

Peter's Missionary Tour  
Acts 9:31-43

I. Acts 9:31-43

A. What happened after Saul was sent to Tarsus?

1. The Jews were engrossed with the emperor Caligula's attempt to have his own image set up in the temple of Jerusalem [Josephus, *Antiquities*, 18.8.1, etc.].
2. The church in Judea, Galilee, and Samaria
  - a. had peace
  - b. were edified or built up
  - c. walked in the fear of the Lord
  - d. walked in the comfort of the Holy Spirit
  - e. multiplied
3. How does this relate to worship?
4. Does this indicate that the persecution had been instigated by one man?
5. How does this relate to Jesus' outline of Acts 1:7-8?

**Comment [BB1]:** NASB, ESV-singular form for church: ekklesia

B. What was the route of Phillip?

1. See Acts 8:5, 26, 40

C. What was the route of Peter?

1. See Acts 9:52, 36,39, 42, 24; Acts 11:2; Acts 21:8

D. Lydda

Ono and Lod and the towns thereof are said to have been built by Shemed, a Benjamite ([1Ch 8:12](#)). The children of Lod, Hadid and One, to the number of 725, returned from Babylon with Zerubbabel ([Ezr 2:33](#); [Neh 7:37](#) (721)). The town lay in the Shephelah, perhaps in *ge' ha-har'ashim*, "the valley of craftsmen" ([Neh 11:35](#)). In the New Testament it appears as Lydda.

After the death of Julius Caesar the inhabitants of Lydda and certain other towns, having failed to pay the contributions Cassius demanded, were by him sold into slavery. They were freed by Antony (*Ant.*, XIV, xi, 2; xii, 2). Lydda suffered severely under Cestius Gallus (*BJ*, II, xix, 1). Along with Jamnia it surrendered to Vespasian (*BJ*, IV, viii, 1). After the fall of Jerusalem it was noted as a seat of rabbinical learning. The classical name of the city was Diospolis. In the 4th century it was connected with the trade in purple. It became the seat of a bishopric, and the bishop of Lydda was present at the Council of Nicea. At Lydda, in 415 AD, took place the trial of Pelagius for heresy. (ISBE)

It is nine miles from Joppa, and is the first town on the northernmost of the two roads between that place and Jerusalem. It was destroyed by Vespasian, and was probably not rebuilt till the time of Hadrian, when it received the name of Diospolis. (Smith Bible Dictionary)

E. Joppa

The modern *Yāfā* is built on a rocky mound 116 ft. high, at the edge of the sea. A reef of rocks runs parallel to the shore a short distance out. It may be rounded in calm weather by lighter vessels, and it affords a certain amount of protection. There is a gap in the reef through which the boats pass that meet the steamers calling here. In time of storm the passage is dangerous. On one of these rocks Perseus is said to have rescued the chained Andromeda from the dragon. Yafa is a prosperous town, profiting much by the annual streams of pilgrims who pass through it on their way to visit the holy places in Palestine. A good trade is done with Egypt, Syria and Constantinople. Soap, sesame, wheat and oranges are the chief exports. The famous gardens and orange groves of Jaffa form one of the main sights of interest. The Christians and the Moslems have rival traditions as to the site of the house of Simon the tanner. The remains of the house of Tabitha are also pointed out. From Jaffa to Jerusalem the first railway in Palestine was built.

The men of Joppa, having treacherously drowned some 200 Jews, Judas Maccabeus fell upon the town “and set the haven on fire by night, and burned the boats, and put to the sword those that had fled thither” (2 Macc 12:3 ff). Jonathan took the city, in which Apollonius had placed a garrison (1 Macc 11:47 ff). It was not easy to hold, and some years later it was captured again by Simon, who garrisoned the place, completed the harbor and raised the fortifications (1 Macc 12:36 f; 13:11; 14:5-34). It is recorded as part of Simon's glory that he took it “for a haven, and made it an entrance for the isles of the sea,” the Jews thus possessing for the first time a seaport through which commerce might be fully developed. It was taken by Pompey and joined to the province of Syria (*Ant.*, XIV, iv, 4; *BJ*, I, vii, 7). Caesar restored it to the Jews under Hyrcanus (*Ant.*, XIV, x, 6). It was among the cities given by Antony to Cleopatra (XV, iv, 1). Caesar added it to the kingdom of Herod (vii. 3; *BJ*, I, xx, 3), and at his death it passed to Archelaus (*Ant.*, XVII, xi, 4; *BJ*, II, vi, 3). At his deposition it was attached to the Roman province. The inhabitants were now zealous Jews, and in the Roman wars it suffered heavily. After a massacre by Cestius Gallus, in which 8,400 of the people perished, it was left desolate. Thus it became a resort of the enemies of Rome, who turned pirates, and preyed upon the shipping in the neighboring waters. The place was promptly captured and destroyed by Vespasian. The people took to their boats, but a terrific storm burst upon them, dashing their frail craft to pieces on the rocks, so that vast numbers perished (*BJ*, III, ix, 2-4). At a later time it was the seat of a bishopric. During the Crusades it had a checkered history, being taken, now by the Christians, now by the Moslems. It was captured by the French under Kleber in 1799 (Napoleon ordered the execution of 4,000 prisoners). It was fortified by the English, and afterward extended by the Turks (Baedeker, *Palestine*, 130). (ISBE)

