

# Abounding Grace Christian Church

## The Acts of the Holy Spirit through the Church – Part 32

### I. Exposition of Chapter Nine (Continued).

#### A. God works miracles through Peter.

##### 1. Verses 32-35 - Peter ministers healing to Aeneas at Lydda.

a. Verse 32 – “Now it came to pass, as Peter went through all parts of the country, that he also came down to the saints who dwelt in Lydda.” – It seems that because of the easing of persecution at the time, Peter was much freer to travel and preach the Gospel in various cities of Palestine. Dr. Stanley Horton writes:

“Since the conditions in Jerusalem had become peaceful, Peter could leave the city. So he began to travel throughout ‘Judea, Galilee and Samaria’ (v. 31). As he journeyed ‘he went to visit the saints [dedicated believers] in Lydda’(as the base of the Shephelah, the foothills on the west of the central highlands, about twenty-four miles northwest of Jerusalem on the road to Joppa).”<sup>1</sup>

b. Peter ran across “...the saints who dwelt in Lydda.” – We saw believers first referred to as “saints” in this book, back in 9:13 (Part 30). Once again it means those who are “set apart”; “dedicated” and “consecrated” to the Lord. From this verse we see that there was apparently a substantial group of believers already in Lydda. Scholars attribute this to the evangelistic work of Philip after he had baptized the Ethiopian eunuch he was “...found at Azotus. And passing through, he preached in all the cities till he came to Caesarea.” (8:40).

c. Verses 33-34 – Peter ministers to Aeneas who had been paralyzed for 8 years and says;

“...Aeneas, Jesus the Christ heals you. Arise and make your bed.’ Then he arose immediately.” According to Richard Longenecker, the first part of this could have been translated, “this moment Jesus Christ heals you.”<sup>2</sup> This was a “right now” statement and the man received immediately!

“The cure provided was perfect and complete. It was not a progressive healing. Immediately Aeneas rose from his bed and made it. ‘Arise, and make thy bed. And he arose immediately.’ For eight years this helpless man had been so dependent upon others, even to the making up of his bed. Now all is changed, for he now does for himself what other had done for him. Making his own bed was an evidence of restoration; it had been a symbol of his weakness.

Is not Peter’s command reminiscent of the manner in which Jesus wrought His work of healing in similar bedridden cases? (Matthew 9:6; John 5:8). This wholeness, Peter ascribed to Jesus Christ and not to any power or holiness he possessed (3:12).”<sup>3</sup>

d. Verse 35 – “So all who dwelt at Lydda and Sharon saw him and turned to the Lord.”

Here we see again the importance of healing and miracles to help show people that Jesus Christ is alive! (3:6-10; 4:4; 5:12-16; 8:4-8)

##### 2. Verses 36-42 - Dorcas is raised from the dead in Joppa.

a. Verse 36 – “At Joppa there was a certain disciple named Tabitha, which is translated Dorcas. This woman was full of good works and charitable deeds which she did.”

1) Joppa was a city only about 12 miles from Lydda.

2) “Dorcas” means “gazelle” in Greek as does its counterpart, “Tabitha” in Aramaic.

She is called a “disciple” which indicates that she was a Christian and she was known for her generosity.<sup>4</sup>

b. Verse 37 – “...she became sick and died. When they had washed her, they laid her in an upper room.” – Concerning this, I. Howard Marshall asserts:

“Her friends...followed the usual practice in washing her body, but instead of anointing it and burying it, they laid it in an upper room, where it would enjoy privacy. These actions suggest that they had some hopes that Tabitha might be raised from the dead...”<sup>5</sup>

c. Verse 38 – Some of the other disciples in Joppa had heard that Peter was in Lydda and sent two men there to get Peter to come to Joppa quickly. It’s possible they had heard about the healing of Aeneas. Horton states it probably took about 3 hours for Peter to arrive.<sup>6</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Stanley M. Horton, *Acts: A Logion Press Commentary* (Springfield, MO: Gospel Publishing House, 2001), 191.

<sup>2</sup>Richard N. Longenecker, "Acts," *The Expositor's Bible Commentary*, (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing House, 1995), 177.

<sup>3</sup>Herbert Lockyer, *All the Miracles of the Bible*, (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing House, 1961), 274.

<sup>4</sup>Stanley D. Toussaint, "Acts," in *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: An Exposition of the Scriptures*, ed. J. F. Walvoord and R. B. Zuck, vol. 2 (Wheaton, IL: Victor Books, 1985), 379.

<sup>5</sup>I. Howard Marshall, *The Acts of the Apostles: An Introduction and Commentary*, (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1980), 179.

