

Acts to Revelation
The Word of the First Christians

Session 3 – The Gospel Spreads to the Gentiles

Session Summary – Tonight we travel to a number of sites outside of Jerusalem to share the accounts of the Gospel being preached in Samaria, Judea, and beyond. We follow Philip to the Samaritan city of Sabaste, where he confronted a sorcerer, and the Roman Road to Gaza, where he baptized an Ethiopian court official. We then travel with Peter through the Judean town of Lydda, where he healed Aeneas, and the port city of Joppa, where he healed Tabitha and lived with a tanner named Simon. We end our journey in Caesarea, where Peter shared the Gospel with a Roman centurion named Cornelius.

Peter said to Cornelius, *“I know realize how true it is that God does not show favoritism, but accepts from every nation the one who fears him and does what is right”* – Acts 10:34-35

Joppa is a port city with over 7,000 years of recorded history. It is known as one of the oldest functioning harbors in the world. This is the port where huge cedar trees were floated from Phoenicia to be used for the construction of Solomon’s Temple in Jerusalem. This is also the harbor where a famous prophet named Jonah caught a ship to Tarshish – a journey cut short by a three-day stay in the belly of a huge fish. Today, Joppa is known as Jaffa, a suburb on the south end of Tel Aviv with a population of about 60,000. Jaffa is still a port for small fishing boats, but it is now known for its restaurants, shops, and tourist attractions along its shoreline.

Scripture Reading: Acts 8-11

Discussion Questions:

1. Where was Samaria and who were the Samaritans?
2. Who was the deacon that first preached in Samaria?
3. How long was an ancient Roman mile? Is it longer or shorter than today’s American mile?
4. What was the name of the man that Peter healed in Lydda? What was the name of the woman that Peter raised from the dead in Joppa?
5. What was special about Peter preaching the Gospel to Cornelius and his household in Caesarea?

Scripture Reading for next week: Acts 9-12