



## CrossRoads Notes:

Turn your Bibles to Acts 11:1-4

*Title: A Peter Revelation*

*Theme: The Enjoyment of Ministry Accountability*

*Series: Essentials for Church Growth*

Acts 11:1-4 and verse 18:

**Introduction:** *The Holy Spirit reveals the importance of God's work through Peter by moving Luke to refer to the events of the ministry in Cornelius's household three different times in the Book of Acts. Whenever, God starts a new work, a work done differently than what was usually done, the cancer of traditionalism births forth the death of criticism. A ministry matured in the Holy Spirit defeats that criticism.*

**Proposition:** *I would propose to you if the work of the Lord was important enough to have the Holy Spirit move Luke to write down the events of Peter's ministry, it should be important enough for the Body of Christ to take note of the truths proclaimed in this message. Peter shows a spiritual maturity that is missing in the Body of Christ.*

It is important to note that those who criticized Peter's ministry to the Gentiles were Jewish Christians, "circumcised believers" who needed a fuller understanding of the whole counsel of the Word of God. (Matthew Henry Commentary; The Bible Knowledge Commentary; The Bible Exposition Commentary; The New American Commentary; Barnes Notes, The Expository Bible Commentary)

It is only by the hand of God, through Christ and the Holy Spirit that the Body of Christ can overcome dead religion and cultural habits. Christians who have the Holy Spirit illumination that Peter knew fear the dangers of the cancers of legalism, traditionalism, denominationalism and faddism. They seek answers to these questions.

**Interrogative Sentence:** *How does a mature ministry receive revelation and how is God's revelation presented to the Body of Christ? How should spiritual leaders respond to the work the Lord is doing?*

**Transitional Sentence:** *The first step toward enjoying Peter's revelation from the Lord is to have hearts that are seeking after God. Acts 10:1-2 says, "At Caesarea there was a man named Cornelius, a centurion in what was known as the Italian Regiment. He and all his family were devout and God-fearing; he gave generously to those in need and prayed to God regularly." (Acts 10:1-2) The first key word to grasp is "devout" (eusebes) meaning to be a person who is respectful to God and things regarding worship unto Him. Devout people are dutiful in their efforts to seek God and know His will for them. (Complete Word Study of the Bible; Vines Amplified Expository Dictionary of New Testament Words; Thayer's Greek-English Lexicon; Analytical Lexicon of the Greek New Testament) The second key*

word is “God-fearing” (*phobeo*) meaning to have a reverential obedience toward God. (Thayer’s Greek-English Lexicon)

God gave Cornelius a supernatural revelation, an angel spoke to Cornelius saying, “...your prayers and gifts to the poor have come up as a memorial offering before God.” Clearly, Cornelius’ gifts were not for gaining favor from God, but works that came from a reverent worship unto the God of heaven and earth. Many times I have seen people come to church or do righteous acts only to win favor with God. Effective ministry duties and other works must be done out of a desire to please Him and from supernatural revelation that what they are doing is good for them and their family. Spiritual revelation comes to those are seeking to know more of the Lord, desire His ways of truth and heavenly wisdom. (The Pulpit Commentary)

The Lord will give devout, God-fearing Christians that which they seek. He will use whatever instruments He pleases to guide true seekers to the place and person who is able to give divine revelation which satisfies the spiritual heart and soul. When God-fearing people faithfully use the light they do have, the Lord will open the door to revelation. (Acts 10:3-8)

It is imperative that Christians understand. Devoted, God-fearing people who seek the Lord today, do so through the whole counsel of God’s Word. Just as the Lord called Peter to take a Word to Cornelius’ home, (Acts 10:22b) the Lord has given the Holy Spirit gift of “prophesying” (Romans 12:6) to the church, so that people may be informed of the will of God through the expounding of Scripture for making known the will of God. (The Expositors Bible Commentary; Ephesians 4:11; Intermediate Greek-English Lexicon; Enhanced Strong’s Lexicon; The Pulpit Commentary; Barnes Notes)

Dr. Alexander Maclaren:

Where does the Holy Spirit find your heart? Is it truly devoted and God fearing? Is your work unto the Lord done from a reverent worship unto God?

