

Acts 9:31: *'Then had the churches rest throughout all Judaea and Galilee and Samaria, and were edified; and walking in the fear of the Lord, and in the comfort of the Holy Ghost, were multiplied.'*

God's call and salvation of Saul/Paul resulted in the layout of the newly created True Church, the Body and Bride of the Lord Jesus Christ; now we will begin to see the full import of Jesus' Words:

'This is the work of God, that ye believe on him whom he hath sent... All that the Father giveth me shall come to me; and him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out... And this is the Father's will which hath sent me, that of all which he hath given me I should lose nothing,' John 6

The True Church is now established, alive and well: strong, healthy and ready for God to draw from all men, everywhere: *'... if I be lifted up from the earth, I will draw all men unto me.'* John 12:32

When a new television series debuts, the first few episodes identify the stars and the storyline.

Now we see many of the co-stars: Peter, James, John, etc and especially Saul/Paul with the star/producer/director being the Lord Jesus Christ; He has planned every episode and He will see to it that the show runs for an incredible 2000 years until the grand finale: the Rapture after which the new spin-off series will run for 7 years: 'Adventures in Tribulation!' culminating with the return of 'SuperStar: The Lord Jesus Christ, King of kings and Lord of lords!' and it will all come far sooner than anyone has expected!

Verse 32: *'And it came to pass, as Peter passed throughout all quarters, he came down also to the saints which dwelt at Lydda. ³³ And there he found a certain man named Aeneas, which had kept his bed eight years, and was sick of the palsy.'*

Lydda is about 25 miles northwest of Jerusalem. Peter is traveling about, preaching and teaching as he goes; likely all of the Apostles were doing the same and now, we see that all the churches have rest, not fearing persecution. In Lydda, Peter finds one Aeneas/ahee-neh'as who has been sick with paralysis for 8 years; this is going to be another adventure in healing of someone who's been known by the entire city; again, this will not be a secret, invisible, in and out...

Verse 34: *'And Peter said unto him, Aeneas, Jesus Christ maketh thee whole: arise, and make thy bed. And he arose immediately. ³⁵ And all that dwelt at Lydda and Saron saw him, and turned to the Lord.'*

Everyone knew Aeneas; everyone recognized his miraculous healing and, consequently, everyone turned to the Lord Jesus Christ.

Notice that God doesn't lead Peter to some anonymous homeless person under a bridge to then disappear; God has planned for this healing, like so many others, to be notorious, to cause the most excitement, to be the largest and most effective proclamation of His power and love and to then use that to draw multitudes to Himself for Salvation... **'And all that dwelt at Lydda and Saron saw him, and turned to the Lord.'**

Notice something unusual: when Jesus healed someone, it was often hidden; He even told some to say nothing about it while he disappeared into the crowd. He had not come to turn the World upside down; everything He did was on a very small scale; His purpose was never to personally call multitudes unto Salvation; He came to be despised and hated; He came to be rejected and crucified; He came to do a nearly invisible work in a small and nearly invisible part of the World among a small and nearly invisible people; and sure enough... all of that was accomplished perfectly and all that He did would have been completely meaningless and forgotten except for one important detail: instead of having been just a small, insignificant, invisible, one more executed supposed criminal... He was God Almighty, Creator, Sustainer and Ruler of all that is! His seemingly invisible Earthly Ministry would bear untold eternal, lasting and multiplying fruit. He was that single, fallen, buried grain of wheat which would then multiply in millions beyond.

