

LESSON 4: ACTS 10, 11, 12, PAUL

READING 1—STUDY NOTES FROM LESSON 3; ACTS 10

1. What scripture, thought or concept did you find helpful from the notes on chapter 3?
2. What things in the life of Cornelius reveal what kind of servant of the Lord he will be?
3. The word *alms* as used in the New Testament comes from the Greek word for compassion, and means an act of charity or giving done out of compassion for the unfortunate. What do LDS women do today that is comparable to the “giving of alms” in New Testament times? Can you give an example from your own experience?
4. Peter was staying with a tanner by the name of Simon in Joppa. Find Joppa on your map. Describe the setting in which Peter saw his heavenly vision. (Note: The sixth hour refers to the time from noon to 3 pm in Biblical timekeeping.)
5. What did he see all three times?
6. The beasts in the vision were either all “unclean,” i.e., forbidden by the Jewish dietary code, or a mix of clean and unclean beasts. But this mixing would still have meant they were all forbidden to Peter since just by touching an unclean animal something would become unclean itself. How do these facts about animals used for food help explain the Jewish revulsion at mixing with Gentiles, and thus, to sharing the gospel with them?
7. What is Peter's response to the command of the Lord to kill and eat one of the animals in his vision?
8. CHALLENGE QUESTION: a. Read 2nd Nephi 26:33 (see Scripture List). Why do you think for thousands of years God instructed His chosen people, the Israelites, to avoid contact with the Gentiles (the word in Hebrew means “*the Nations*”)? Then why do you think this policy changed in the Christian era?
 - b. How would you explain this seeming inconsistency to someone who questioned it?
9. Both Peter and Cornelius are somewhat dazed by all the miracles in this situation. They go forward one step at a time as they are shown. Why do you think it was necessary to have such an abundance of miracles—Angels, visions, miraculous timing—in order to give the message to Peter that the Gentiles could have the gospel directly?
10. PERSONAL: Has there ever been a time when the Lord sent guidance into your life by means of His providential or amazing timing?

11. When Peter begins to speak, the first thing he does is express his amazement at the discovery God has led him into. Paraphrase Peter's new understanding in verses 34 and 35.
12. Peter then delivers a missionary sermon to Cornelius and his gathered friends. Name 4 things Peter tells them about the life and mission of Jesus.
13. Peter's summary statement in verse 43 could be used by someone to support a "cheap grace" view of the gospel that all one has to do is believe to be saved and that the works, or what a person does, do not matter. What statement by Peter in this same sermon could be used to show that our works do matter to God?
14. What occurred to the Gentiles at the end of Peter's speech?
15. What was the reaction of the 6 disciples that came with Peter from Jerusalem? Cite verse.
16. What significance did speaking in tongues have for -
Cornelius and the Gentiles:

Peter and company:
17. PERSONAL: What are some changes you have seen in the church as it has become a world wide rather than a Rocky Mountain States or even American church? Have any been hard for you?

Reading 2 - Acts 11

18. Note: "They which were of the circumcision" refers to Christian Jews who still kept the Law of Moses. What did these brethren accuse Peter of?
19. For Peter, the issue all comes down to what? Choose a verse that you think is the most important point in his argument and defend your choice. (There is no one right answer.)

Note: After Rome and Alexandria, Antioch of Syria was the third largest city in the Roman Empire. From its beginning in about 300 B.C. it was a busy seaport. Located 300 miles north of Jerusalem is was the home of many Jews of the Diaspora and became the headquarters of the missionary effort to the Gentiles.

20. Locate the areas of Phoenicia and Cyprus, and the cities of Tarsus and Antioch on the map. What name is first given to believers in Antioch?
21. What things contributed to the church's great success in Antioch?

22. What characteristics made Barnabas such an effective leader in God's church?

Reading 3 - Acts 12

24. The Herod of Acts 12:1 is Herod Agrippa I, one in a long line of rulers in the Herod family who served at Rome's discretion. The Herod family was hated by Judeans and given this background, Agrippa was anxious to curry favor with the Jews. For this reason he began a vigorous persecution of the church.

a. How might your experience in the church be different if we lived in a time when Mormons were actively persecuted?

b. What would you tell a young person who was experiencing ridicule or rejection for their faith?

25. Why did Herod put extra guards on Peter while he was imprisoned and awaiting trial? (see Acts 5:19)

26. What would the death of Peter have done to the new Christian movement?

27. What was the church's response to Peter's imprisonment? Cite verse.

28. Read the scriptures on the Lesson 4 Scripture List about "Praying Always." How can you pray always?

29. a. Read the scriptures on the Lesson 4 Scripture List about "Upholding Prayer." How does it make a difference in the lives and service of our leaders if we pray for them?

b. What is our obligation in this regard?

30. What are your favorite details from the delightful story of Peter returning to the saints after being let out of prison by an angel?

31. a. Look at verses 1 & 2 of chapter 12. Then verses 22 & 23. And finally verse 24. What overall point do you think Luke is trying to make in this chapter about King Agrippa and the work of the Lord?

b. Luke obviously believed that it was King Agrippa's pride that killed him. How and why does God "smite" people when their pride becomes an offense to Him?

32. Who do Paul and Barnabas take with them on their return to Antioch from the Jerusalem church?

NOTE: The first half of Acts, chapters 1-12, focused on Peter and the early beginnings of the church. The rest of Acts, chapters 12-28, focus on Paul and his missionary experiences and the spread of the church to the Gentiles.

REVIEW ON PETER, JAMES AND JOHN

33. Read the Bible Dictionary entry (page 749) on Peter.

- a. Which gospel writer was influenced by Peter?
- b. How is it thought that Peter met his death?

34. From your past reading in the New Testament, what were some manifestations of Peter's human frailty?

35. a. What examples of his weaknesses becoming strengths do we see in the first half of Acts?

- b. Why does the Lord choose the weak to do his work? (See 1Cor: 26-29 in Scripture List)

36. PERSONAL: Noting God's promise in Ether 12:27 (Scripture List), what area of weakness has the Lord made strong in your life? How did He do it?

37. Read Bible Dictionary (page 709) on James. Tell one thing you didn't know about each of the two different men named James who were such important participants in the story of the early church.

38. Read Bible Dictionary (page 715) about John—one of the Twelve.

- a. Skim 1Nephi 14:18-27 (Scripture List) What writing was John called to do? Where can we find these things?
- b. Read D&C 7:1-8 (Scripture List) What is the status of John today?

39. Read D&C 27:12 (Scripture List)

- a. What role did Peter, James and John have in the restoration of the Latter-day church?

40. Read D&C 29:12 (see Scripture List) What roles will the original 12 have in the future?

41. What lesson have you taken away from the story of the early church and its leaders that will be helpful to your life?