#### F. Sharon

##### **Sharon**

Or Saron, a plain, a level tract extending from the Mediterranean to the hill country to the west of Jerusalem, about 30 miles long and from 8 to 15 miles broad, celebrated for its beauty and fertility ([1Ch 27:29](#); [Isa 33:9](#); [Isa 35:2](#); [Isa 65:10](#)). The “rose of Sharon” is celebrated ([Son 2:1](#)). It is called Lasharon (the article *la* being here a part of the word) in [Jos 12:18](#). (Easton Bible Dictionary)

[1Ch 5:16](#); [Isa 33:9](#), "the excellency (*beauty*) of Sharon" ([Isa 35:2](#), [Isa 65:10](#); [Son 2:1](#), "the rose (*narcissus*) of Sharon," famous for flowers and for pasture; [Act 9:35](#)). The broad rich tract between the central mountains and the Mediterranean, stretching from Joppa or Jaffa northwards to Carmel. Half the width is of marl and alluvial soil, the other half of old red semi-consolidated sand and shelly breccias. (*See PALESTINE.*) The coast is marked by white sandhills; fine grain, well trimmed plantations, and long gentle swells of rich red and black earth, characterize Sharon. (Fausset Bible Dictionary)

This name is attached to the strip of fairly level land which runs between the mountains and the shore of the Mediterranean, stretching from *Nahr Rubīn* in the South to Mt. Carmel in the North. There are considerable rolling hills; but, compared with the mountains to the East, it is quite properly described as a plain. The soil is a deep rich loam, which is favorable to the growth of cereals. The orange, the vine and the olive grow to great perfection. When the many-colored flowers are in bloom it is a scene of rare beauty. (International Standard Bible Encyclopedia)

#### G. The Healing of Aeneas

1. Do we know if Aeneas was a believer?
2. What is told regarding Aeneas?
3. What can we conclude was the purpose of his infirmity? See John 9:1-3
4. Who heals Aeneas?
5. Why is he instructed to make his **bed**?
6. What was the effect of this miracle upon the residents of Lydda and Sharon?

**Comment [BB2]:** An echo of Mark 2:11

#### H. The Raising of Tabitha, Dorcas (“gazelle” in Aramic and Greek)

1. Joppa, on the coast, is 10 miles NW from Lydda and about 38 miles NW from Jerusalem.
2. What are we told about Tabitha?
3. What does it mean, “a disciple”?
4. What is the difference between “good works” and “alms deeds or works of charity”?
5. What does this say about her character? What kind of a person was she?
6. Does Luke imply that her friends expected Peter to raise her from the dead?
7. Who seemed to be most disturbed about her death? Were they believers? See v. 41.
8. Who was sent to Peter? What was their message?
9. What does Peter do upon hearing their message?
10. What was shown to Peter? How, perhaps, did they show these to him?
11. Why does Peter put them all out of the room? What could he be remembering?
12. What does Peter do? Why does he kneel? Was this standard practice for men when they prayed?
13. Was Tabitha dead or alive when Peter spoke to her?
14. What did Tabitha do after Peter spoke to her? What did he do?
15. To whom did Peter present Tabitha?
16. What effect did the miracle have in Joppa?
17. How long does Peter stay in Joppa?
18. Who is not mentioned to be with Peter? Is it possible that she was with him? See 1<sup>st</sup> Corinthians 9:5.
19. With whom did Peter lodge while in Joppa? Why not Tabitha?
20. Why is this significant? Does it have any bearing upon Peter’s ministry to the Gentiles?

**Comment [BB3]:** The saying is trustworthy, and I want you to insist on these things, so that those who have believed in God may be careful to devote themselves to good works. These things are excellent and profitable for people. (Titus 3:8 ESV)

**Comment [BB4]:** An echo of Mark 5:35-42

**Comment [BB5]:** I.B.B. Bruce reports that this area (Sharon, Lydda, Joppa) was semi-Gentile. Commentary on Acts, p. 211.