



CAPITOL COMMISSION™

Peter—An Effective Leader

MAY 27-29, 2015

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Acts 9:32-43 *“Now it came about that as Peter was traveling through all those parts, he came down also to the saints who lived at Lydda. 33) And there he found a certain man named Aeneas, who had been bedridden eight years, for he was paralyzed. 34) And Peter said to him, ‘Aeneas, Jesus Christ heals you; arise, and make your bed.’ And immediately he arose. 35) And all who lived in Lydda and Sharon saw him, and they turned to the Lord. 36) Now in Joppa there was a certain disciple named Tabitha (which translated in Greek is called Dorcas); this woman was abounding with deeds of kindness and charity, which she continually did. 37) And it came about at that time that she fell sick and died; and when they had washed her body, they laid it in an upper room. 38) And since Lydda was near Joppa, the disciples, having heard that Peter was there, sent two men to him, entreating him, ‘Do not delay to come to us.’ 39) And Peter arose and went with them. And when he had come, they brought him into the upper room; and all the widows stood beside him weeping, and showing all the tunics and garments that Dorcas used to make while she was with them. 40) But Peter sent 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. 41) And he gave her his hand and raised her up; and calling the saints and widows, he presented her alive. 42) And it became known all over Joppa, and many believed in the Lord. 43) And it came about that he stayed many days in Joppa with a certain tanner, Simon.” (NASB)*

“PETER WOULD NEVER HAVE CLAIMED TO BE A SOURCE OF POWER; HE WAS ONLY A CHANEL OF POWER. WE THINK

TOO MUCH OF WHAT WE CAN DO AND TOO LITTLE OF WHAT CHRIST CAN DO THROUGH US.” WILLIAM BARCLAY

How is this passage similar to what Peter was doing the last time he was mentioned in Acts? Why was Aeneas chosen for healing? What was the significance of Lydda? How did the masses respond to this miracle? Is Aeneas' inactivity contrasted with Tabitha's amazing activity? What did those in Joppa expect Peter to do? How had Dorcas blessed all these widows? Why does Peter pray first? Who else is blessed besides these wonderful widows? How does the tanner prove Peter's freedom from prejudice?

FOCUS ON FUTURE BIBLE STUDIES:

- JUNE 3-5: ACTS 10:1-9 *THE POWER OF PRAYING LEADERS*
- JUNE 17-19: ACTS 10:10-20 *POLITICAL & RACIAL ANIMOSITY OVERCOME BY PRAYER*

Peter and John had followed Philip to Samaria, the next closest national capitol, and had witnessed and helped in the great revival there. Yet they sought every opportunity to reach as many individuals as possible as they returned “preaching the gospel to many villages of the Samaritans” (Acts 8:25), the last time Peter was mentioned in Acts. After winning the Ethiopian eunuch to Christ, and thereby planting a church and reaching a nation, Philip had “found himself at Azotus; and as he passed through, he kept preaching the gospel to all the cities, until he came to Caesarea” (Acts 8:40). One of the cities Philip would have passed through on the Roman road on his way to Caesarea, would have been the capital of one of the ten administrative districts in Judea, Lydda. This was where the Jewish Sanhedrin, or the Congress of Israel, would convene when their king was in Caesarea, his Roman capital where he ruled all of Judea. Since Saul the persecutor had been miraculously transformed by the Risen Christ, the church had enjoyed peace again and probably the Apostles had sent Peter to follow up again on the work of Philip “the Evangelist.”

BIBLE STUDIES

WEDNESDAY @ 7:30AM – FREDERICKSBURG – BOB EVANS ON RT. 3 AND 11:30AM – WOODBRIDGE – BOB EVANS, 13900 NOBLEWOOD PLAZA

THURSDAY @ 7:00AM – CHESTER – SHONEY'S AT RT. 10 (IRON BRIDGE ROAD) & 301(12531 JEFFERSON DAVIS HIGHWAY)

FRIDAY @ 7:00 AM – NORFOLK – GOLDEN CORRAL, 6103 N. MILITARY HWY, NEAR THE NORFOLK AIRPORT

Virginia

Peter—An Effective Leader

“PETER WAS EFFECTIVE WITH INDIVIDUALS BECAUSE HE WAS INVOLVED, CHRIST-EXALTING, AVAILABLE, POWERFUL, FRUITFUL, AND FREE FROM PREJUDICE.”
JOHN MACARTHUR

