

# ACTS

## of the Holy Spirit

### Session #15 – 9:20 - 43

#### I. Saul's Ministry Begins (9:20 - 22)

##### Verse 20

At once (eutheos = immediately)  
 he began to preach (kerysso = to proclaim in public)  
 in the synagogues (Paul returns to his Jewish roots)  
 that 1) Jesus is The Son of God.

Saul takes advantage of the synagogue custom that allowed any able Jewish man to speak on the scriptures at meetings.

Notice the first point that Saul proclaims – **the deity of Christ!**

“The Son of God” is such an important truth for everyone to understand and believe! This phrase is used to indicate that Christ is the same substance of God and is therefore God! The Trinity is understood as same substance – separate roles.

On both occasions where Jesus called himself “The Son of God” (John 5:17-18; Matt. 26:63-65) he was accused of blasphemy!

##### Verse 21

All those who heard him  
 were astonished  
 and asked,

- 1) Past - “Isn’t he the man who raised havoc  
 (portheo = to utterly destroy)  
 in Jerusalem  
 among those who call on this name?”
- 2) Present - And hasn’t he come here  
 to take them as prisoners  
 to the chief priests?”

**The power of transformation! (2 Cor. 5:17)** People were utterly amazed at the change in devotion and direction that happened in the life of Paul and yet they were still afraid and skeptical.

##### Verse 22

Yet

- 2) Saul grew more and more powerful (endynamoo = to receive supernatural strength from an outside source)
- 3) and baffled (sygcheo = stir up with confusion)  
 the Jews  
 living in Damascus
- by 4) proving (symbibazo = sun (together) + bibazo (force with argumentation)) that Jesus is the Messiah (Christos).

Notice three other things that are fruit of the Spirit in Saul’s early ministry – he is empowered by the Spirit, his words have wisdom not of this earth, and his passion is to “prove” that Christ is the long awaited “messiah”. Paul Old Testament training would be put to maximum use now in connecting the dots with Jesus!

#### II. Saul's Desert Training (9:23a)

##### Verse 23a

After many days had gone by ...  
 (pleroo = when the time is full/finished/fulfilled)

Paul spend **three years** in Arabia.

Galatians 1:15 – 17

We don’t know where and we don’t know what he did there, but it is clear that the Apostle was called by God and then sent into the desert to learn from God prior to his ministry starting.



#### III. Saul's Tribulation (9:23b - 25)

##### Verse 23b

...there was a conspiracy (symbouleuo = sun (together) + Bouleuo (to counsel))  
 among the Jews  
 to kill him,

Even though Paul has connections with the Jewish faith, they do not trust him any longer. When he comes back on the scene, three years later in Damascus, they have formed a strategy to

- 1 destroy him. **The persecutor has become the persecuted!**

#### Verse 24

but Saul learned  
of their plan.  
Day and night they kept close watch  
on the city gates  
in order to kill him.

Possibly his connections within the Jewish circle, provided inside information that protected his life. God provided divine protection for Paul starting even in these early days of his ministry.

#### Verse 25

But his followers took him  
by night  
and lowered him  
in a basket  
through an opening  
in the wall.

Later in 2 Cor. 11:32-33, Paul adds some detail to this story by referring to Aretas the King of Damascus. This connects with the known history and puts this incident at between 37 and 39 A.D.



Saul now has disciples!

This is a similar picture to Rehab and the two spies in Joshua 2.  
Further humbling – further learning to trust others.

### **IV. Saul First Trip to Jerusalem (9:26 - 29)**

#### Verse 26

When he came to Jerusalem,  
he tried to join the disciples,  
but they were all afraid (phobeo) of him,  
not believing that he really was a disciple.

After having been kicked out of Damascus, Paul makes the journey to Jerusalem and walks back into the lions den.

Even after his years of preparation in the desert and even after the signs of God's transformation in Damascus, the people of Saul's past still don't believe his changed heart.

