

Acts 9:31-43, The Acts of Peter
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Overview

Luke likes to give summaries, then open them up to show the details.

1. ch. 8-9a
 - a) 8:3-4, general persecution by Saul and scattering of the believers
 - b) 8:5-40, Philip as a specific instance of the scattering of the believers
 - c) 9:1-30 as a specific instance of Saul's persecution
2. 11:19-12:25
 - a) 11:19, diaspora as far as Phenice and Cyprus and Antioch
 - b) 11:20ff, specific history of the church in Antioch.
3. The same dynamic now in 9:31-11:18
 - a) 9:31 introductory summary, describing the state of the church after Saul's conversion
 - b) 9:32-11:18, specific examples of this in the ministry of Peter

A. 31, The Summary

Luke focuses our attention on two experiences of the church: one inward, the other outward; in the words of J.B. Nicholson, one dealing with the church's elevation, the other with its population.

1. Inward: The churches had rest and were edified. In Greek, the dependence between the two is even stronger: they had rest, being edified.
 - a) Rest, or peace. Three broad meanings in the NT:
 - 1) Peace with God. As believers, the churches certainly had this, but it doesn't seem to be emphasized in the context.
 - 2) Peace with the unbelievers, due to the cessation of persecution from Saul. Yet this is hardly a condition for edification. Rom. 5 shows that tribulation is a means for our growth!
 - 3) Peace *among* the believers.
 - a> It is in this sense that the term is associated with edification, in Rom. 14:19.
 - b> The section we are entering deals with reception of Gentiles into the church, the same issue as Rom. 14, and a continual source of stress in the early church.
 - c> Recall the emphasis in the history of Saul of the difficulty he had being accepted into the assemblies of the believers.
 - b) Edified:
 - 1) Refers to the spiritual growth of the believer, not the growth in numbers of the church. (We'll see that side of things in the second half of the verse.)
 - 2) NOT something one does to oneself. The only such ref. in

the NT is 1 Cor. 14:14, describing the disadvantage of speaking in tongues. Building up is something we do to one another: 1 Thes. 5:11; Rom. 14:19; 1 Cor. 14:12; Eph. 4:12. Happens in community.

a> Our relation to the Lord (e.g., quiet time) not as a means to "get a blessing," but to have something to give to others!

b> I can't provide for my own spiritual needs, and you can't provide for yours. You need me to care for you ... and I need you to care for me. --> the folly of one-man ministry! When you don't bring a blessing to share at the Lord's Table, you're not only cheating yourself, but those with whom you worship.

c) *Application*: These two go together: the edification of the church and peace among the believers. The more mature we are, the more we will love and be at peace with one another; and the more peaceful our relations with one another, the greater the growth we will experience personally in the Lord. Indeed, since edification depends on what we do for one another, if we aren't at peace with each other, how can it happen?

d) Amplification in ch. 9-11: bringing Gentiles into the church was potentially very divisive, yet such division will cut off the spiritual growth of the believers. The summary anticipates the favorable outcome of this decision.

2. Outward: The churches were multiplied as they conducted themselves by two guides.

a) Multiplied: numerical increase of the believers.

b) Walking: note the two guides that they followed, and recall the twofold guide of the Christian life, the Scriptures and the Spirit.

1) The fear of the Lord.

a> Results from miracles, Acts 2:43

b> // to knowledge in Prov. 1:29; 2:5; 9:10

c> Joined with keeping God's commandments in Deut. 5:29; 6:2; 8:6; 13:4; 17:19; Psa. 119:63; Ec 12:13 "Let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter: Fear God, and keep his commandments: for this [is] the whole [duty] of man."

d> --> the effect of external evidences, such as miracles or the law of God. Obedience to what we can see and hear.

2) The comfort (*parakl8sis*) of the HS. This is the work the HS was sent to do as the Comforter (*paraklete*). Involves exhortation as well as comfort.

c) *Application*: It's as we live in obedience to God's twofold directions--by his word and by his Spirit--that we'll see the

church multiplied.

