

Peter's Itinerant Ministry (c. 38–40)

Acts 9:31–43

Peace and Growth for the Early Church

31 Then the church throughout all of Judea and Galilee and Samaria had peace, being strengthened. And living in the fear of the Lord and the encouragement of the Holy Spirit, it was increasing *in numbers*.

Aeneas Healed at Lydda

32 Now it happened that *as* Peter was traveling through all *the places*, *he* also came down to the saints who lived *in* Lydda.

33 And he found there a certain man named Aeneas who was paralyzed, who had been lying on a mat for eight years.

34 And Peter said to him, "Aeneas, Jesus Christ heals you! Get up and make your bed yourself!" And immediately he got up.

35 And all those who lived *in* Lydda and Sharon saw him, who *all* indeed turned to the Lord.

Dorcas Raised at Joppa

36 Now in Joppa there was a certain female disciple named Tabitha (which translated means "Dorcas"). She was full of good deeds and charitable giving which she was constantly doing.

37 Now it happened that in those days *after* becoming sick, she died. And *after* washing *her*, they placed her in an upstairs room.

38 And *because* Lydda was near Joppa, the disciples, *when they* heard that Peter was in Lydda, sent two men to him, urging, "Do not delay to come to us!"

39 So Peter got up *and* accompanied them. *When he* arrived, they brought *him* up to the upstairs room, and all the widows came to him, weeping and showing *him* tunics and *other* clothing that Dorcas used to make *while she* was with them.

40 But Peter sent *them* all outside, and, falling to *his* knees, he prayed. And turning toward the body, he said, "Tabitha, get up!" And she opened her eyes, and *when she* saw Peter, she sat up.

41 And he gave her *his* hand *and* raised her up. And he called the saints and the widows *and* presented her alive.

42 And it became known throughout all Joppa, and many believed in the Lord.

43 And it happened that *he* stayed many days in Joppa with a certain Simon, a tanner.

Peter and Cornelius—Salvation Apart from Circumcision Confirmed (c. 38–40)

Acts 10

Cornelius' Vision

1 Now *there was* a certain man in Caesarea named Cornelius, a centurion of what was called the Italian Cohort, 2 devout and fearing God together with all his household, doing many charitable deeds for the people and praying to God continually.

3 About the ninth hour of the day, he saw clearly in a vision an angel of God coming to him and saying to him, "Cornelius."

4 And he stared at him and became terrified *and* said, "What is it, Lord?" And he said to him, "Your prayers and your charitable deeds have gone up for a memorial offering before God.

5 And now, send men to Joppa and summon a certain Simon, who is also called Peter.

6 This man is staying as a guest with a certain Simon, a tanner, whose house is by the sea."

Cornelius Sends Men to Joppa for Peter

7 And when the angel who spoke to him departed, he summoned two of the household slaves and a devout soldier from those who attended him,

8 and *after he* had explained everything to them, he sent them to Joppa.

Peter's Vision of Unclean Animals

9 And the next day, *as* they were on their way and approaching the city, Peter went up on the housetop to pray *at* about the sixth hour.

10 And he became hungry and wanted to eat. But *while* they were preparing *the food*, a trance came over him.

11 And he saw heaven opened and an object something like a large sheet coming down, being let down to the earth by its four corners,

12 in which were all the four-footed animals and reptiles of the earth and birds of the sky.

13 And a voice came to him, "Get up, Peter, slaughter and eat!"

14 But Peter said, "Certainly not, Lord! For I have never eaten anything common and unclean!"

15 And the voice *came* again to him for the second time: "*The things* which God has made clean, you must not consider unclean!"

16 And this happened three times, and immediately the object was taken up into heaven.

The Arrival of Cornelius' Servants

17 Now while Peter was greatly perplexed within himself *as to* what the vision that he had seen might be, behold, the men who had

been sent by Cornelius, having found the house of Simon by asking around, stood at the gate.

18 And they called out *and* asked if Simon who was also called Peter was staying there as a guest.

19 And *while* Peter was reflecting about the vision, the Spirit said to him, “Behold, men are looking for you.

20 But get up, go down, and go with them—not hesitating at all, because I have sent them.”

21 So Peter went down to the men *and* said, “Behold, I am *he* whom you are looking for! What *is* the reason for which you have come?”

22 And they said, “Cornelius, a centurion, a righteous and God-fearing man—and well spoken of by the whole nation of the Jews—was directed by a holy angel to summon you to his house and to hear words from you.”

23a So he invited them in *and* entertained them as guests,

Peter at Cornelius’ House in Caesarea

23b and on the next day he got up *and* went away with them. And some of the brothers from Joppa accompanied him.