This is a huge step in ministry! We can't serve Christ and please people – only when we come the realization that we have to speak truth and even if our family and friends reject us because of that truth, can we truly witness for Christ.

#### Verse 27

But Barnabas (name means “son of rest”  
– aka “son or encouragement”) took him  
and brought him to the apostles.  
He told them how Saul

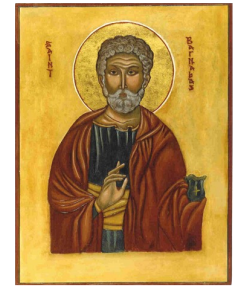
on his journey

1) had seen the Lord (horao)

2) and that the Lord had spoken to him, (laleo)

3) and how in Damascus

he had preached fearlessly (boldly and frankly)  
in the name of Jesus.



Barnabas, like Ananias before him, was able to welcome and serve people even through their past. This was the beginning of a significant ministry team that would be used to change the world.

#### Verse 28

So Saul stayed with them  
and moved about freely  
in Jerusalem,  
speaking boldly  
in the name of the Lord.

Back in Galatians 1:18 – Paul adds more detail to this first trip to Jerusalem, but pointing out that he stayed with Peter for 15 days. he also noted that he DID NOT meet with ALL the apostles on this occasion.

Why does this matter?

What Paul will point to in the future is that His Message is not FROM MEN (the Apostles) but FROM GOD (**Gal. 1:1** – “not from men nor by men, but by Jesus Christ”, **1:10** – “Am I trying to win the approval of men or God?”, **1:16** – “I did not consult any man”)

#### Verse 29

He talked (laleo) and debated (syzeteo = seek truth together)  
with the Hellenistic (Greek) Jews,  
but they tried to kill him.

The “Pauline Approach” begins early in his ministry! The persecution starts early as well!

Paul was known throughout the New Testament as a good presenter of truth and a passionate heart using his personal experience and conversion as a launch point to share his new world view to the hearers.



## V. The Close of Phase 2 (9:30 - 31)

### Verse 30

When the believers [brothers] learned of this, they took him down to Caesarea and sent him off to Tarsus. (Paul's home town)

Saul was sent home for ten to 12 years of personal development!

When we get to Acts 11, Paul is recruited by God through Barnabas to begin his twenty year ministry that changed the world.

Even Paul had to wait – train – and prepare! Even Paul had a limited season of significant service. Our calling is either to be training or serving – each season has important opportunities!



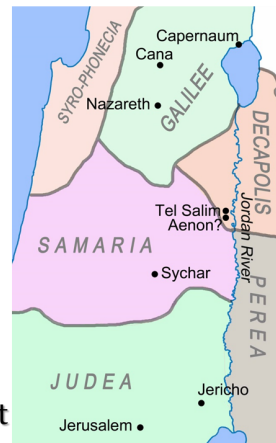
### Verse 31

Then the church (“the way”) throughout Judea, Galilee (?) and Samaria

- 1) enjoyed a time of peace
- 2) and was strengthened. (edified)
- 3) Living in the fear of the Lord
- 4) and encouraged by the Holy Spirit, it increased in numbers.

Note: The Book of Acts does not tell us about the planting or developing of any churches in Galilee – remember is an overview with a larger purpose, not a detailed history of the church.

**Four signs of spiritual growth:** Peace in unity, strength in knowledge, respect in worship, and joy through the Holy Spirit.



## VI. Aeneas and Dorcas (9:32 - 43)

### Verse 32

Then

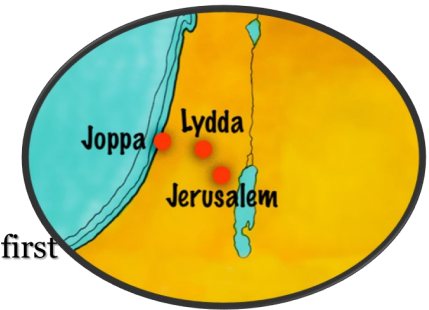
### Phase Three Begins!