<sup>6</sup>Horton, 193.

d. **Verse 39** – Peter went with the two men immediately to Joppa. The widows who were showing him the clothing she had made for them, were genuinely weeping but, it could also have been a way for then to plead with Peter to not let her stay dead.

e. **Verse 40** – **“But Peter put them all out, and knelt down and prayed. And turning to the body he said, ‘Tabitha, arise.’ And she opened her eyes, and when she saw Peter she sat up.”**

**“Peter follows the pattern of Jesus (9:40), asking everyone to leave (as Jesus had done with Jairus’ daughter, Mark 5:40; also Elisha in 2 Kgs 4:33). He then got on his knees and prayed, asking Christ to give her back her life, then immediately turned and commanded, ‘Tabitha, get up!’ There is no hesitation in Peter at all, and Christ’s response is instantaneous. The woman opens her eyes, sees Peter, and sits up in the bed. He extends his hand, helps her stand, and sends for the others. The entire process took only a few minutes, but lives were forever changed.”<sup>7</sup> 1)**

This is the first time someone is raised from the dead as recorded in the Book of Acts.

The only other certain instance is found in **20:9-10**. The only other possible account is when Paul was stoned (**14:19-20**).

2) This was more than just a healing of the body (though she must have also been healed of whatever sickness killed her), but this would be categorized as the **“working of miracles”** as is mentioned as one of the nine gifts (or, manifestations) of the Holy Spirit found in **I Corinthians 12:14 (also see verses 28-31)**.

3) It seems plausible that the reason why Peter may have prayed before making the command was to be certain the Lord wanted Him to raise her up.

f. **Verses 41-42** – Peter took her by the hand and lifted her up and showed her to the others. Not surprisingly, as a result, **“throughout all Joppa...many believed on the Lord.”**

**“Needless to say, the miracle quickly ‘became known all over Joppa.’ It would have been the only thing talked about for weeks, and Tabitha would have become an instant celebrity. As with Aeneas, the major result was that many became believers.”<sup>8</sup>**

3. **Verse 43** – **“So it was that he stayed many days in Joppa with Simon, a tanner.”**

**“Peter stayed on in Joppa for some days. His host there, Simon the tanner, followed an occupation which was technically “unclean”, but Peter was gradually being emancipated from notions of ceremonial purity and impurity.”<sup>9</sup>**

## II. Exposition of Chapter Ten.

### A. A Gentile named Cornelius.

1. **Verse 1** – **“There was a certain man in Caesarea called Cornelius, a centurion of what was called the Italian Regiment.”**

a. Caesarea was a city approximately 32 miles north of Joppa along the coast of the Mediterranean Sea. This is where the residence of the Roman governor of Judea was located.<sup>10</sup>

Archaeologists have discovered a stone from a building in Caesarea inscribed with the name **“Pontus Pilate.”<sup>11</sup>**

b. Cornelius was a centurion in the Roman army. Dr. Bob Utley states:

**“Centurions are mentioned several times in the NT and always in a favorable light (cf. Matt. 8:5; Luke 7:2; 23:47; Acts 10:1; 22:5; 27:3; etc). Technically they were leaders of a hundred men; however, they were noncommissioned officers, something like our sergeant majors.”<sup>12</sup>**

2. **Verse 2** – **“...a devout man and one who feared God with all his household, who gave alms generously to the people, and prayed to God always.”**

a. **“devout”** has the idea of being devoted to his faith. Utley suggests that the three characteristics following are demonstrations of his devotion. Utley asserts:

**“There is a threefold description of this man’s devotion:**

**1. he revered God (see note at v. 22) with all his households**

**2. he was always liberal in his many deeds of charity to the people**

### 3. he had the habit of praying to God (cf. v. 22; 13:16, 26).”<sup>13</sup>

<sup>7</sup>Grant R. Osborne, *Acts: Verse by Verse*, Osborne New Testament Commentaries (Bellingham, WA: Lexham Press, 2019), 189–190.

<sup>8</sup>*Ibid.*, 190.

<sup>9</sup>F. F. Bruce, *Acts: Bible Study Commentary* (Nashville, TN; Bath, England: Kingsley Books, 2017), Ac 9:32–43.

<sup>10</sup>Craig S. Keener, *The IVP Bible Background Commentary: New Testament* (Downers Grove, IL: Intervarsity Press, 1993), 350. <sup>11</sup>Joseph M. Holden and Norman Geisler, *The Popular Handbook of Archaeology and the Bible* (Eugene, OR: Harvest House Publishers, 2013), 347. <sup>12</sup>Robert James Utley, *Luke the Historian: The Book of Acts*, vol. Volume 3B, Study Guide Commentary Series (Marshall, TX: Bible Lessons International, 2003), 133.

<sup>13</sup>Utley, *Luke the Historian: The Book of Acts*, 133.