

## **The Holy Spirit in Peter – Acts 9:32-43, 10:1-8**

### **Introduction:**

Many people have suddenly become aware of a program called Zoom. It was invented to help groups gather online and share information while seeing one another. Who would have known that it would become such an essential part of business and worship? One of the quirks of this program – and most online programs – is that when one person starts to talk all other voices are silenced. So there may be six, sixteen or sixty people on a Zoom call, but only one voice can be distinguished at a time. That is how the Book of Acts was written. We started with the outpouring of the Holy Spirit on the Church in chapter two and immediately the attention goes to Peter. We hear his voice. Then we hear Stephen followed by Phillip. Suddenly a new character comes into focus, a man named Saul. Now at the end of chapter nine the microphone is handed back to Peter to hear more of his story. Here we see the Holy Spirit opening doors to ministry through miracles. Peter seems to be fully the man God intended him to be ... and then comes chapter ten. Peter has some lessons to learn, as did the whole Christian church. The opening verses of chapter ten will set the scene for a monumental shift in the thinking of God's people. Let us journey together with Peter and the early church.

### **The Healing of Aeneas – Acts 9:32-35**

1. We read earlier that with the conversion of Saul peace was in the land. How is Peter taking advantage of this time of peace? (vs. 32)
2. In verse one we read who Peter is visiting. Who is the intended audience? How are they described in verse 32? This became the Apostle Paul's favorite designation of the followers of Jesus (cf. Romans 1:7; 1 Corinthians 1:2; Ephesians 1:1, etc). What might this term tell us about followers of Jesus?
3. Lydda is a community 35 km northwest of Jerusalem, about 16 km from the Mediterranean Sea. The population was basically Gentile. How might the Gospel have travelled to this community?

4. Verse 33 tells us that Peter “found” a man named Aeneas. How do you think he “found” this man? What would be the purpose of this encounter? What was the condition of this man according to verse 33?
5. What does Peter say to Aeneas? (vs. 34) Is it important what he said? Why?
6. How did Aeneas respond to the words of Peter? (vs. 34)
7. What was the response of the community when they saw the healing of Aeneas? (vs. 35)

The resurrected Christ, by the authority of His name, brought perfect soundness to Aeneas (see Acts 3:6, 16; 4:10). The healing was instantaneous, and the man was able to get up and make his bed. He became a walking miracle! Acts 9:35 does not suggest that the entire population of Lydda and Sharon were saved, but only all those who had contact with Aeneas. Just seeing him walk around convinced them that Jesus was alive and they needed to trust in Him. <sup>1</sup>

### **Dorcas Raised to Life – Acts 9:36-43**

8. From Lydda Peter moves to Joppa. This is a city on the seacoast of the Mediterranean. It was an important port city that played significant role in getting supplies to Jerusalem (from food to timber). In this city there was a woman named Dorcas or Tabitha. Both names mean “gazelle;” Tabatha being the Hebrew version and Dorcas the Greek version of the name. What else do we learn about her (vs. 36)?

(Note the word “disciple”. Only time used in the NT, a female disciple. It might indicate a person of position in the church there).

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<sup>1</sup> Wiersbe, W. W. (1996). [\*The Bible exposition commentary\*](#) (Vol. 1, p. 443). Wheaton, IL: Victor Books.

9. Verse 37 gives a fair amount of detail about what happened to Dorcas. Why?
10. Lydda was not far from Joppa, so when the church of Joppa heard Peter was in Lydda, what did they do according to verse 38? What was their intent?
11. Peter responds to their request to go with them to Joppa, and when he arrives, what does he see? (vs. 39)
12. In verse 40 we read three steps Peter took to minister in this situation. Name each step and why each was important.
  - a.
  - b.
  - c.
13. Peter spoke two simple words and the miracle happened. Magic says you must use certain formulas and proper word order to have power. Is what Peter using “magic”? Explain.
14. What does Peter do in verse 41? How do you think the church responded to this? In verse 42 we read that the story of what happened goes throughout the city. How does the city respond?
15. Luke seems to give us a random piece of information in verse 43. What is it? What might be its purpose?

### **Meet Cornelius – Acts 10:1-8**

16. We are whisked away 48 km north to the Gentile city of Caesarea (vs 1). This was the another important seaport and the seat for the Roman military in that part of the world. In this city we meet Cornelius. What do we learn about him in verses 1-2?

17. Who visited Cornelius at about 3:00 in the afternoon (a Jewish time of prayer)? Why the time reference? (cf. Acts 10:30)
18. How does Cornelius respond to his guest? (vs 4) What message is Cornelius given?
19. We ended chapter 9 with a strange comment on where Peter was staying. But it is an easy place – and unlikely place – to find someone. Tanners were considered unclean, and unapproachable. It would be easy to find Simon Peter staying with Simon the tanner. Even the general location of the house is given – by the sea. Again, what do we learn about God through all these details?
20. Who does Cornelius send to get Peter? (vs 7-8) Why does he not go?

**Conclusion:**

We leave the story with a Gentile, a Roman soldier at that, getting a visit from an angel with instructions to find Peter. We are not told what the soldier is to expect from Peter, though we have seen that the Holy Spirit is doing great things through Peter. Peter's ministry is mirroring that of Jesus, for the same Spirit who worked in Jesus now lives in Peter. But we are not given any clues as to what will come next, except maybe this one detail: many years earlier God sent a prophet named Jonah out of the city Joppa with a message for a pagan city called Nineveh. Ninevites were the evil enemies of Israel, inflicting great suffering on the nation. It was an eye-opening event for the prophet, Jonah, to realize God had a place for even evil non-Jews in His plans. Was God once again preparing to send his message of redemption to those not only outside of the Jewish family, but also deemed enemies of God's people – the Romans? Jonah nearly failed to complete the mission given to him by God: how would Peter fair? This will be the subject of next week's study...