

Acts 9:31-35

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A time of peace for the church begins. Peter visits many of the churches throughout Israel. In the town of Lydda, Peter heals a paralyzed man named Aeneas. Seeing this disabled man now walk, all who live in Lydda and the surrounding area believe in Jesus.

There is a brief period of *peace* for the church in Judea, Galilee, and Samaria. We can infer that Saul/Paul was the primary instigator of the persecution of the church. Now that he is gone, the church has an opportunity to be *built up*, continuing to grow, to *increase* in number of believers. It thrives through *the fear of the Lord* and finds *comfort in the Holy Spirit*. The Pharisees and Sadducees apparently have pumped the brakes on their persecution campaign. Saul, their most valuable asset in persecution, has become a disciple of Jesus, and has fled to Cilicia for now. It could also be that his conversion gave them pause on continuing to persecute the church of Jesus.

So Peter goes on a journey to visit the churches across Israel. *Now as Peter was traveling through all those regions, he came down also to the saints who lived at Lydda.* Lydda, or Lod in Hebrew, is a town northwest of Jerusalem toward the Mediterranean Sea.

In Lydda, Peter found a man named Aeneas, who had been bedridden eight years, for he was paralyzed.

Peter performs a miracle, by the power of Christ and the Spirit, "Aeneas, Jesus Christ heals you; get up and make your bed." Immediately the formerly paralyzed man got up. He could walk. He could make his own bed. Peter had healed a paralytic in the Temple in Acts 3, leading estimated thousands to faith in Christ. Peter is always sure to attribute these healings to the power of Jesus as the Son of God (Acts 3:16) and performs these miracles for the purpose of turning hearts to faith in Him.

This is exactly what happens in Lydda and the neighboring region of Sharon: *And all who lived at Lydda and Sharon saw that Aeneas could walk, and they turned to the Lord.* Clearly Aeneas was well known in the area as a paralyzed man, and the sight of him walking around, thanks to the power of Jesus Christ, opened the hearts of his neighbors to receive the good news, taught by Peter. In noting this episode Luke recounts the advance of the church of Jesus. But he also records miracles of healing performed by Peter among the Jews just as miracles of healing will be performed by Paul among the Gentiles (Acts 28:8-10). In doing so Luke validates Paul's authority from Jesus to be the apostle of Jesus sent to the Gentiles.

Biblical Text

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. Now as Peter was traveling through all those regions, he came down also to the saints who lived at Lydda. ³³ There he found a man named Aeneas, who had been

bedridden eight years, for he was paralyzed. ³⁴ Peter said to him, “Aeneas, Jesus Christ heals you; get up and make your bed.” Immediately he got up. ³⁵ And all who lived at Lydda and Sharon saw him, and they turned to the Lord.