He didn't come to be received and crowned as king of Israel; in fact, when they would to take Him by force and crown Him, He disappeared, following His having miraculously fed the 5000+ which was the only reason why they wanted Him as king. The Jews, as a whole, won't turn to Him in repentance and faith, as their promised Messiah, until He returns at Armageddon when they finally recognize Him for Who He is and themselves for all they have done. Then finally, *'... and so all Israel shall be saved.'* Rom 11:26

God's Eternal Plan was never to create the True Church as the result of Jesus' preaching on Earth. Then, His mission was not to save multitudes... it was to be God's sacrifice, all alone; the Holy Spirit was not operating in the World, then, as He does now; He said, *'Nevertheless I tell you the truth; It is expedient for you that I go away: for if I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you; but if I depart, I will send him unto you. And when he is come, he will reprove the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment:'* John 16:7

During Jesus' Earthly Ministry, the Holy Spirit was not reproving the world of sin, righteousness and judgment. Once He came, filling the Apostles and other Disciples, people began to come to Salvation in droves. Now, He has sent down His Holy Spirit and unleashed Him... now He is free to 'blow' everywhere and draw to Himself His chosen, by the 100's and 1000's and millions... Pentecost was just the beginning... 3000... and then on and on and on He goes, through today... until He calls the last chosen one of the True Church to Himself and then we will all be called up together, the entire True Church, when He will take us all back to His Father's House!

What if the Lord Jesus Christ had led many thousands to Himself during His Earthly Ministry? His Apostles would have ever been trying to copy what He had done... trying to act the same, say the very same words, give the invitation exactly the same and so on... But His plan was to do all of His evangelistic work through regular people. The first conversions came through the preaching of men. Even the Apostles, themselves were not fully born again until Jesus sent His Holy Spirit at Pentecost Who then filled and recreated them all... all at once. How do we know? Right up until the night of His crucifixion, even Peter turned away as a coward, afraid of a servant girl. It was not until the Holy Spirit came that He was able to stand and courageously confront the Jews with all their terrible sin of rejecting and crucifying *The Prince of Life* (Acts 3:15) and offer the true Words of God unto Eternal Salvation.

But now we see as He moves His disciples to heal someone... He uses it to draw many chosen ones to Himself. During His Earthly ministry... it was never God's plan to save multitudes; in fact, it was God's plan that they would reject Him, hate Him and crucify Him but now... all restraints are off and now Lucifer is beginning to realize just how wrong he was in trying to instigate the crucifixion of the Son of God.

And something else... I believe... possibly... that far in the past, when Lucifer actually had a kingdom, somewhere, that he and his angels also had physical bodies. (remember, he had a throne: he said, *'... I will exalt my throne above the stars of God'*... Isa 14) When his kingdom was destroyed, he and his fallen angels were, possibly, destroyed physically which is likely why they seek to inhabit human bodies now. After their bodies were destroyed, they were only spirits. I think this may be a reason for his drive toward the crucifixion: he may have thought that if Jesus Christ's physical body was killed... then He, like the fallen angels, would not be able to return, physically, to rule over the physical Israel and Earth, thus destroying Prophecy! ... just a thought...

Verse 36: *'Now there was at Joppa a certain disciple named Tabitha, which by interpretation is called Dorcas: this woman was full of good works and almsdeeds which she did. ³⁷ And it came to pass in those days, that she was sick, and died: whom when they had washed, they laid her in an upper chamber.'*

By the way... one of the false teachings through the centuries has been that when Christians die, they sleep until a resurrection after the 7-year Tribulation: no Pre-Tribulation Rapture. One of the reasons they buy into this lie is that in Revelation 20, we read: *'But the rest of the dead lived not again until the thousand years were finished. **This is the first resurrection.** ⁶ Blessed and holy is he that hath part in the first resurrection: on such the second death hath no power, but they shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with him a thousand years.'* Rev 20:5 They say: See! The first resurrection doesn't happen until then and there is no Pre-Tribulation Rapture of the Church since that is the first resurrection.