24 And on the next day he entered into Caesarea.

25 So it happened that when Peter entered, Cornelius met him, fell at *his* feet, *and* worshiped *him*.

26 But Peter helped him up, saying, “Get up! I myself am also a man!”

27 And *as he* conversed with him, he went in and found many *people* gathered.

28 And he said to them, “You know that it is forbidden for a Jewish man to associate with or to approach a foreigner. And to me God has shown *that* I should call no man common or unclean.

29 Therefore—and without raising any objection—I came *when I* was sent for. So I ask for what reason you sent for me.”

30 And Cornelius said, “Four days ago at this hour, *the* ninth, I was praying in my house. And behold, a man in shining clothing stood before me

31 and said, ‘Cornelius, your prayer has been heard, and your charitable deeds have been remembered before God.

32 Therefore send to Joppa and summon Simon who is also called Peter. This man is staying as a guest in the house of Simon, a tanner, by the sea.

33 Therefore I sent for you at once, and you were kind enough to come. So now we all are present before God to hear all the things that have been commanded to you by the Lord.”

Peter Presents the Gospel

34 So Peter opened *his* mouth *and* said, “In truth I understand that God is not one who shows partiality,

35 but in every nation the one who fears him and who does what is right is acceptable to him.

36 *As for* the message that he sent to the sons of Israel, proclaiming the good news of peace through Jesus Christ—this one is Lord of all—

37 you know the thing that happened throughout all Judea, beginning from Galilee, after the baptism that John proclaimed:

38 Jesus of Nazareth—how God anointed him with the Holy Spirit and with power, who went about doing good and healing all who were oppressed by the devil, because God was with him.

39 And we *are* witnesses of all *the things* that he did both in the land of the Judeans and in Jerusalem, whom they also executed *by* hanging *him* on a tree.

40 God raised this one up on the third day and granted *that* he should become visible,

41 not to all the people but to us who had been chosen beforehand by God *as* witnesses, who ate and drank with him after he rose from the dead.

42 And he commanded us to preach to the people and to testify solemnly that this one is the one appointed by God *as* judge of the living and of the dead.

43 To this one all the prophets testify, *that* through his name everyone who believes in him receives forgiveness of sins.”

The Holy Spirit Confirms Salvation to the Gentiles Apart from Circumcision

44 *While* Peter was still speaking these words, the Holy Spirit fell on all those who were listening to the message.

45 And those believers from the circumcision who had accompanied Peter were astonished that the gift of the Holy Spirit had been poured out even on the Gentiles,

46 for they heard them speaking in tongues and glorifying God. Then Peter said,

47 “Surely no one can withhold the water for these *people* to be baptized, who have received the Holy Spirit as we also did!”

48 So he ordered *that* they be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ. Then they asked him to stay for several days.

Early Jewish Resistance to Salvation without Circumcision (c. 38–40)

Acts 11:1–18

Peter Attacked by the Circumcision Party

1 Now the apostles and the brothers who were throughout Judea heard that the Gentiles also had accepted the word of God.

2 So when Peter went up to Jerusalem, those of the circumcision took issue with him,

3 saying, “You went to men who were uncircumcised and ate with them!”

Peter’s Defense of Gentile Conversion Apart from Circumcision

4 But Peter began *and* explained *it* to them in an orderly sequence, saying,

5 “I was in the city of Joppa praying, and in a trance I saw a vision—an object something like a large sheet coming down, being let down from heaven by its four corners, and it came to me.

6 As I looked intently into it, I was considering *it*, and I saw the four-footed animals of the earth and the wild animals and the reptiles and the birds of the sky.

7 And I also heard a voice saying to me, ‘Get up, Peter, slaughter and eat!’

8 But I said, ‘Certainly not, Lord! For nothing common or unclean has ever entered into my mouth!’

9 But the voice replied from heaven for the second time, ‘*The things* which God has made clean, you must not consider unclean!’

10 And this happened three times, and everything was pulled up into heaven again.

11 And behold, at once three men who had been sent to me from Caesarea approached the house in which we were *staying*.

12 And the Spirit told me to accompany them, not hesitating *at all*. So these six brothers also went with me, and we entered into the man’s house.

13 And he reported to us how he had seen the angel standing in his house and saying, ‘Send to Joppa and summon Simon, who is also called Peter,

14 who will speak words to you by which you will be saved, you and all your household.’

15 And *as* I was beginning to speak, the Holy Spirit fell on them, just as also on us at the beginning.

16 And I remembered the word of the Lord, how he said, ‘John baptized with water, but you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit.’ [cf. [Acts 1:5](#); [Mark 1:8](#)]

17 Therefore if God gave them the same gift as also to us *when we* believed in the Lord Jesus Christ, who was I *to be* able to hinder God?”