**Transitional Sentence:** *Hearts that seek after the Lord enjoy Peter’s revelation through true worship and through a heart of prayer.* Acts 10:9 says, “About noon the following day [Cornelius’s servants] were on their journey and approaching the city, Peter went up on the roof to pray.” The Bible says, “[He] prayed to God regularly.” (Acts 10:2b) Peter was a mere man. He is known among Bible studiers as being very spiritually mature, a spiritual leader, but he still needed to be a man of prayer. (The Preacher’s Outline Sermon Bible; The Expositors Bible Commentary)

Let the Holy Spirit place this truth into your spiritual heart. When devout, God-fearing men pray with a surrendered heart to God, they enjoy divine appointments and are sent to do ministry that introduces kingdom seekers to Christ. (Acts 10:34-48)

The great prayer warrior George Muller said, “the most important part of prayer was the first fifteen minutes after I said, ‘Amen.’” (Knights Treasury of 2,000

Illustrations) Walter B. Knight wrote, "Prayer is not a monologue, it is dialogue – our talking to God and God talking to us." (Knights Treasury of 2,000 Illustrations)

Pastor O. C. Lunholm:

Christians who catch revelation from God set their spiritual hearts to hear the Lord through prayer and will set their sights on what God has revealed to them, thus they are used of the Lord to do great things. Christians who desire Holy Spirit illumination must go beyond obedience to seasons of prayer and seize daily leisure, grasping strong feelings to be in prayer developing a listening heart. (Barnes Notes)

**Transitional Sentence:** *Prayer warriors enjoy Peter's Revelation through sensitivity to the Holy Spirit.* Acts 10:19-20 says, "While Peter was still thinking about the vision, the Spirit said to him, 'Simon, three men are looking for you. So get up and go downstairs. Do not hesitate to go with them, for I have sent them.'" Peter was not spoken to by an angel nor was it in a vision, but the speaking of the Holy Spirit. (Matthew Henry Commentaries; A Commentary Critical and Explanatory; The Bible Exposition Commentary)

Peter receives a "word of knowledge" (1 Corinthians 12:28) on what to do. Please note that the Holy Spirit had this Word for Peter, after he spent time in heart seeking, surrendered prayer. The men sent by Cornelius confirmed what the Holy Spirit had revealed to Peter. The men sent by Cornelius did not have a new revelation for Peter to submit to, what was said to Peter, Peter had first heard from the Holy Spirit.

The Holy Spirit is surrendered to achieving God's purpose in the universe for the glory of God and Jesus Christ. It has been well said, "The heavenly Father brings forth, the Son of God, Jesus Christ disposes and arranges, the Holy Spirit perfects it all." (Kuyper) L. Thomas Holdcraft writes, "The work of the Holy Spirit is to bring into effect all that which Deity intends and has provided for."

Christians who have the same illumination as Peter have full revelation of Psalm 32:8, "I will instruct you and teach you in the way you should go; I will counsel you and watch over you."

To be led of the Holy Spirit, a child of God must be willing to set aside dependence on self and natural wisdom when led of God to do so. It is important to note that the Holy Spirit can use our natural wisdom as long as we are willing to "Live by the Spirit and walk in step with the Holy Spirit." (Galatians 5:25) This has been referred to as "the intuitions of our sanctified judgment" (L. Thomas Holdcraft, *The Holy Spirit*, page 83) George Flattery writes, "The Holy Spirit leads us as a father leads his sons or as a master executive leads his work force. At times He delegates decisions to us; other times He influences our decisions; finally, there are times when He very directly reveals God's will to us."