Of so much, they are willingly ignorant! First, the Rapture is one of the most clearly described doctrines of the Church, our Blessed Hope! But even beyond the Rapture: Let's count up all the resurrections from the dead which have already occurred, even in the Old Testament: Elijah raised the widow's son. 1 Kings 17 ; Elisha raised the shunammite woman. 2 Kings 4; Jesus raised a young girl, a widow's son, a boy and, of course, Lazarus! Peter is about to resurrect Dorcas but first and foremost: the Lord Jesus Christ was raised to Life; He

is 'the first fruits of them that slept.' 1 Cor 15:20 (them that slept; not, them that sleep) We have all been already raised to Life Eternal, in Him, with Him, never to die at all. Col 3:1

When Revelation 20 says, '*This is the first resurrection,*' it simply means this is **OF** the first resurrection! So many are 'willingly ignorant!' ... unwilling to read the Word and accept what it clearly tells us.

'But now is Christ risen from the dead, and become the firstfruits of them that slept... But every man in his own order: Christ the firstfruits; afterward they that are Christ's at his coming... *Behold, I shew you a mystery; We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed, ⁵² In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump: for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed... But thanks be to God, which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.*' 1 Cor 15

'If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God. ² Set your affection on things above, not on things on the earth. ³ **For ye are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God.**' Col 3:1

We have already died, with Jesus Christ, crucified with Him and already raised to Eternal Life **IN** Him. Col 3:1

When the Word speaks of a believer's 'sleep,' it is simply a metaphor for physical death but only of the physical body; remember what Jesus said: '*I am the resurrection, and the life: he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live: ²⁶ And whosoever liveth and believeth in me shall never die*' John 11:25

Born again believers shall never die! Only our physical bodies may 'sleep' until the Rapture. How could we ever die if we are, even now, seated and alive with Jesus Christ? '*But God, who is rich in mercy, for his great love wherewith he loved us, ⁵ Even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ, (by grace ye are saved;)* ⁶ *And hath raised us up together, and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus: ⁷ That in the ages to come he might shew the exceeding riches of his grace in his kindness toward us through Christ Jesus.*' Eph 2:4 We are seated now, in Heavenly places with the Lord Jesus Christ. Believe it!

And, by the way: God 'quickened' us, made us to come alive spiritually, when we were still dead and completely unable to hear/see/respond: our present Eternal Life is God's Work, from beginning through forever, and He does nothing short of perfect!

Verse 38: '*And forasmuch as Lydda was nigh to Joppa, and the disciples had heard that Peter was there, they sent unto him two men, desiring him that he would not delay to come to them. ³⁹ Then Peter arose and went with them. When he was come, they brought him into the upper chamber: and all the widows stood by him weeping, and shewing the coats and garments which Dorcas made, while she was with them.*'

Dorcas is definitely dead and has been for at least a day or two.

Verse 40: '*But Peter put them all forth, and kneeled down, and prayed; and turning him to the body said, Tabitha, arise. And she opened her eyes: and when she saw Peter, she sat up. ⁴¹ And he gave her his hand, and lifted her up, and when he had called the saints and widows, presented her alive.*'

Notice Peter's humility: he sends them all out so that no one will see him simply kneel and pray for her but then laud him as the great miracle worker... so unlike so many today who work their imitation healings under lights and cameras to then bilk millions off their duped followers.

Verse 42: '*And it was known throughout all Joppa; and many believed in the Lord. ⁴³ And it came to pass, that he tarried many days in Joppa with one Simon a tanner*' Obviously, to continue preaching and teaching.

See that phrase: '*many believed in the Lord.*' This means so much more than 'believing of or about or what someone has said. first, it means 'I believe what You have said about Yourself; I believe that You are able to do what You've said You will do; I believe that You will do what You've said You will do... for me! Then, it means: 'many believed **IN** the Lord:' The instantaneous moment that God opened their eyes, hearts and minds to Himself, giving them the gifts of repentance and faith to believe... they/we were, in that split microsecond, **IN** the Lord Jesus Christ and He was **IN** us! They believed **IN** Him.