As Peter traveled about the country, he went to visit the Lord's people (saints) who lived in Lydda.

Peter comes back into focus in the last couple of sections of chapter 9.

Peter now begins to expand his ministry from just Jerusalem to all parts of the country. Lydda is 25 miles North West of Jerusalem. The first time believers are called “saints”.

The Book of Acts																											
Focus		Foundation of the Church														Founder of Churches											
Divisions	Topics	Foundation of the Church														Founder of Churches											
		Foundation of the Church														Founder of Churches											
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28
Spirit of the Church	Jerusalem To the Jews	Jerusalem	Jerusalem	Jerusalem	Jerusalem	Jerusalem	Jerusalem	Jerusalem	Jerusalem	Jerusalem	Jerusalem	Jerusalem	Jerusalem	Jerusalem	Jerusalem	Jerusalem	Jerusalem	Jerusalem	Jerusalem	Jerusalem	Jerusalem	Jerusalem	Jerusalem	Jerusalem	Jerusalem	Jerusalem	Jerusalem
Growth of the Church	Samaria	Samaria	Samaria	Samaria	Samaria	Samaria	Samaria	Samaria	Samaria	Samaria	Samaria	Samaria	Samaria	Samaria	Samaria	Samaria	Samaria	Samaria	Samaria	Samaria	Samaria	Samaria	Samaria	Samaria	Samaria	Samaria	Samaria
Persecution of the Church	Judea To the Samaritans	Judea To the Samaritans	Judea To the Samaritans	Judea To the Samaritans	Judea To the Samaritans	Judea To the Samaritans	Judea To the Samaritans	Judea To the Samaritans	Judea To the Samaritans	Judea To the Samaritans	Judea To the Samaritans	Judea To the Samaritans	Judea To the Samaritans	Judea To the Samaritans	Judea To the Samaritans	Judea To the Samaritans	Judea To the Samaritans	Judea To the Samaritans	Judea To the Samaritans	Judea To the Samaritans	Judea To the Samaritans	Judea To the Samaritans	Judea To the Samaritans	Judea To the Samaritans	Judea To the Samaritans	Judea To the Samaritans	Judea To the Samaritans
Expansion of the Church	Antioch	Antioch	Antioch	Antioch	Antioch	Antioch	Antioch	Antioch	Antioch	Antioch	Antioch	Antioch	Antioch	Antioch	Antioch	Antioch	Antioch	Antioch	Antioch	Antioch	Antioch	Antioch	Antioch	Antioch	Antioch	Antioch	Antioch
First Journey of Paul	Asia Minor	Asia Minor	Asia Minor	Asia Minor	Asia Minor	Asia Minor	Asia Minor	Asia Minor	Asia Minor	Asia Minor	Asia Minor	Asia Minor	Asia Minor	Asia Minor	Asia Minor	Asia Minor	Asia Minor	Asia Minor	Asia Minor	Asia Minor	Asia Minor	Asia Minor	Asia Minor	Asia Minor	Asia Minor	Asia Minor	Asia Minor
Second Journey of Paul	Europe and Corinth	Europe and Corinth	Europe and Corinth	Europe and Corinth	Europe and Corinth	Europe and Corinth	Europe and Corinth	Europe and Corinth	Europe and Corinth	Europe and Corinth	Europe and Corinth	Europe and Corinth	Europe and Corinth	Europe and Corinth	Europe and Corinth	Europe and Corinth	Europe and Corinth	Europe and Corinth	Europe and Corinth	Europe and Corinth	Europe and Corinth	Europe and Corinth	Europe and Corinth	Europe and Corinth	Europe and Corinth	Europe and Corinth	Europe and Corinth