- d) Amplification: We'll see obedient believers and salvation among unbelievers as a result, in the next few chapters.

B. 32-42, Peter in the Lowlands

The next two episodes prepare us for the conversion of Cornelius.

1. Both healings have striking similarities to healings done by the Lord Jesus. They thus establish the authority of Peter, by continuing to show (as we saw in ch. 3) that he could do works just like those the Lord Jesus did, John 14:12. The conversion of the eunuch, though a gentile, didn't make much of a stir because Philip was a comparatively minor character. But when one with the standing of Peter receives a gentile without circumcision, it's a major event!
2. They both exemplify 9:31b, the multiplication of the church as the believers walk in obedience to the Lord.

1. 32-35, Palsied Aeneas

- a) Note his illness: paralysis. Recalls two healings in the gospels:

- 1) Mark 2:3 // Matt. 9:2 // Luke 5:17, the man borne of four. Cf. Luke 5:24 for the significance:

"But that ye may know that the Son of man hath power upon earth to forgive sins, (he said unto the sick of the palsy,) I say unto thee, Arise, and take up thy couch, and go into thine house."

One who can heal the sick can certainly forgive sin, and Peter is about to proclaim the forgiveness of sin to a Gentile.

- 2) Matt. 8:6 // Luke 7:1 (but only Matt. mentions the sickness), the servant of the centurion in Capernaum. In this episode the Lord endorses the faith of the centurion above that of the Jews, Matt. 8:10-12. The next step in Matt. is into Peter's house; natural that Peter should have been there. When he finds the Lord healing a paralytic through him, he can hardly help but remember the centurion, and be thus prepared for Cornelius.

- b) 35, The outcome: everybody in the region saw the man and "turned to the Lord." Reference is to conversion (absolute 3:19; 28:27; to God or the Lord 11:21; 14:15; 15:19; 26:18, 20). Emphasizes the outward aspects (26:18,20), and may in many cases have been only outward, but at least there was a great turning.

2. 36-42, Dead Dorcas

- a) Her life was an example of "walking in the fear of the Lord and in the comfort of the Holy Ghost," and of peace leading to edification among the believers.
- b) With the healing, compare Mark 5:22-24, 35-42 and parallels. Again, Luke is emphasizing the similarity between the Lord's work and that of Peter.
 - 1) The Lord (23) and Peter (38) summoned to help;
 - 2) Description of the mourners (Mark 38, Acts 39)
 - 3) The Lord (40) and Peter (40) put out the observers;
 - 4) The words to the dead person would have been remarkably similar in Aramaic, differing in only one letter.
 - a> Mark 5:40,41, "talitha qumi," = "damsel, arise."
 - b> Acts 9:40, "tabitha qumi," = "Dorcas, arise."
 - 5) The Lord (41) and Peter (41) lift her up by the hand (though the Lord is bold enough to touch the corpse before revival, while Peter waits until after, to avoid defilement)
- c) Prayer before raising: cf. Elijah, 1 Kings 17:19ff; Elisha, 2 Kings 4:33
- d) 42, Again, everyone hears of it, and many believe. (This time, looks not at outward conversion, but at inward faith.)

C. 43, Peter at Simon the Tanner's House

A preparation for what is to come. Tanners always dealt with dead bodies, thus were unclean. Peter's willingness to live with him for an extended period suggests his Jewish exclusiveness is beginning to wane. This is no doubt one of the believers, and we see here exemplified the "peace" that will become even more evident with Cornelius.

Summary

- 1. The church's outreach depends on its obedience, exemplified in the results of Peter's healings in Lod and Joppa.
- 2. The church's internal growth depends on its love and peace, illustrated in Peter's sojourn with Simon, and even more in the next chapter with Cornelius.

Hymn:

Analysis

For the basic *men..de* structure, moving from the church as a whole to one individual members, cf. 8:4,5 with Philip; and again in 19:19,20 with the mission to Antioch.

