Herod. This was the cup Jesus had told him he would drink. But God had other plans for Peter. Perhaps Peter remembered what Jesus once said to him.

John 21:18:

... when you are old, you will stretch out your hands, and another will gird you (or dress you) and carry you where you do not wish to go.

Peter may have taken these words to mean that he would live to grow older. Or perhaps he took them to mean he would never be free again.

Did all the disciples bring glory to God in the same way? _____

11. They did not bring glory in the same way. But Peter was not afraid. He was able to sleep in the prison. The people of the church were helping him.

Acts 12:5:

So Peter was kept in prison; but earnest prayer for him was made to God by the church.

How did the church help Peter bring glory to God by staying alive? _____

12. They prayed for him. The church had power to help Peter through prayer. God heard their prayer. His will was that Peter should live longer. So he answered their prayer by sending an angel.

Acts 12:7:

and he struck Peter on the side and woke him, saying, "Get up quickly." And the chains fell off his hands.

What is the second way disciples brought glory to God in Acts 12?

(1) By dying

(2) _____

13. They brought glory to God by living. Peter was very much alive. The chains fell off his hands and feet. He walked away from the soldiers he had been chained to. The gates of the prison opened in front of him. He followed the angel a little way into the city. Then he knew that he was free from prison and free from Herod.

What is the first way disciples brought glory to God in Acts 12?

(1) _____

(2) By living.

14. James brought glory to God by dying. Herod killed him with the sword. It seemed to happen very quickly. We do not know much about the way he died. But we know that God saw the death of his faithful servant.

How did Peter bring glory to God at this time? _____

15. Peter brought glory to God by living. Sometimes it is easier to die than it is to live. Life can be very hard at times. Later Paul wrote that he did not know whether to choose life or death. But he wanted to bring glory to God.

Philippians 1:20:

it is my eager expectation and hope that I shall not be at all ashamed, but that with full courage now as always Christ will be honoured in my body, whether by life or by death. For to me to live in Christ, and to die is gain.

Our God is one. His purpose for all his children is to bring glory to him. Are you willing to bring glory to God in the way he chooses?

16. In what two ways did disciples bring glory to God in Acts 12?

(1) _____

(2) _____

WEEK 10: THE CHURCH LEARNED MANY LESSONS
DAY 4: GOD FREED PETER AND STRUCK HEROD
Acts 12:12-25

1. In what two ways did disciples bring glory to God in Acts 12?

(1) _____

(2) _____

2. They brought glory to God by dying and by living. James died for Christ. Peter lived for him. God was working out his purposes. Today we see how God defeated the plan of Herod to kill Peter. Then we will see what happened to Herod. Let us learn it this way.

(1) God sent an angel to bring Peter out of prison in answer to the prayers of the church.

(2) God caused Herod to be eaten by worms because he did not give God glory.

Take your Bible now and read Acts 12:12 to 24. What were the Christians doing while Peter was in prison?

3. They were praying. They did not want to lose another apostle.

Acts 12:12:

When he (Peter) realized this, he went to the house of Mary, the mother of John whose other name was Mark, where many were gathered together and were praying.

For whom do you think the church was praying especially? _____

4. I think they were praying for Peter. This was the way the church could help.

Acts 12:6-7:

The very night when Herod was about to bring him out, Peter was sleeping between two soldiers, bound with two chains, and sentries before the door were guarding the prison; and behold, an angel of the Lord appeared, and a light shone in the cell (or room of the prison).

Whom did God send to bring Peter out of prison? _____

5. God sent an angel. The Bible says much about angels. Angels are spirits which serve God. They bring his messages to us, and they do his work among us.

Psalm 103:20-21:

Bless the Lord, O you his angels, you mighty ones who do his word, hearkening to the voice of his word! Bless the Lord, all his hosts, his ministers that do his will!

What did God send an angel to do for Peter? _____



6. He sent the angel to bring Peter out of prison. As Peter walked through the gates he thought he was dreaming. But when the angel left him, he knew it was true. God works when people pray for his will to be done.

Who prayed for Peter when he was in prison? _____

7. The church prayed for Peter. It was the people of God. God wants us to pray for things. Sometimes he does not help because we have not asked for help. But when Peter came to the house where they were praying, they were surprised. Perhaps they did not believe God would save him from Herod. Or perhaps they thought God would save him in another way. We sometimes think this way. We think we know how God will work. Then we do not understand when he does things in another way.

How did God answer the prayers of the church for Peter in prison?

8. God sent an angel to bring Peter out.

Acts 12:18:

Now when day came, there was no small stir among the soldiers over what had become of Peter. And when Herod had sought for him and could not find him, he examined the sentries and ordered that they should be put to death.

Who was trying to kill Peter? _____

9. Herod was trying to do this. He was the king sent by Rome. The name, Herod, is well known to us who read the New Testament. Herod the Great was king when Jesus was born. He was a different man from the one we are studying now. Herod the Great tried to find Jesus to kill him. When he could not find him he killed all the baby boys in Bethlehem. About a year later this king died. God saved Jesus from Herod the Great by sending an angel to tell Joseph to go to Egypt.

