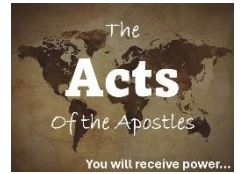




The Resurrection of Tabitha!
Acts 9:31-43
(Lesson #15)



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<https://truth-seekers.net>*

Before we get to our lesson text, I want us to look at something that has been and will continue to develop.

I was hoping to get it when we were in Acts 8, but we did not have time. I then was hoping to get in Acts 9, but we did not have time.

Before we advance any further, I want us to take in, almost as a survey, some of the salvation experiences we have seen so far and a couple that are coming up.

I want us to look at Spirit Baptism, and I want us to see when groups of people spoke in tongues as part of that experience (salvation) and when it seems they did not.

I believe in looking at this holistically it will bring into sharp focus some key points to make sense of all that we are seeing.

Let's look at the salvation experiences recorded here in Acts. **Please turn to the last page.**

BACK TO OUR STUDY: Over the last few weeks we have seen the amazing story of Stephen, that preaching deacon and the first recorded martyr of the infant church.

We then saw that amazing preaching Deacon Philip and how the God used him mightily.

Then last week we saw the conversion of Saul, we saw how he left Damascus and went to Arabia, then came back from Arabia and spoke boldly in Damascus, so much so that when they could not overthrow his biblical wisdom and logic, they plotted to kill him.

Today, Luke picks back up the story with Peter and what is happening with him.

OUTLINE of Acts Chapter 9:1-31

- 1) Having completed the discussion of Saul's conversion and his flight from Jerusalem back to Tarsus, Luke shifts back to some key events in the ministry of Peter.
- 2) As Peter is traveling around he goes to visit the saints in Lydda (9:32).
- 3) In Lydda he runs into a man who has been paralyzed and bedridden for eight years (9:33).
- 4) Peter heals the man in the name of Jesus Christ (9:34).
- 5) This miracle created quite a stir in Lydda and Luke tells us "all the residents of Lydda and Sharon... turned to the Lord" (9:35).
- 6) In a neighboring town named Joppa there was a disciple named Tabitha who was full of good works and acts of charity, she got sick and passed away (9:36-37).
- 7) The disciples in Joppa sent to Lydda and asked Peter to come quickly to Joppa (9:38).
- 8) Peter arose immediately and went to Joppa (9:39a).
- 9) Upon his arrival he was escorted to the upper room where Tabitha was and many widows were mourning and showed Peter things she had made for them (9:39b).
- 10) Peter put everyone outside (9:40a).
- 11) Next he prayed and then commanded Tabitha to arise (9:40b).
- 12) Calling the saints and the widows back into the room, Peter presented Tabitha alive (9:41).
- 13) Word spread quickly about this miracle and many believed in Jesus (9:42).
- 14) Peter stayed in Joppa, with a man named Simon, who was a tanner (9:43).

31 So the church throughout all Judea and Galilee and Samaria had peace and was being built up. And walking in the fear of the Lord and in the comfort of the Holy Spirit, it multiplied. 32 ¶ Now as Peter went here and there among them all, he came down also to the saints who lived at Lydda. 33 There he found a man named Aeneas, bedridden for eight years, who was paralyzed. 34 And Peter said to him, "Aeneas, Jesus Christ heals you; rise and make your bed." And immediately he rose. 35 And all the residents of Lydda and Sharon saw him, and they turned to the Lord.

Vs 31 - So the disbursed church, throughout Judea, Galilee, and Samaria had peace and was being built-up in the word.

The persecution that seemed to be at least encouraged by Saul, was calming down a bit and the church, once centralized in Jerusalem is now spread across Israel and is being strengthened and built up in the Word.

The church was **walking in the fear of the Lord**.

The church was walking in the **comfort of the Holy Spirit**, and it was multiplying.

God has brought a time of peace, comfort, and multiplication.

This is yet another progress report from Luke to Theopolis. **What would Theopolis make of all of this?**

Vs 32 - Peter is going here and there and we do not know exactly where here and there was, but it seems he was traveling all over Israel, among the brethren. We suspect he is strengthening the believers and he is teaching about the Messiah.

It is clear that the ministry of the apostles is now happening outside Jerusalem. Up until this point the only one we were told that ministered outside Jerusalem was Peter and John when they went to Samaria.

Here we see Peter is carrying out the office of an apostle, outside Jerusalem.

In his travels, sharing Jesus, encouraging believers, he comes down to the saints who live in Lydda.

This is near the modern-day city of Lod.

Lydda is about 25 miles Northwest of Jerusalem.

By the time Peter goes to Lydda, there were already **saints** living there, again we have talked about this last week. The gospel is multiplying in Israel and leaking out in the Roman empire.

This was the same general area where Phillip ministered

Vs 33 - Upon his arrival in Lydda he runs into a man named Aeneas.

Scholars disagree if Aeneas was saved at this point or not.

For those who believe he was not saved, they would say, Luke has labored to tell us about disciples and saints.

Luke introduced Ananias as a “disciple at Damascus” (Acts 9:10).

