

# **GATECITY CHURCH**

## **THE BOOK OF ACTS, PT. 8**

### **PETER'S MINISTRY & GENTILE PENTECOST, ACTS 9:32 – 11:18**

**MARCH 9<sup>TH</sup>, 2025 – BILLY HUMPHREY**

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#### **I. Introduction and Recap**

A. Over the last two weeks, we talked about Stephen and were introduced to Paul. When we consider how Luke expressed the narrative from Acts 6-11, we realize that he highlighted four key individuals:

1. Stephen (Acts 6-7) – The first martyr, whose death led to persecution and scattering.
2. Philip (Acts 8) – The evangelist who first brought the Gospel outside Jerusalem (Samaria & the Ethiopian eunuch).
3. Peter (Acts 1-12) – The leader of the apostles who played a central role in taking the Gospel to both Jews and Gentiles.
4. Paul (Acts 9-28) – The former Pharisee turned apostle, who would soon take the center stage in the book of Acts.

B. He emphasized these four intentionally to profile the way the believers can and should function.

C. It's noteworthy that He highlighted Stephen & Philip before he highlighted Peter and Paul. Stephen and Philip were two of the seven who were chosen by the church to make sure the daily distribution of food was managed properly, and nobody was neglected (the Hellenist widows having been passed over, which was likely a sign of racial discrimination in the early church).

D. At this point, we are about 8 years into the journey of the early church. We find in Acts 9:23 the phrase, "when many days had elapsed." This period of time was likely about 3 years. So, in Acts 9, we get Paul's conversion, his ministry in Damascus, many days elapse, he escaped Damascus because there was a plot to kill him and went to Jerusalem. There, he ministered publicly, preaching Jesus boldly. Later, another plot arose to kill him and for his safety, the disciples sent him off to Tarsus, which was his hometown.

**Acts 9:31** – "So the church throughout all Judea and Galilee and Samaria enjoyed peace, being built up; and going on in the fear of the Lord and in the comfort of the Holy Spirit, it continued to increase."

E. This verse covers a period of about 10 years. This decade was a time of relative peace and expansion of the early Church.

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- F. Paul spent this time primarily in Tarsus, Commentators tell us that he likely experienced much of the persecution that he described in 1 & 2 Corinthians at this time. It was this season that shaped Paul into the Apostle who would take the Gospel all over the known world and write nearly 2/3rds of the New Testament.
- G. Our focus today will primarily be on Peter's ministry and the outpouring of the Holy Spirit at Cornelius' House.

## **II. Peter's Ministry**

- A. Peter was apparently experiencing great moves of the Spirit throughout Judea during these 10 years. The last time we see Peter in the book of Acts is in chapter 5, where his shadow healed the sick and he was preaching boldly in the temple and house to house after having been arrested and beaten for his witness of the Gospel.
- B. In Acts 9:32 we pick up the story of Peter's ministry:  
**Act 9:32-35** – “<sup>32</sup> Now as Peter was traveling through all those regions, he came down also to the saints who lived at Lydda. <sup>33</sup> There he found a man named Aeneas, who had been bedridden eight years, for he was paralyzed. <sup>34</sup> Peter said to him, 'Aeneas, Jesus Christ heals you; get up and make your bed.' Immediately he got up. <sup>35</sup> And all who lived at Lydda and Sharon saw him, and they turned to the Lord.”
- C. Lydda & Sharon were two towns on the way from Jerusalem to Caesarea. When Aeneas gets healed, “all who lived at Lydda and Sharon saw him and turned to the Lord.” Commentators suggest that thousands, and up to tens of thousands, may have been born again because of this healing miracle.
- D. The disciples in Joppa (about 11 miles from Lydda) heard about the move of the Spirit in Lydda and at the tragedy of Tabitha's death they asked Peter to come.
- E. Peter raised Tabitha from the dead after he put all the mourners out of the room. This is exactly what Jesus did with Jairus' daughter in Mark 5:37-43.
- F. Peter stayed in Joppa for a short season (less than a year) and the momentum on the Church and the move of the Spirit is heightening. Luke's telling of this part of the narrative sets us up with anticipation for something dramatic to happen.

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#### **III. Gentile Pentecost**

- A. Acts chapter 10 marks the turning point of the whole book of Acts. This moment is the culmination of God's long-standing plan to bring salvation to all nations. The inclusion of Gentiles was always in His design (Gen 12:3, Isaiah 49:6, Psalm 22:27, Joel 2:28, Hosea 2:23, Amos 9:11-12)
- B. Cornelius and his household received the Gospel, and the Holy Spirit fell upon them just as it did at Pentecost. What had been foretold for centuries was now a reality.
- C. There are several key reasons this is the turning point of the whole book of Acts:

- 1. The Gospel shifts from being a Jewish movement to a global mission.
  - a. Up to this point, the Gospel had spread among Jews and Samaritans (Acts 8)—but never to full Gentiles.
  - b. Cornelius became the first Gentile convert without converting to Judaism first.

**Acts 10:34-35** – “<sup>34</sup> Truly I understand that God shows no partiality, <sup>35</sup> but in every nation anyone who fears Him and does what is right is acceptable to Him.”

- c. Before Acts 10, the mission was still centered on Israel. After Acts 10, the Gospel was open for a full Gentile mission.
  - 2. Peter's Transformation Mirrors the Church's Transformation
    - a. Peter still carried Jewish assumptions about who could belong to God's people. His vision of unclean animals being declared clean was about more than food—it was about people.  
**Acts 10:28** “God has shown me that I should not call any person common or unclean.”
    - b. Before Acts 10, the Church saw itself merely as an extension of Judaism. After Acts 10, it became clear that the extension of Judaism now included all nations.
  - 3. The Holy Spirit Moved Without a Jewish Festival
    - a. It's noteworthy that the Holy Spirit fell on them just as on the day of Pentecost, but this wasn't on a Jewish festival. It was a sign that the move of God was not going to only be bound to the festival calendar.
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- b. The Spirit fell on the Gentiles before Peter even finished preaching (Acts 10:44-46). They started speaking in tongues, just like the Jewish believers did at Pentecost.
  - c. This was God's confirmation, The Gentiles were now fully accepted without circumcision, without keeping the Law, just by faith.
  - d. Before Acts 10, the Gentiles were considered outside the covenant. After Acts 10, the Holy Spirit proved they belonged.
- 4. The Main figure in the book of Acts shifts from Peter to Paul
  - a. Acts 1-12 primarily focuses on Peter and the Jewish Church.
  - b. Acts 13-28 shifts to Paul, who took the Gospel to the Gentile world.
  - c. The power base of the Church is getting ready to shift from Jerusalem to Antioch.