

Chapter 9

- **Saul's conversion. (9:1-19)**
- **Saul preaches in Damascus, escapes to Jerusalem where he is accepted by the Disciples, challenges the Jerusalem "Hellenists" and leaves for Tarsus. (9:20-31)**
- **Peter heals Aeneas and resurrects Tabitha. (9:32-43)**

Summary

Saul's Conversion (9:1-19)

- Saul, "breathing threats and murder against the disciples," gets authority from the high priest to arrest Christians in Damascus and is enroute when a light flashes around him, throws him to the ground and blinds him. A voice, identifying itself as Jesus, asks Saul why he is persecuting him and instructs him to proceed to Damascus where he will be met.
- Meanwhile, in Damascus "the Lord" instructs a disciple named Ananias to go to Saul. Ananias is understandably reluctant, in view of Saul's reputation, but the Lord insists: "Go, for he is an instrument whom I have chosen to bring my name before the Gentiles and kings and before the people of Israel." Ananias goes, meets Saul and restores his sight.

Summary

Saul preaches in Damascus, escapes to Jerusalem where he is accepted by the Disciples, challenges the Jerusalem "Hellenists" and leaves for Tarsus. (9:20-31)

- Saul is baptized in Damascus and immediately starts preaching in the synagogues. The Jews plot to kill him, but he escapes by night in a basket lowered from the city walls.
- He goes to Jerusalem, where the disciples are suspicious, but Barnabas (see 4:36-37) vouches for him and Paul (as in Damascus) begins preaching "boldly" and argumentatively with "the Hellenists" (diaspora Jews, like Paul himself) who attempt to kill him.
- In view of the threat, the believers in Jerusalem take Saul to the Mediterranean port of Caesarea and send him onward to his home city of Tarsus.

Summary

Peter heals Aeneas and resurrects Tabitha. (9:32-43)

- Peter takes up the role of an itinerate pastor among the now dispersed believers, travelling in Judea and Samaria. In the town of Lydda (now Lod, where Ben Gurion airport is) he heals a bedridden paralytic named Aeneas and all the residents of coastal plain "turned to the Lord."
- In the town of Joppa (now Jaffa) just northwest of Lydda Peter is told of a disciple named Tabitha who had died. He goes to her room, sends everyone else out, kneels beside her, prays, and she is resurrected. Many of the people of Jaffa heard and believed. Peter stays for a time in Joppa in the home of a tanner named Simon.

Summary

Peter's vision about accepting unclean things and the conversion of the gentile centurian.

- An angel visits a pious Roman centurian named Cornelius "who feared God" and "gave alms generously" and tells him to send some men for Peter, who would be at the home of Simon the tanner.
- Meanwhile Peter goes to the roof of Simon's home to pray and falls into a trance in which he sees a sheet lowered from heaven filled with "all kinds of four-footed creatures, reptiles, and birds." A voice tells Peter to get up, kill and eat. Peter protests to "the Lord" that he has never eaten anything unclean. The Lord's voice repeats again, a second and third time: "What God has made clean, you must not call unclean."
- Peter is still puzzled by the dream when the men from Cornelius arrive. "The Spirit" tells Peter to meet the men for "I have sent them." He does so and the men tell him about Cornelius who is "well spoken of by the whole Jewish nation." They spend the night at Simon's home and the next day they begin the roughly 40-mile walk north to Cornelius' home in Caesarea.
- When Peter arrives, he enters Cornelius' home and addresses the assembled household. He has come to understand the meaning of his rooftop vision and tells them that while Jews really aren't supposed to consort with gentiles, God has shown him that "I should not call anyone profane or unclean."
- Peter explains the gospel of Jesus to the group, prefacing it with the words "I truly understand that God shows no partiality, but in every nation anyone who fears him and does what is right is acceptable to him."
- As Peter is speaking, the Holy Spirit falls on the group to the astonishment of the Jewish disciples who had come with Peter because "the gift of the Holy Spirit had been poured out even on the gentiles." Peter concludes: "Can anyone withhold the water of baptism for these people who have received the Holy Spirit just as we have." Peter orders that they be baptized and stays with them for several days.