In a moment Luke will introduce Tabitha as a “disciple” in Joppa (Acts 9:36).

Luke calls Aeneas “**a man.**” The Greek it is **τις (tis) ἄνθρωπος (anthropos), a certain man.**

This man had been bedridden for eight years, something had happened that caused him to be paralyzed.

We are not given details and this man is only mentioned twice in the Bible, both times right here in Acts chapter 9.

But Peter comes in contact with Aeneas, a man who had been paralyzed and thus bedridden for eight years.

We do not know what caused the paralysis, only that he is paralyzed!

Vs 34 - Peter looked at Aeneas and said to him, **Jesus Christ heals you!**

The Greek word is **ἰάομαι (iaomai)**. It means to heal, to cure, or to make whole.

Jesus, who is the Messiah, heals you!

Rise and make your bed. Rise and fold up your bed.

This seems similar to what Jesus said when he healed the paralytic in Mar 2:

10 But that you may know that the Son of Man has authority on earth to forgive sins”—he said to the paralytic— 11 “I say to you, rise, pick up your bed, and go home.” 12 And he rose and immediately picked up his bed and went out before them all, so that they were all amazed and glorified God, saying, “We never saw anything like this!” (Mar 2:10-12, ESV).

Immediately, the guy who had been paralyzed rose up.

This was not a progressive healing, this was a miraculous, instantaneous, and total healing of Aeneas!

Again, we see the **apostles** and their **immediate associates** are connected with **amazing and incredible miracles**.

Again, this is not a **hangnail** or a **headache**. This is a man who has been paralyzed for 8 years, who is immediately restored, his muscles are immediately restored, the atrophy that would have occurred over these eight years is **instantly reversed!**

This is just another one in a **long string of miracles that God is doing during this very amazing and incredible time!**

Here a man who had been bedridden for years is instantly healed and commanded by Peter on behalf of Jesus Christ to rise and collect his bed.

Vs 35 - As we have seen on multiple occasions, God is using these **miracles** to **validate the message of the messengers**.

God is declaring the message of Jesus and He is accompanying it with amazing signs and miracles.

Notice Luke’s careful account, in this case, we are told **“all the residents of Lydda and Sharon”** saw the paralytic, now able to walk, no doubt were amazed by the miracle, seized on the message and turned to the Lord.

We have every reason to believe that this is still on Israelites, still only Jews, for the gospel has not yet gone to the Gentiles.

One of the big questions. Was Aeneas saved. We do not know for sure, here is what we do know from the text:

- 1) He is not called a disciple, brother, or saint when Peter runs into him, instead a certain man.
- 2) There is no record of him making a profession of faith. So, if he did become saved, Luke chooses not to record it.

This is yet another progress report. Many, maybe most, Luke says **all** the residents of Lydda and Sharon (this is the plain of Sharon) turned to the Lord.

This is the gospel as it goes forth in the early days of the church.

Can you imagine being there?

36 ¶ Now there was in Joppa a disciple named Tabitha, which, translated, means Dorcas. She was full of good works and acts of charity. **37** In those days she became ill and died, and when they had washed her, they laid her in an upper room. **38** Since Lydda was near Joppa, the disciples, hearing that Peter was there, sent two men to him, urging him, "Please come to us without delay." **39** So Peter rose and went with them. And when he arrived, they took him to the upper room. All the widows stood beside him weeping and showing tunics and other garments that Dorcas made while she was with them.

Vs 36 - Luke, now almost awkwardly breaks from a discussion of what is happening in Lydda, to something happening in Joppa.

He starts his account of this amazing event, by introducing us to a **"disciple"** there is that term again, a pupil, a learner, a believer.

There was in Joppa, a disciple named Tabitha. **Tabitha is Aramaic** and means a female gazelle or deer, her name **translated into Greek was Dorcas**.

This Tabitha (Dorcus), Luke tells us was full of good works and full of charity.

Full - πλήρης (pleres) – filled to the top, to the brim. She was full of two things.

- 1) **Full of good works** – These are good deeds that she did. The verb tense is imperfect implying she was doing these good deeds over and over again (habitually).
- 2) **Full of charity** – she was full of donations to the poor, of almsgiving.

Joppa is about 10 miles northwest from Lydda and it is located on the coast of the Mediterranean Sea.

Vs 37 - Continuing on with the story, in those days, the days when Peter was in Lydda. Tabitha became sick and she died. They washed her and laid her in an upper room.

Dr. Fruchtenbaum writes in his commentary: "After they washed her body, which was a common Jewish practice, they laid her in an upper chamber. By Jewish law, a body in Jerusalem had to be buried by sundown, but outside Jerusalem, a body was permitted to remain unburied for three days and three nights."

Now at this point you should be wondering, OK, but why would they do this. Although we can speculate, it is impossible to be sure why they did this.

Vs 38 - Lydda was indeed close to Joppa. The disciples in Joppa heard that Peter was in Lydda.

This seems to be what caused them to place Tabitha in an upper chamber. I appears they had something in mind and it involved the apostle Peter.