Third Journey of Paul	Rome	Rome	Rome	Rome	Rome	Rome	Rome	Rome	Rome	Rome	Rome	Rome	Rome	Rome	Rome	Rome	Rome	Rome	Rome	Rome	Rome	Rome	Rome	Rome	Rome	Rome	Rome
Arrest of Paul	To the Gentiles	To the Gentiles	To the Gentiles	To the Gentiles	To the Gentiles	To the Gentiles	To the Gentiles	To the Gentiles	To the Gentiles	To the Gentiles	To the Gentiles	To the Gentiles	To the Gentiles	To the Gentiles	To the Gentiles	To the Gentiles	To the Gentiles	To the Gentiles	To the Gentiles	To the Gentiles	To the Gentiles	To the Gentiles	To the Gentiles	To the Gentiles	To the Gentiles	To the Gentiles	To the Gentiles
Trials of Paul	Various Parts	Various Parts	Various Parts	Various Parts	Various Parts	Various Parts	Various Parts	Various Parts	Various Parts	Various Parts	Various Parts	Various Parts	Various Parts	Various Parts	Various Parts	Various Parts	Various Parts	Various Parts	Various Parts	Various Parts	Various Parts	Various Parts	Various Parts	Various Parts	Various Parts	Various Parts	Various Parts
Imprisonment of Paul	Various Parts	Various Parts	Various Parts	Various Parts	Various Parts	Various Parts	Various Parts	Various Parts	Various Parts	Various Parts	Various Parts	Various Parts	Various Parts	Various Parts	Various Parts	Various Parts	Various Parts	Various Parts	Various Parts	Various Parts	Various Parts	Various Parts	Various Parts	Various Parts	Various Parts	Various Parts	Various Parts
Place	Jerusalem	Jerusalem	Jerusalem	Jerusalem	Jerusalem	Jerusalem	Jerusalem	Jerusalem	Jerusalem	Jerusalem	Jerusalem	Jerusalem	Jerusalem	Jerusalem	Jerusalem	Jerusalem	Jerusalem	Jerusalem	Jerusalem	Jerusalem	Jerusalem	Jerusalem	Jerusalem	Jerusalem	Jerusalem	Jerusalem	Jerusalem
Time	2 Years (A.D. 33-35)	2 Years (A.D. 33-35)	2 Years (A.D. 33-35)	2 Years (A.D. 33-35)	2 Years (A.D. 33-35)	2 Years (A.D. 33-35)	2 Years (A.D. 33-35)	2 Years (A.D. 33-35)	2 Years (A.D. 33-35)	2 Years (A.D. 33-35)	2 Years (A.D. 33-35)	2 Years (A.D. 33-35)	2 Years (A.D. 33-35)	2 Years (A.D. 33-35)	2 Years (A.D. 33-35)	2 Years (A.D. 33-35)	2 Years (A.D. 33-35)	2 Years (A.D. 33-35)	2 Years (A.D. 33-35)	2 Years (A.D. 33-35)	2 Years (A.D. 33-35)	2 Years (A.D. 33-35)	2 Years (A.D. 33-35)	2 Years (A.D. 33-35)	2 Years (A.D. 33-35)	2 Years (A.D. 33-35)	
Author	Luke the Doctor	Luke the Doctor	Luke the Doctor	Luke the Doctor	Luke the Doctor	Luke the Doctor	Luke the Doctor	Luke the Doctor	Luke the Doctor	Luke the Doctor	Luke the Doctor	Luke the Doctor	Luke the Doctor	Luke the Doctor	Luke the Doctor	Luke the Doctor	Luke the Doctor	Luke the Doctor	Luke the Doctor	Luke the Doctor	Luke the Doctor	Luke the Doctor	Luke the Doctor	Luke the Doctor	Luke the Doctor	Luke the Doctor	Luke the Doctor



### Verse 33

There he found a man named Aeneas, (name means “laudable”) who was paralyzed and had been bedridden for eight years.

As Peter is ministering through the area, God provides an opportunity for His glory to be manifested in healing.