God's Holy Spirit is actively moving and drawing those whom God, the Father, had chosen and given to His Son; each and every one will eventually come as God, one by one, opens their eyes to the Truth of Salvation in the Lord Jesus Christ. God is causing miraculous signs to confirm the Truth which His Apostles and disciples

are preaching; consequently, during this time, the True Church is growing by leaps and bounds until it will become established in all the known World. When, however, the Letters from Paul, Peter, John, James, Jude and the Gospels become hard copies of God's Word, God's use of miraculous signs will begin to cease; then, the True Church's growth will become more slow and steady but still resulting in every person, for the next 2000 years, whom God did choose from the foundation of the World, coming to Him by faith with their Salvation being kept sure and secure by God's Own power and faithfulness.

Acts 10:1: *'There was a certain man in Caesarea called Cornelius, a centurion of the band called the Italian band, ²A devout man, and one that feared God with all his house, which gave much alms to the people, and prayed to God alway.'*

Cornelius is a Roman officer, a commander of 100 soldiers. His band would have been tasked with keeping the peace in Caesarea on the Mediterranean coast. He may have been told about the God of Israel in Whom he believed. He was faithful and generous. He was also a Gentile! So far, all the Christians had been Jews which is why Peter believed that Christianity was the culmination of Judaism and not, necessarily a whole new thing which would, eventually, be comprised mostly of Gentiles from all around the World.

Verse 3: *'He saw in a vision evidently about the ninth hour of the day an angel of God coming in to him, and saying unto him, Cornelius. ⁴And when he looked on him, he was afraid, and said, What is it, Lord? And he said unto him, Thy prayers and thine alms are come up for a memorial before God. ⁵And now send men to Joppa, and call for one Simon, whose surname is Peter: ⁶He lodgeth with one Simon a tanner, whose house is by the sea side: he shall tell thee what thou oughtest to do.'*

Once more we see that God is the One Who condescends to reach down to His chosen man. This is the reason God moved Peter to stay with Simon the tanner, in Joppa, about 35 miles south of Caesarea. Joppa, Jaffa today, is part of modern Tel Aviv.

Cornelius is the perfect example for the answer to the question: 'What about all those who've never heard the Gospel?' Cornelius was a Roman and not from some outlying conquered country; we're told he was from the Italian band: so, relatively close to Rome, the city, the capitol; Peter calls Rome: Babylon! It was an evil, pagan city and empire. Cornelius would likely have been a Roman citizen, as was Paul, and he would have had to swear complete allegiance to Caesar who was worshipped as a god in order to achieve his high office. (like modern communists being required to be party members to have good jobs and living spaces.)

But Cornelius was *'... a devout man who feared God with all his house.'*

Very possibly, this was a man, living in an evil, pagan place, who recognized, first in Creation, the reality of a True and Almighty God, over all, and he chose to fear, worship and pray to that God. First, we must understand that God had chosen Cornelius for Himself, from the foundation of the World; He had given Cornelius the same light that He gives to all men, everywhere, for which all men are responsible:

'In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. ²The same was in the beginning with God. ³All things were made by him; and without him was not any thing made that was made.

***⁴In him was life; and the life was the light of men. ⁵And the light shineth in darkness; and the darkness comprehended it not... That was the true Light, which lighteth every man that cometh into the world.'** Jn 1:1*

Cornelius recognized that Light and responded by coming toward that Light. (see John 6 above, page 1 top)

But, again, first, Cornelius had been chosen by God, for Himself, as part of the Bride for His Son and, so, God, Himself, opened Cornelius' eyes and heart to the Truth after Cornelius was faithful to respond to the amount of Light which God had given him. The same is true for every person from every tribe and tongue: those whom God has chosen, He gives light of understanding and will, in His Own time and way, bring the Gospel to that man. And, remember that now, during the time of the Church, God is giving dreams and visions in many places to accomplish His purpose:

'And it shall come to pass in the last days, saith God, I will pour out of my Spirit upon all flesh: and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, and your young men shall see visions, and your old men shall dream dreams:' Acts 2:17