How did God answer the prayers of the church for Peter in prison?

10. God send an angel to bring Peter out. Another Herod we read about is the one who killed John the Baptist. Perhaps you remember that he cut off John's head. He gave it to a dancing girl. This Herod was the son of the Herod who tried to kill Jesus.

Do you think the Herod's wanted to serve God and give him glory?

11. The Herod's did not serve God. It seems that the kings of the family of Herod liked to kill people. The third Herod killed James the apostle. He was a nephew of the second Herod. He was the first king who persecuted the church. The leaders of the Jews had scattered the church. But the church continued to grow. Now the king got busy. The Jews were happy. Perhaps the king could do what they failed to do.

Think carefully. When Herod persecuted the church, against whom was he really fighting?

12. Herod was really fighting against God. This Herod was very much like his uncle and grandfather. He was a proud man. He wanted people to honour him. One day he made a speech to the people of Tyre and Sidon. They had been in trouble with Herod. Now they wanted to make him happy. They said his voice was the voice of a god. Herod let them say this even though it was a lie.

Acts 12:22:

And the people shouted, "The voice of a god, and not of a man!"

What did the people say about Herod? _____

13. They said he had the voice of a god. Herod allowed the people to say this. This is not pleasing to God. He will never give his glory to others. Herod was a very sinful man. God saw what he was doing.

Acts 12:23:

Immediately an angel of the Lord smote him, because he did not give God the glory; and he was eaten by worms and died.

Whom did God send to strike Herod so that he was eaten by worms?

14. Again God sent an angel. We have seen that angels bring God's word and do his work. They are spirits whom God sends to work in the world. Since we have the Bible, we do not wait for angels to tell us God's will. But angels are with us all the time to help us.

Hebrews 1:14:

Are they not all ministering spirits sent forth to serve, for the sake of those who are to obtain salvation?

What happened to Herod after the angel struck him for not giving glory to God?

15. He was eaten by worms. Angels help some people. They bring judgment to others. An angel told Mary she would have a son. An angel told the shepherds that Jesus was born. An angel told Joseph to take Jesus away from King Herod to Egypt. An angel also came to the Herod in our lesson.

Acts 12:23:

an angel of the Lord smote him, because he did not give God the glory; and he was eaten by worms and died.

Why did God send an angel to strike Herod in this way? _____

16. It was because he did not give God glory. So we see that angels help and they bring judgment. An angel fed Jesus in the desert after he was tempted. An angel rolled the stone away from his grave. A few weeks ago we saw that an angel brought Peter and John out of prison.

In Acts 12, how did God answer the prayers of the church for Peter in prison?

17. God sent an angel to bring Peter out. But God also sent an angel to Herod.

Why did God cause Herod to be eaten by worms?

18. Herod did not give God glory. He wanted the glory for himself. He had to be judged. Bringing God's judgment is one of the important things angels do. They will be helping Christ in the judgment at the end of time.

I Thessalonians 1:7:

... when the Lord Jesus is revealed from heaven with his mighty angels in flaming fire, inflicting vengeance (or judgment) upon those who do not know God.

Stop now and thank God for his angels. Thank him that they are with you now. Thank him that they will help to bring judgment in the end time.

19. In Acts 12, how did God answer the prayers of the church for Peter in prison?

Why did God send an angel to strike Herod and let him be eaten by worms?

WEEK 10: THE CHURCH LEARNED MANY LESSONS
DAY 5: REVISION

You have now studied about half of the book of Acts. We pray that God has helped you through these lessons. We also hope that you will be able to go on to Part 2 with us.

Today you will go over what you learned in Weeks 9 and 10. Then you should go over all the other questions. Try to take three or four days for this. Answer all the questions before you find the answers. Be sure you know all the answers.

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Questions from Week 9.

1. From Acts 9, what happened when God healed Aeneas and raised Dorcas from the dead through Peter?

2. Who was the first Gentile who received Christ through the preaching of the apostles?

How did Peter say this Gentile and every one could be forgiven of their sins?

3. At first, Peter thought Christ died only for whom? _____

From Peter's lesson of the blanket let down from heaven, for whom did Christ die?

4. What is the great truth Peter learned by going to Cornelius' house? Answer by writing Acts 10:34-35:

5. Why is Peter's visit to Cornelius important to us today? _____

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Questions from Week 10.

6. After Peter showed what God had done for the Gentiles, what did the believers in Jerusalem do?

(1) _____

(2) _____

7. From Acts 11, write three important things about the church in Antioch, where believers were first called Christians.

(1) _____

(2) _____

(3) _____

8. In what two ways did disciples bring glory to God in Acts 12?

(1) _____ (2) _____

9. In Acts 12, how did God answer the prayers of the church for Peter in prison?

10. Why did God send an angel to strike Herod and let him be eaten by worms?

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When you have finished these questions go back to pages 76 , 123 and 199. Hide the answers you have written. Try to answer every question. Do your best to put these lessons into your life.

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