

## THE BOOK OF ACTS | GOD'S REVELATION OF TRANSITION

SESSION 31 | ACTS 9:32-10:8

### ACTS 9:32-43 | PETER AT LYDDA

- Verse 32 –
  - After the introduction of Saul as one of the disciples, we now move back to Peter.
    - This is evidence that the mystery has not yet been revealed.
    - Further evidence is that the book of Acts has no evidence of the mystery to this point, and none of Paul's writings give evidence either.
    - Even if there is a mystery revealed at this point, there is an overlap between Paul's message and Peter's that lasts through the destruction of the Temple.
  - Peter comes to **the saints**, who are clearly Jews who believe in Jesus as Messiah. To this point there have been no gentiles (Cornelius being the first, and not until the next chapter).
  - Note that **Lydda** is the Greek name for what is Lod in the Hebrew. The ancient city of Lod is the site of the Ben Gurion Airport in modern Tel Aviv.
- Verses 33-35 –
  - Peter met **Æneas**.
    - The Æ is called an "ash" and is carried directly from Latin.
    - It was used in older English (in words like *archaeology*), though rarely today.
  - Æneas was **sick of a palsy**, that is, had a weakness of the muscles that kept him from walking, a condition he had had for **eight years**.
  - Peter (with the keys to the Kingdom), immediately declared him **whole**.
  - The result was **all that dwelt at Lydda and Saron** (the plain of Sharon, the general location of Lydda) **turned to the Lord**, that is, they believed that Jesus was the Messiah offering to them the Kingdom, and they became part of "Peter's little flock," which was called *the way*.
- Verse 36 –
  - The coastal city of **Joppa** is not far from Lydda. Joppa has been seen three previous times in Scripture.
    - In 2 Chronicles 2:16 cedars from Lebanon are brought for the Temple in Jerusalem by way of the sea and the Joppa port.
    - In Ezra 3:7 we read of the same for the second Temple.
    - In Jonah 1:3, Jonah uses this port to escape his duty. By the days of Peter, the port at Joppa had been overshadowed by the one at Caesarea, built by Herod.
  - **Tabitha** is an Aramaic word and **Dorcas** is a Greek word, both meaning *doe* or *gazelle*.
- Verses 37-41 –
  - Have you ever heard a verifiable account of this kind of miracle happening in the modern church? If not, why not? Our options:
    - Simply read the story and pretend that there is no variance with today's Christian experience.
    - Conclude that this Biblical account is myth and never happened.
    - Conclude that the modern church is simply not spiritual enough to see such miracles.
    - Conclude that the era of this miracle was in a different dispensation of God.
  - Clearly, "rightly dividing" the Scripture is the best approach.

- Verse 42 –
  - The fact that **many believed in the Lord** is not evidence that salvation *by grace through faith not of works* was being offered or accepted.
  - The people were believing that Jesus was Messiah, risen from the dead, and would come and save them from their sins and their enemies (Lk. 1:71).
- Verse 43 –
  - While it is popular by many preachers to comment that **Simon a tanner** must have been unclean because he was touching a dead animal, one should remember that John the Baptist wore **camel's hair, and a leathern girdle about his loins** (Matt. 3:4), and that the straps used by orthodox Jews are leather.
  - Sometimes popular theology is based on repetition of thought rather than research.

## ACTS 10:1-8 | INTRODUCING CORNELIUS

- Verses 1-2 –
  - Cornelius was not a Jew (see Acts 11:3) nor was he a proselyte to Judaism (yet).
  - He was a **centurion**, a soldier who typically led 40-60 soldiers (despite the name and common lore).
  - Though he was not a Jew, God chose him to be the first one of *the nations* who would be presented the message of the Kingdom.
  - He was chosen, no doubt, because of his devotion to God and his love for the Jewish people (see the promise of Genesis 12:3).
  - Note that the centurion of Tiberius also loved the Jewish nation, and Jesus healed his servant (Lk. 7:1).
- Verses 3-6 –
  - It was the **prayers** and the **alms** that **came up for a memorial before God** and were the impetus for God's selection of Cornelius.
  - The instruction of the vision was simple: *find Simon Peter at Simon the tanners house and learn what thou oughtest to do* (words that do not appear in the modern versions).
- Verses 7-8 –
  - Cornelius (a powerful man with servants under his orders) was immediately obedient to the vision.