The Holy Spirit led Jesus. (Luke 4:1) Simeon was led of the Holy Spirit to be in the temple to meet baby Jesus (Luke 2:27) The Bible says those who are "...led by the Spirit

of God are sons of God.” (Romans 8:14) Being led of the Holy Spirit is a sign of Christian maturity.

On occasion, the Holy Spirit’s leading is negative and preventive. We find this in Acts 16:6-7, “Paul and his companions traveled throughout the region of Phrygia and Galatia, having been kept by the Holy Spirit from preaching the word in the province of Asia. When they came to the border of Mysia, they tried to enter Bithynia, but the Spirit of Jesus would not allow them to.” Edmund Tedeschi in his exposition on this passage of Scripture writes, “The Holy Spirit leads, and the result is that Christ is presented to an individual family, or a whole region of the world. And the checking of the Holy Spirit on effect withholds the gospel, perhaps to protect His messengers, perhaps in judgment of the region, perhaps to speed the gospel to some other more ready people, or perhaps because He is leading some other apostle, a sent one to that place.”

It must be understood, in the spiritual hearts of born again Christians is the indwelling of the Holy Spirit of Christ (Romans 8:9-11) and most of the time the Lord’s leading will come through His illumination of the written Word of God, which is the sword of the Spirit. (Ephesians 6:17; John 14:26) Therefore, it is imperative that you prayerfully read and study the whole counsel of God’s Word.

Christians, who come to enjoy the illumination that Peter knew, know the Spirit’s leading must not be confused with human desires and opinions. There are many well meaning Christians who will say that they are Holy Spirit led, yet what they think and say is only a product of human reasoning and opinion. Jesus knew this was a problem, He even rebuked Peter, Matthew 16:23 says, “Jesus turned and said to Peter, ‘Get behind me, Satan! You are a stumbling block to Me; you do not have in mind the things of God, but the things of men.’” Every anointed ministry has had to deal with the opinion of man, even in the church, especially when having to deal with leadership, spiritual or governmental.

Adoniram Judson - A.J. Grodon wrote, “Adoniram Judson was led of the Holy Spirit to go to Burma to translate the Word of God into the Burmese language, a work that has now seen over thirty thousand conversions to Christ.” (All the information regarding Adoniram Judson came from Knights Treasury of 2,000 Illustration and Wikipedia, the free Encyclopedia)

Christians who are led of the Holy Spirit will in due season find a work open to them, just as Peter and Adoniram Judson enjoyed. Christians who are led of the Holy Spirit enjoy revelation and illumination, thus praying to completion the work set before them.

**Transitional Sentence:** *Holy Spirit led ministries have accountability that can be substantiated.* Acts 11:4 says, “Peter began and explained everything to them precisely as it had happened” Acts 11:12b says, “...these six brothers also went with me...”

Acts 11:2 gives the heart attitude of those overcome with the cancer of legalism and traditionalism, "So when Peter went to Jerusalem, the circumcised believers criticized him." I love the way the New American Standard puts it, "But Peter... proceeded to explain to them in orderly sequence..." Peter gave a full and fair accountability without argument or apology. (Matthew Henry Commentary) Holy Spirit illuminated Christians have such a conviction and understanding of their revelation from God that they have no problem presenting and substantiating their ministry to those who may criticize their work.

**In Closing:** *Christians who have Peter's revelation on how to oversee a work with the Lord enable the Body of Christ to find peace in ministry and praise God for what He is doing.* Acts 11:18 says, "When they heard [Peter's full accounting], they had no further objections, and praised God saying, 'So then, God has granted even the gentiles repentance unto life.'"

Holy Spirit illuminated ministries exercise their Spiritual gifts in the way of full accountability of their labors for the Lord. When Christians are exposed to ministries of Biblical accountability, they are to die to their own opinions, thrown off spiritual traditionalism, legalism, and denominationalism, and rejoice in what God is doing. True Holy Spirit illumination in the Lord's work brings rejoicing in the church and confidence to an on looking world.

Let us pray!