I. ENABLING THE INACTIVE ACTS 9:32-35

Peter may have chosen Lydda because it was the strategic center of most of the cities that Philip had evangelized. Lydda was at the intersection of the roads from Joppa to Jerusalem and from Syria to Egypt. Philip’s work was evident because there were “*saints*” living in the city, whom Peter had come to encourage. When he saw Aeneas, Peter must have been reminded of the first man the Lord had used him to heal at the gate of the Temple called Beautiful. That man had been lame from his mother’s womb and was begging alms from Peter and John. Peter had said to him, “*I do not possess silver and gold, but what I do have I give to you: In the name of Jesus Christ the Nazarene—Walk!*” (Acts 3:6) That act of mercy and exaltation of Jesus Christ as the Lord of the Universe generated the opportunity to preach to thousands in the Temple and five thousand men had believed (Acts 4:4). So Peter, realizing that there was no ability in himself but all ability in his Risen Savior, said to Aeneas having been lame eight years, “*Aeneas, Jesus Christ heals you; arise, and make your bed.*” When “*immediately he arose,*” everyone realized that through Jesus Christ Aeneas’ cure had been complete, as all the healings of Christ and the Apostles had always been, and there was a dramatic and exhaustive response. “*All who lived at Lydda and Sharon saw him and they turned to the Lord.*” **Without exception, the capital turned to Christ**, as well as those who lived in the Plain of Sharon surrounding the city, who saw Aeneas. Peter’s willingness to be involved in the life of one individual to bring glory to Jesus Christ made him a powerful instrument in the hand of the Lord to reap a rich harvest for His kingdom. The verb “*turned*” means “to turn

around” and reveals that salvation is more than a change of mind, it is a change in actions and direction of life.

“*ABIDE IN ME, AND I IN YOU. AS THE BRANCH CANNOT BEAR FRUIT OF ITSELF, UNLESS IT ABIDES IN THE VINE, SO NEITHER CAN YOU, UNLESS YOU ABIDE IN ME. I AM THE VINE, YOU ARE THE BRANCES; HE WHO ABIDES IN ME AND I IN HIM, HE BEARS MUCH FRUIT; FOR APART FROM ME YOU CAN DO NOTHING.*” JOHN 15:4-5

II. RESURRECTING THE MOST ACTIVE ACTS 9:36-43

Peter’s strategic witness led to an even greater miracle. While Peter was busy discipling the new converts in the capital, tragedy struck the church nearby in Joppa. A kind lady named Tabitha (better known by her Greek name, Dorcas; both meaning “gazelle”), was such a model of Christian virtue that she is specifically called a “*disciple*” (the only time “disciple” occurs in the feminine form in the New Testament). The widows remembered her as “*abounding with deeds of kindness and charity.*” She was a Proverbs 31:20 woman in caring for the poor and needy. When she “*fell sick and died,*” her widow friends washed and laid her body in an upper room and immediately sent two men to nearby Lydda, to get Peter. As he responded to their urgent call, Peter was met in the upper room with the weeping widows showing him the garments so lovingly made for them by Dorcas. Peter, remembering the actions of Christ in a similar situation (Mk. 5:35-43), sent them out of the room so he could concentrate in his great priority. After kneeling in fervent prayer, he turned and almost perfectly matched the words of Christ, saying, “*Tabitha, arise.*” Suddenly her eyes opened, she saw Peter and sat up. In congratulations he took her hand and presented her to her friends. As the word spread of this greater miracle of resurrection, “*many believed in the Lord.*” As Peter is again busy strengthening the church in Joppa, he chose to stay with an outcast of Jewish society, Simon the Tanner, because he treated animal skins (Lev. 11:40).

Questions to Ponder:

- 1) Are you willing to be a bold witness for Christ, even in the capitol?
- 2) Have you truly “*turned to the Lord*” in your mind, actions and direction of life?
- 3) Is your leadership effective like Peter’s and Tabitha’s because you are always seeking to serve others?