



Acts 9:32-43 | Session 25 | Peter's Apostolic Healings

Verse 32—

At least three years have passed since Saul met Jesus on the Damascus road. Now the narrative shifts back to Peter as he **passed throughout all quarters**. Peter is fulfilling what the Lord commanded the apostles to do, that is to be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judaea, and in Samaria...(Acts 1:8)

He came down also to the saints which dwelt at Lydda. Lydda is the Greek name for the Hebrew city of Lod. Today it is the location of the Ben Gurion Airport in the city of Tel Aviv. The term **saints** refers to the Jewish believers in the Messiah **which dwelt at Lydda**.

According to the historian Josephus, **Lydda** became the center of Rabbinic thought, that is, it was a completely Jewish city at this time and remained so until perhaps the second or third century.

Verse 33—

And there found (happened to come upon) **a certain man named Aeneas**. This man was bedridden and had been **sick of the palsy**, that is he was most likely paralyzed, how we don't know; a fall, or a stroke, some kind of accident to his spinal cord, or even, some suggest, tuberculosis affecting the spinal cord.

Dr. Luke, in recording this account is specific; the man had been in that condition and **kept his bed** for **eight years**. Luke no doubt specifies the duration to underscore the severity of the sickness and the miracle that is about to take place.

Often the phrase **kept his bed** means lying prostrate in this case he had apparently been lying down for eight years. The only remedy was to massage the paralytic with olive oil and just try to keep him comfortable, but it must have been a miserable existence.

Verse 34—

We don't know anything about this man other than his **palsy**. If he was poor he probably only had a bed for furniture. Nonetheless, Peter told him, in the name of **Jesus Christ, to arise, and make thy bed**. We should remember that the apostles' acts are actually Jesus's acts working through them. Peter spoke with Apostolic power and notice Aeneas was **immediately** healed. This was not a gradual healing. For eight years he had lain flat, and as soon as Peter spoke the man was completely restored.

We might think about our lives and what happens, through Jesus, when we believe on him. We are made complete; we are new creatures; the old has gone the new has come.

Verse 35—

The purpose of the miracle to verify Peter's Kingdom gospel, and the result was that **all that dwelt at Lydda and Saron** (Sharon) **saw him, and turned to the Lord**.

The Jews, like all the others we have seen thus far in Acts, repented and **Turned** to believing Jesus was Messiah. We still do not see salvation as we know it, that of salvation by grace through faith... All salvation was works based and national in scope.

These new believers in **Lydda and Saron** were now a part of the multitude in the Jewish assembly (as in Acts 2:41, 4:4, 4:32, 5:14, 14:1).

Turned to the Lord. This does not mean they believed by grace through faith. That gospel of grace through faith had not been revealed to the Apostle Paul. Peter was preaching the good news of the Kingdom.

Turning to the Lord was language used often by the Old Testament prophets in reference to Israel (e.g. Jeremiah 3:12; Joel 2:12-13; Malachi 3:7, etc.). It is used in the New Testament (as in the case here) in reference to Israel (Luke 1:16) or, the heart of Israel (2 Corinthians 3:16).

In the dispensation of grace we are never told to "turn to the Lord." The message for us is to believe on the Lord Jesus Christ (Acts 16:31 and that we are saved by grace through faith and not of ourselves it is a gift of God, not of works (Ephesians 2:8,9).

What did the Jews in Lydda and Saron turn to? They turned to Jesus as their Messiah. They repented, and were baptized and followed the Law of Moses. These were Jews who believed Jesus was the Messiah and that they had rejected him. These believers became part of the Jewish ekklesia and joined the multitudes who had already believed the kingdom gospel, that is, that Jesus Christ would return and set up his physical kingdom on earth, if the nation as a whole would believe. This is not the church (or the body of Christ) as we know it today.



Verse 36—

Peter moves on from Lydda (Lod) about 10 miles, to **Joppa** located on the coast of the Mediterranean. Joppa is a familiar Biblical city. It was from this port Jonah ran away from the Lord's command to go to Nineveh (Jonah 1:3). Lydda, Saron, and Joppa were large Jewish communities.

A certain disciple named Tabitha. She was a disciple who believed Jesus was the Jewish Messiah. It is notable that the Apostle Paul never uses the term disciple in any of his letters. Why? Because we are not disciples. We are "complete" (Colossians 2:10) [I understand when people use the term disciple today, but they miss the point of who we are in Christ].

Tabitha was a Jewish disciple. She was not saved by grace through faith. She was part of Jewish assembly of Israel who believed that Jesus was Messiah.

What happened to these believers when they died? They went to Hades, or Sheol in the Old Testament, and would await (and are still awaiting) the resurrection of the dead when Christ returns. Believers saved in the dispensation of grace are absent from the body upon death, but present with the Lord. Those who believed by grace through faith and have died will have their bodies resurrected at the Rapture (1 Thessalonians 4:16,17).

Verse 37, 38—

She was sick, and died. When a person died in Biblical days, unlike today in our country, they were prepared for immediate burial due to the climate and also various customs. **Tabitha's** body was placed **in an upper chamber**, or upper room (seen often in scripture).

Peter was in Lydda which was about a four-to-five-hour walk. So, we may assume Tabitha died, someone found Peter, he immediately, without **delay** came to them. They no doubt heard of the healing of Aeneas, and the miracles Peter had performed in Jerusalem (Acts 3:6; 5:15,16). Maybe, 8 to 12 hours have passed since the death of Tabitha. Since she had not been buried, we may assume those who sent for Peter were expecting him to raise her from the dead.

Verse 39—

All the widows stood by him weeping. Dorcas had a ministry to the widows as she was **full of good works and almsdeeds**. Perhaps the sale **coats and garments** she **made** was a source of income for these **widows**? Later in 1st Timothy 5, the apostle Paul will give instructions for the care of widows, for example, 5:16.

For a Jew under the Law of Moses (as Peter was), touching a dead body would make him impure or unclean before the Lord (Numbers 19:11-13). Although we might argue that Peter only touched her after she was alive. Peter, however, followed Jesus's example of compassion ([Luke 5:13](#); [8:44-48](#), [51](#), [54](#)).

Verse 40—

Peter put them all forth, he sent them out. Was this out of respect for Tabitha so that when she awakened there would not be a commotion? What Peter **prayed** we do not know, but it was after the prayer he **turned to the body** and **said, Tabitha, arise.**

And she opened her eyes. This would, of course, necessitate that someone had closed her eyes upon her death.

Verse 41—

Peter is fulfilling the command of Jesus to raise the dead (e.g. Matthew 10:8).

He had called the saints and widows. Some think Luke is referring to two distinct groups. the Greek reads "The saints" and "The widows." I would presume the **widows** were also **saints**, but Luke probably separates them here to reinforce the different roles each have in the narrative, and to remind us of Tabitha's distinct role in caring for the widows, and not all the saints.

Verse 42—

The word of the resurrection spread throughout **Joppa; and many believed in the Lord.** As before, these in Joppa believed that Jesus was the Messiah, the one who was raised from the dead, and the one who would save them from their enemies (see Luke 1:71).

Verse 43—

With such belief in the Messiah, Jesus, Peter stays on in Joppa, in the home of **Simon a tanner**. It is here Peter will receive word of his next apostolic mission (and use the keys of the Kingdom) to explain the kingdom gospel to the Gentiles, that they might be granted repentance unto life.