### Verse 34

“Aeneas,” Peter said to him,  
*“Jesus Christ heals you.  
 Get up and roll up your mat.”*  
 Immediately Aeneas got up.

Once again, Peter is careful to give the power of the healing to Jesus Christ and not to himself. He speaks in bold faith and Aeneas responds in bold faith and stands up.

#### Verse 35

All those who lived  
in Lydda  
and Sharon  
saw him (he must have travelled)  
and turned to the Lord.

We see once again, that God uses healings as a means to bring people into faith in Christ. The whole region of Sharon is moved by this miracle.

#### Verse 36

In Joppa  
there was a disciple named Tabitha (“female gazelle”)  
(in Greek her name is Dorcas);  
she was always doing good  
and helping the poor.

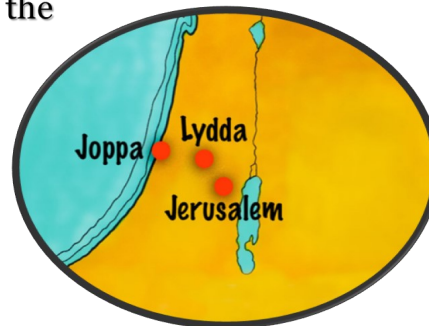
We see a prominent member of the Christian church who has a glowing reputation for good works in the community who lived about 8 miles from Lydda.

#### Verse 37

About that time  
1) she became sick  
2) and died,  
3) and her body was washed  
4) and placed in an upstairs room.

Obviously prepared for the funeral.

This woman was not just sick in the bed – she had died and her body was prepared for the guests visitation.



#### Verse 38

Lydda was near Joppa;  
so when the disciples heard  
that Peter was in Lydda,  
they sent two men to him  
and urged him,  
*“Please come at once!”*

Why do the disciples get so involved in this funeral to invite Peter to come and help them so urgently?

#### Verse 39

Peter went with them,  
and when he arrived  
he was taken upstairs to the room.  
All the widows stood around him,  
crying and  
showing him the robes  
and other clothing  
that Dorcas had made  
while she was still with them.

#### Verse 40

Peter sent them all out of the room;  
then he got down on his knees  
and prayed.  
Turning toward the dead woman,  
he said,

*“Tabitha, get up.”* Not the same person Jesus raised up in Mark 5:38-43 (that was “Talitha” not “Tabitha”).  
She opened her eyes,  
and seeing Peter she sat up.

*“For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways and my thoughts than your thoughts.”* (Isa. 55:9) – We will never fully understand what God is doing – to raise Tabitha from death and leave Stephen, James, and John the Baptist in the grave is still a mystery of God’s wisdom.

#### Verse 41

He took her by the hand  
and helped her to her feet.  
Then he called for the believers,  
especially the widows,  
and presented her to them alive.

Tabitha was raised up, not for her own benefit – she was surely in heavenly bliss, but she was brought back to life even to suffer death again, for the sake of the ministry of Jesus Christ.

#### Verse 42

This became known all over Joppa,  
and many people believed in the Lord.

The point of this and every miracle – to bring people to believe in Christ as Lord.

With these two miracles, Joppa and Lydda become the epicenter of the Christian Church in the days after the persecution in Jerusalem starts.

#### Verse 43

Peter stayed in Joppa  
for some time with a tanner named Simon.

At the close of chapter 9 we see Peter living in Joppa.

Interesting to note: Peter has been raised as a Jew. In the Jewish faith a tanner was banned from community life because he touched and dealt with dead bodies, therefore, he had to live 75 feet outside of town and could not have physical contact with any Jewish leaders without proper purification rituals.

(Note: there is NO references to “Tanners” in the Torah)  
(There are certain unclean animals (Lev. 20:25) but not the goats, sheep, and cows the tanner would deal with)

What we see in Peter is a higher concern for a person’s heart than for the Jewish religion. This is a heart change that opens the door for the next phase in Peter’s life.