

“RESISTING GOD”
Acts 11:1-18
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INTRODUCTION

This is now the fourth recorded problem faced by the early church: covetousness (Ananias and Sapphira), murmuring (the issue with the Greek widows), simony (Simon the sorcerer), and now contentiousness—a “party spirit”.

The real issue of this text is the willingness of God’s people to submit to God’s authority and will.

You must accept God’s authority for your life and be willing to do His will.

In this passage we see the contention of stubborn believers in Judea over the work of God with the Gentiles, the conditions orchestrated by the Lord Himself that He used to overcome that contentious spirit, and the contentment that resulted in the church once the people submitted to the Lord’s will.

I. CONTENTION OF STUBBORN BELIEVERS (11. 1-3)

A. Christians in Judea heard about the conversion of the Gentiles—“They had received the word of God.” (v. 1)

B. Jewish Christians who were “sticklers” for legal restrictions “contended with” Peter

- This verb is the same as used in 10:20 and 11:12—“without misgivings, nothing doubting”.
- They did “make distinctions” between Christians—Jewish and Gentile.
- Their biggest “beef” was that Peter “ate with” the Gentiles. (v. 3)

The position that Peter took here in defending the freedom of the Gentiles and their equality with the Jewish Christians cost him dearly:

- 1) Peter was part of the persecution under Herod Agrippa I (ch. 12—put in prison and James killed).
- 2) James became the leader (pastor) of the Jerusalem church (ch. 15).

But the Lord Himself anticipated all of this prejudice and stubborn narrow-mindedness.

II. CONDITIONS ORCHESTRATED BY THE LORD (11:4-17)

- Note the links between Peter’s vision of unclean food and eating with Gentiles.
- Note the repetition of events in chapter 11. Peter makes clear that God was totally in control of what happened on both his end and Cornelius’ end.
- Peter also stresses the **6 witnesses** from Jerusalem.
- The ministry of Peter was intended to bring **salvation** to Cornelius and his household (14).

- Notice in v. 15 and v. 16 the connection of the “falling” of the Spirit upon them and the “baptism with (in) the Spirit”. Spirit baptism occurs at the moment of salvation and it brings people into the Body of Christ.
- Water baptism followed Spirit baptism, and it **identifies people with the local assembly**. Have you had these two baptisms?
- “The same gift” of v. 17 is the “gift of the Holy Spirit” mentioned in 10:45; note in 10:47 he simply says that they “received the Holy Spirit”.
- “Just as we did” in 10:47 means 1) the same Holy Spirit; 2) On the same basis—by faith in Christ. Notice “after believing in the Lord Jesus Christ” (v. 17); 3) with the same outward manifestations (Acts 2 with 10).
- Peter simply “**stayed out of God’s way**” in this incident (v. 17). He could not withstand God—and had no desire to oppose His plan! 10:47—baptism.

After Peter rehearsed the conditions orchestrated by God Himself, showing that what happened was His plan, the church found contentment.

III. CONTENTMENT OF THE CHURCH (18)

- A. The trouble-makers “quieted down.”
- B. They “glorified God”.
- C. They acknowledged that God had granted to the Gentiles **REPENTANCE OF LIFE**: that is repentance that results in life. How does God do this? By giving men the Gospel and enabling them to respond to that Gospel by faith—turning from their sins. God guarantees that *those who repent have life!*
- D. “Who was I to resist God?” **Who are we to resist God?**

IV. GOD MAKES HIS WILL CLEAR—WILL WE LISTEN TO HIM?

- A. In _____ (v. 14): “God is not willing that any should perish but that all should come to repentance.” (II Pet. 3:9)
- B. In _____ (See 10:47-48 with 11:17)
- C. In _____ (Rom. 12:1-2)
- D. In _____: going where God sends us; doing His work (10:14 with 11:17)
- E. In _____—not the kind these Jews wanted (v. 3 etc).
 1. “Be ye holy, for I am holy” (I Pet. 1:15-16).
 2. “This is the will of God, even your sanctification” (I Thes. 4:3).
 3. “Come out from among them and be ye separate, says the Lord” (II Cor. 6:17, and 14).
 4. “Receive not” false teachers (II John 10)

CONCLUSION

You must accept god’s authority for your life and be willing to do His will: In

*Salvation *Baptism *Dedication *Service *Separation