A. 31, Summary

- 1. (Ai me\n ou)^n e)kklhsi/ai kaq' o(/lhs th^s)Ioudai/as kai\ Galilai/as kai\ Samarei/as ei)^xen ei)rh/nhn,
a) oi)kodomoume/nh

2. kai ... e)plhqu/neto.
 - a) poreuome/nh -- the twofold guide!
 - 1) tw^| fo/bw| tou^ kuri/ou,
 - 2) kai\ th^| paraklh/sei tou^ a(gi/ou pneu/matos

B. 32-43, Detail

1. at Lydda
 - a) 32)Ege/neto de\ Pe/tron dierxo/menon dia\ pa/ntwn katelqei^
kai\ pro\s tou\s a(gi/ous tou\s katoikou^ntas Lu/dda.
 - b) 33 eu(^ren de\ e)kei^ a)/nqrwpo/n tina o)no/mati Ai)ne/an e)c
e)tw^n o)ktw\ katakei/menon e)pi\ kraba/ttou, o(\s h)^n
paralelume/nos.
 - c) 34 kai\ ei)^pen au)tw^| o(Pe/tros,
1) Ai)ne/a,
2) i)a^tai/ se)Ihsou^s Xristo/s:
3) a)na/sthqi
4) kai\ strw^son seautw^|.
 - d) kai\ eu)qe/ws a)ne/sth.
 - e) 35 kai\ ei)^dan au)to\n pa/ntes oi(katoikou^ntes Lu/dda kai\
to\n Sarw^na, oi(/tines e)pe/streyan e)pi\ to\n ku/rion.
2. at Joppa
 - a) 36)En)Io/pph| de/ tis h)^n maqh/tria o)no/mati Tabiqa/, h(\
diermhneuome/nh le/getai Dorka/s:
 - b) au(/th h)^n plh/rhs e)/rgwn a)gaqw^n kai\ e)lehmounw^n w(^n
e)poi/ei.
 - c) 37 e)ge/neto de\ e)n tai^s h(me/rais e)kei/nais a)sqenh/sasan
au)th\n a)poqanei^n:
 - d) lou/santes de\ e)/qhkan [au)th\n] e)n u(perw/|w|.
 - e) 38 e)ggus de\ ou)/shs Lu/ddas th^|)Io/pph| oi(maqhtai\
a)kou/santes o(/ti Pe/tros e)sti\n e)n au)th^| a)pe/steilan
du/o a)/ndras pro\s au)to\n parakalou^ntes, Mh\ o)knh/sh|s
dielqei^ e(/ws h(mw^n.
 - f) 39 a)nasta\s de\ Pe/tros sunh^lqen au)toi^s:
 - g) o(\n parageno/menon a)nh/gagon ei)s to\ u(perw^|on,
 - h) kai\ pare/sthsan au)tw^| pa^sai ai(xh^rai klai/ousai kai\
e)pideiknu/menai xitw^nas kai\ i(ma/tia o(/sa e)poi/ei met'
au)tw^n ou)^sa h(Dorka/s.
 - i) 40 e)kbalw\n de\ e)/cw pa/ntas o(Pe/tros kai\ qei\s ta\
go/nata proshu/cato,
 - j) kai\ e)pistre/yas pro\s to\ sw^ma ei)^pen, Tabiqa/,
a)na/sthqi.
 - k) h(de\ h)/noicen tou\s o)fqalmou\s au)th^s,
 - l) kai\ i)dou^sa to\n Pe/tron a)neka/qisen.
 - m) 41 dou\s de\ au)th^| xei^ra a)ne/sthsen au)th/n,
 - n) fwnh/sas de\ tou\s a(gi/ous kai\ ta\s xh/ras pare/sthsen
au)th\n zw^san.
 - o) 42 gnwsto\n de\ e)ge/neto kaq' o(/lhs th^s)Io/pphs,
 - p) kai\ e)pi/steusan polloi\ e)pi\ to\n ku/rion.
3. 43)Ege/neto de\ h(me/ras i(kana\s mei^nai e)n)Io/pph| para/
tini Si/mwni bursei^.