Most Jews are Convinced by Peter’s Explanation (but not all, cf. Acts 15:1–5)

18 And *when they* heard these *things*, they became silent and praised God, saying, “Then God has granted the repentance *leading* to life to the Gentiles also!”

Herod Agrippa I Executes James (c. 43)

Acts 12:1–2

1 Now at that time, Herod the king laid hands on some of those from the church to harm *them*.

2 So he executed James the brother of John with a sword.

Peter Imprisoned by Herod Agrippa I (April of 43 or 44)

Acts 12:3–19

Peter Arrested and Imprisoned

3 And *when he* saw that it was pleasing to the Jews, he proceeded to arrest Peter also. (Now this was during the feast of Unleavened Bread.)

4 *After he* had arrested him, he also put *him* in prison, handing *him* over to four squads of soldiers to guard him, intending to bring him out for public trial after the Passover.

5 Thus Peter was kept in the prison, but prayer was fervently being made to God by the church for him.

Peter Rescued by an Angel

6 Now when Herod was about to bring him *out*, on that *very* night Peter was sleeping between two soldiers, bound with two chains, and guards before the door were watching the prison.

7 And behold, an angel of the Lord stood near *him*, and a light shone in the prison cell. And striking Peter’s side, he woke him up, saying, “Get up quickly!” And his chains fell off of *his* hands.

8 And the angel said to him, “Gird yourself and put on your sandals!” And he did so. And he said to him, “Wrap your cloak around you and follow me!”

9 And he went out *and* was following *him*. And he did not know that what was being done by the angel was real, but was thinking *he* was seeing a vision.

10 And *after they* had passed the first and second guard, they came to the iron gate that leads to the city, which opened for them by itself, and they went out *and* went forward *along* one narrow street, and at once the angel departed from him.

11 And *when* Peter came to himself, he said, “Now I know truly that the Lord has sent out his angel and rescued me from the hand of Herod and all that the Jewish people expected!”

Peter Goes to Mary's House, Then Leaves for a Safe Hiding Place

12 And *when he realized this*, he went to the house of Mary, the mother of John (who is also called Mark), where many *people* were gathered together and were praying.

13 And *when* he knocked at the door of the gateway, a female slave named Rhoda came up to answer.

14 And recognizing Peter's voice, because of *her* joy she did not open the gate, but ran in *and* announced *that* Peter was standing at the gate.

15 But they said to her, "You are out of your mind!" But she kept insisting it was so. And they kept saying, "It is his angel!"

16 But Peter was continuing to knock, and *when they* opened *the door* they saw him and were astonished.

17 But motioning to them with *his* hand to be silent, he related to them how the Lord had brought him out of the prison. And he said, "Report these *things* to James and to the brothers," and he departed *and* went to another place.

Herod Executes the Guards

18 Now *when* day came, there was not a little commotion among the soldiers *as to* what then had become of Peter.

19 And *when* Herod had searched for him and did not find *him*, he questioned the guards *and* ordered *that they* be led away to execution. And he came down from Judea to Caesarea *and* stayed *there*.

The Death of Herod Agrippa I (44)

Acts 12:20–23

20 Now he was very angry with the Tyrians and Sidonians. So they came to him with one purpose, and *after* persuading Blastus, the king's chamberlain, they asked for peace, because their country was supported with food from the king's country.

21 So on an appointed day Herod, *after* putting on royal clothing and sitting down on the judgment seat, began to deliver a public address to them.

22 But the people began to call out loudly, "The voice of a god and not of a man!"

23 And immediately an angel of the Lord struck him down because he did not give the glory to God. And he was eaten by worms *and* died.

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Chronological Notes

- 1) Concerning the death of Herod Agrippa I, I side with the majority (represented by Kostenberger) against Steinmann¹ and Schwartz,² and affirm that Herod's death took place in the first half of 44.³

¹ Andrew E. Steinmann, *From Abraham to Paul*, 303–304. Steinmann follows Schwartz's view of Herod's death.

² Daniel R. Schwartz, *Agrippa I: the Last King of Judea*, (Tubingen: Mohr, 1990): 109–111, 203–207. For an excellent critique of Schwartz's view see Nina L. Collins, "Review: *Agrippa I* by Daniel R. Schwartz," *Novum Testamentum* 34.1 (Jan 1992): 90–101.

³ Andreas J. Kostenberger, L. Scott Kellum, Charles L. Quarles, *The Cradle, the Cross, and the Crown* (B&H Academic, 2009): 62.