

The Acts of the Apostles - Chapters 11-12 Study Questions

1. **Acts 11:2-3** When someone asks you a "why" question what do you think they are really asking?

How should you reply?

Matthew 13:10 (p. 30)

2. **Acts 11:12** Many Christians justify what they do on the grounds that "the Spirit told them" to. Since such prophecy falls into the category of "private revelation", how would you evaluate it if you heard it?

CCC 799 Whether extraordinary or simple and humble, charisms are graces of the Holy Spirit which directly or indirectly benefit the Church, ordered as they are to her building up, to the good of men, and to the needs of the world.

CCC 800 Charisms are to be accepted with gratitude by the person who receives them and by all members of the Church as well. They are a wonderfully rich grace for the apostolic vitality and for the holiness of the entire Body of Christ, provided they really are genuine gifts of the Holy Spirit and are used in full conformity with authentic promptings of this same Spirit, that is, in keeping with charity, the true measure of all charisms.

CCC 801 It is in this sense that discernment of charisms is always necessary. No charism is exempt from being referred and submitted to the Church's shepherds. "Their office [is] not indeed to extinguish the Spirit, but to test all things and hold fast to what is good," so that all the diverse and complementary charisms work together "for the common good."

3. **Acts 11:19-23** How would you recognize when the grace of God is acting in a person's life? What might you do to imitate Barnabas' encouragement of it?

Colossians 1:9-10 (p. 365)

Romans 12:6-8 (p. 276) and **Footnote 12:6 Gifts**

1 Corinthians 12:1-13 (p. 302) and **Footnote 12:4 Gifts**

4. **Acts 11:19-26** Why does Luke place the episode of Barnabas' trip to Antioch here? What was the importance of Antioch to the early Church?

Footnote p. 226, 11:19-26 Luke places this episode

5. **Acts 12:1-5** Persecutions often follow the pattern of Herod's in attacking leaders. Why do you think the Jerusalem Church responded with prayer instead of following Jesus' injunction in Matthew 10:23? (p. 24)

Footnote p. 226, Acts 12:5 But earnest prayer

6. **Acts 12:5** What do the *Catechism* references in this note have to say about prayer?

Luke 18:1 (p. 140) and **Footnote 18:1-14 Two parables on Christian prayer**

CCC 2634 Intercession is a prayer of petition which leads us to pray as Jesus did. He is the one intercessor with the Father on behalf of all men, especially sinners. He is "able for all time to save those who draw near to God through him, since he always lives to make intercession for them." The Holy Spirit "himself intercedes for us . . . and intercedes for the saints according to the will of God."

CCC 2635 Since Abraham, intercession - asking on behalf of another has been characteristic of a heart attuned to God's mercy. In the age of the Church, Christian intercession participates in Christ's, as an expression of the communion of saints. In intercession, he who prays looks "not only to his own interests, but also to the interests of others," even to the point of praying for those who do him harm.

CCC 2636 The first Christian communities lived this form of fellowship intensely. Thus the Apostle Paul gives them a share in his ministry of preaching the Gospel but also intercedes for them. The intercession of Christians recognizes no boundaries: "for all men, for kings and all who are in high positions," for persecutors, for the salvation of those who reject the Gospel.

7. **Acts 12:15** How seriously do you take the Catholic belief in guardian angels?

Matt 18:10 (p. 39) and **Footnote 18:10 Their angels**

CCC 334 In the meantime, the whole life of the Church benefits from the mysterious and powerful help of angels.

CCC 335 In her liturgy, the Church joins with the angels to adore the thrice-holy God. She invokes their assistance (in the funeral liturgy's *In Paradisum deducant te angeli*. . . ["May the angels lead you into Paradise. . ."]). Moreover, in the "Cherubic Hymn" of the Byzantine Liturgy, she celebrates the memory of certain angels more particularly (St. Michael, St. Gabriel, St. Raphael, and the guardian angels).

CCC 336 From its beginning until death, human life is surrounded by their watchful care and intercession. "Beside each believer stands an angel as protector and shepherd leading him to life." Already here on earth the Christian life shares by faith in the blessed company of angels and men united in God.

8. **Acts 12:17** Who is the James mentioned in this verse?

What was his role after Peter left Jerusalem "for another place"?

Where do early traditions say that Peter went?

Footnote p. 227, 12:17 James