

## **Review**

We left off in our study of the book of Acts in chapter nine with a man named Saul who went from violently and murderously persecuting Christians to becoming one himself. Once convinced of the reality of Jesus Christ, he began to preach the gospel boldly. This got many people angry, and he had plots against his life in Damascus and Jerusalem. So, he was sent to Caesarea to catch a boat to his hometown of Tarsus.

### **9:31 A Period Of Peace**

With the number one enemy of Christianity now converted, you might think that the opposition had relaxed. They hadn't.

The church's peace came from the fact that they were going on in the comfort of the Holy Spirit, not their circumstances.

They also continued to grow because they were walking in the fear of God. The Bible tells us that we perfect holiness in the fear of God (2Cor. 7:1), so the church was increasing because God saw that it was a holy entity that could be entrusted with new believers.

### **9:32 Peter's Travels**

Because so many new churches were starting, and the number of believers was increasing, Peter was traveling throughout Judea, Galilee, and Samaria to do the same thing he'd done when the church first began to spread outside of Jerusalem: testifying to the truth, preaching the gospel, and teaching the Word of God (Acts 8:25).

### **The Saints**

Peter's travels took him to the town of **LUD-dah**, where he visited the saints. The term "saints" has been terribly corrupted since the days the Bible was written. Now most people think of saints as people who have been canonized by the Catholic church. Believers who met requirements like having heroic virtue, miracles performed through them, and uninterrupted fame for their holiness.

Saints have been nearly deified, with the church encouraging parishioners to pray to them regarding the areas that they have influence

over, like travel, health, and commerce.

But the Bible tells us that Jesus is the only mediator we need (1Tim. 2:5).

So who are the saints that the Bible refers to well over 50 times in the New Testament? The word “saints” in Greek is **HAG-ee-os**, which means “someone or something that is holy.” Interestingly, that word is never used in veneration of a single heroic, famous, and miracle-working person, but always in plurality. And simply reading how the word is used gives quick understanding of who the saints are.

Paul, when he was writing to the church in Rome, wrote...

**Rom. 1:7 to all who are beloved of God in Rome, called saints...**

And to the church of Corinth,

**1Cor. 1:2 to the church of God which is at Corinth, to those who have been sanctified in Christ Jesus, saints by calling...**

When he spoke of persecuting the church before he became a Christian, he said,

**Acts 26:10 “...not only did I lock up many of the saints in prisons, having received authority from the chief priests, but also when they were being put to death I cast my vote against them.”**

So you get the idea - the saints are the people that have been set apart, who have been made holy, who have been saved by Christ, born again. If you are a Christian today, you are a saint.

### **9:33 Finding Aeneas**

While Peter was in LUD-dah, he found a man named **Ahee-NEH-as**. This guy had been stuck in bed with paralysis for eight years. How do you find a guy that's home in bed? Only by networking. In other words, Peter was interacting with lots of people, ministering to them. You'll never find the guy who's stuck at home in bed unless you're being involved in people's lives. So often I hear from Christians, “Well, I would have helped if I knew they were in need.” But how will you ever know who's in need until you start to fellowship and get involved?

### **9:34-35 Jesus Christ Heals You**

When Peter came to Ahee-NEH-as' house, he simply said,

**Acts 9:34 "...Jesus Christ heals you; get up and make your bed"...**

Today, people who are famous for "healing" make a big production out of it. They sweat and tremble and shout into the microphone, "BEE-ah HEEEEEd!" and smack them on the forehead. But, neither Jesus nor the apostles ever made a huge production out of God's miracles.

And notice too that Peter made sure this was clear: "It's Jesus who is about to do this healing, not me." As a result, when Ahee-NEH-as did get healed, the inhabitants of LUD-dah and Sharon turned to the Lord.

No matter what the miracle is, it should draw people to the Lord, not to the disciple.

**Col. 3:17 Whatever you do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks through Him to God the Father.**

When I hear that God seems to be moving radically in a ministry, the first thing I ask myself is, "Who's being glorified? Is it the Master or the minister?" If it's not the Master, I don't want to be anywhere near it.

If God uses you, turn the attention to Him. As it happened here, people should see you and turn to the Lord.

### **9:36 Tabitha In Joppa**

Joppa was the coastal seaport city where Jonah had caught a ship going to Tarshish. In that city was a Christian lady named **Tab-ee-THAH** in Aramaic, **Dor-KAS** in Greek. Both words mean "gazelle" or "deer."

Tabitha is described as a woman "abounding with deeds of kindness and charity." That literally translates to "good and merciful." Since mercy means to give people what they don't deserve, this was a woman who was always doing nice things for people who didn't deserve them. And she wasn't just known for doing it on occasion. She did continually - her entire life was marked by doing good things for undeserving people.

### **9:37-38 Sending For Simon Peter**

When Tabitha got sick and died, her friends and family did what

they normally did when someone died: they washed the body, anointed it with spices, and prepared to bury it after a time of mourning.

But, her Christian friends also did something else: when they heard that Peter was only about ten miles away in LUD-dah, they sent for him to come immediately.

### **9:39 Tabitha's Tunics**

The widows must have thought that Peter was there to do the funeral. One part of ministry that most people never see is that when you're called to perform the funeral of someone who didn't know well or at all, the family often spends a couple hours talking to you about them, showing you photo albums, telling stories, etc. In this case, the widows were showing Peter the clothing that Tabitha used to make.

### **9:40-42 Peter Prays**

Peter told everybody to vacate the room. Then he knelt down to pray. It is interesting that as you do a study on the position of prayer throughout the Scripture, you never see the "hands folded, eyes closed" method described. More often than not, the person's hands are spread out toward the Lord, and the person is standing or kneeling.

After praying, Peter raised Tabitha from the dead. And when word of this spread throughout the city, many believed in the Lord.

Even though a human instrument was used to perform the healing, the Lord once again got the glory.