They heard that Peter was in Lydda, so they sent men to Peter in Lydda and **urged him (beseeched, admonished, exhorted, pleaded with urgently)** to please come to them in Joppa without delay.

Peter come quickly, Peter come without delay! This is urgent!

Vs 39 - Peter has no idea why they need him right now. There is no indication that he knows what has happened, or that they have communicated any expectation to him.

He only understands, it seems that two men have come, and they are pleading with him to come to Joppa about 10 miles to the northwest. So, Peter arises and goes with them.

He gets to Joppa, and they immediately escort him to the upper room. The upper room where Tabitha is lying.

In that upper room Peter also find widows, weeping and crying over the loss of Tabitha.

You can imagine this is a heart wrenching moment. These are widows, some of the most vulnerable of that ancient society, and they have lost the woman who loved them, the woman who aided and assisted in taking care of them.

The widows begin to show Peter the items that Tabitha had made for them. The tunics and the outer garments that she made while she was with them.

Even now, it is unclear what they expected Peter to do. It could be they sent for Peter to comfort these widows, or to speak a word of encouragement. We do not know.

But look at what Peter does next.

40 But Peter put them all outside, and knelt down and prayed; and turning to the body he said, "Tabitha, arise." And she opened her eyes, and when she saw Peter she sat up. 41 And he gave her his hand and raised her up. Then calling the saints and widows, he presented her alive. 42 And it became known throughout all Joppa, and many believed in the Lord. 43 And he stayed in Joppa for many days with one Simon, a tanner.

Vs 40 - Then Peter does something that seems a little surprising, at least at first. He puts all these mourning widows out of the room.

I am sure he does so in a very kind and pleasant manner, but he asks them all to step outside and to leave only himself and the body of Tabitha alone in the room. This is what Jesus did in Mark 5:

"While he was still speaking, there came from the ruler's house some who said, "Your daughter is dead. Why trouble the Teacher any further?" But overhearing what they said, Jesus said to the ruler of the synagogue, "Do not fear, only believe." And he allowed no one to follow him except Peter and James and John the brother of James. They came to the house of the ruler of the synagogue, and Jesus saw a commotion, people weeping and wailing loudly. And when he had entered, he said to them, "Why are you making a commotion and weeping? The child is not dead but sleeping." And they laughed at him. But he put them all outside and took the child's father and mother and those who were with him and went in where the child was." (Mr 5:35-40 ESV)

Peter, who was there, that day when Jesus raised Jairus' daughter from the dead, did something similar to what Jesus did. He put them out.

Then Peter knelt down next to Tabitha, and he prayed. Although he is next to Tabitha, as you will see in a moment, it appears that he does not face Tabitha when he kneels, for he is not going to be talking to Tabitha's body, but to Jesus.

We do not know **how long he prayed**; we **do not know what he prayed**.

But we know Peter prayed...

We might speculate that Peter cried out to Jesus and asked that as Jesus had raised Jairus's daughter years ago he would raise Tabitha, he likely reminded the Lord how much she was loved and needed in this community. We do not know.

Peter prayed. It then seems in the stillness of the moment the Lord conveyed to Peter that He would do what Peter had asked, for and we read:

Peter turns himself towards the body of Tabitha and says simply: **Tabitha arise! If in Aramaic: *tab-ee-thah' cumi***

This too reminds us of what Jesus said to Jairus' daughter in Mark 5: *"Taking her by the hand he (Jesus) said to her, "Talitha cumi," which means, "Little girl, I say to you, arise.""* (Mr 5:41 ESV)

And she opened her eyes, she saw Peter and she sat up! **Can you imagine this?**

This is the power to heal that existed in the days of the Messiah, the apostles, and their immediate associates.

These are the types of miracles that the world was seeing that were meant to validate the messenger thus validate the message.

He told her to arise, she opened her eyes!

SO YOU KNOW: This is the first time it is recorded that one of the apostles raised someone from the dead. So, it was not like anyone would be expecting this type of miracle.

SO YOU KNOW: There is one other example in the book of Acts of an apostle raising someone from the dead, it is in Acts 20, and in that case it is the apostle Paul.

Pausing Here For A Moment! These miracles of raising the dead were only temporal for the day came when Lazarus died again physically, the day came when the woman from Nain's son died again physically, the day came when Jairus' daughter died again physically, and yes the day came when Tabitha died again physically.

But they remind us of three important points. First, life and how long we live physically, is in the hands and sovereign control of our God.

Second, the day is coming, when even death will be no more. We might say the day is coming for believers when death will die.

"Behold! I tell you a mystery. We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed, in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet. For the trumpet will sound, and the dead will be raised imperishable, and we shall be changed. For this perishable body must put on the imperishable, and this mortal body must put on immortality. When the perishable puts on the imperishable, and the mortal puts on immortality, then shall come to pass the saying that is written: "Death is swallowed up in victory."" (1Co 15:51-54 ESV)

There is coming a day, when each of us will receive a new and resurrected body, one that does not breakdown and fall apart. One, as Paul says is imperishable.

Paul said it this way to the church in Thessalonica: *"For the Lord himself will descend from heaven with a cry of command, with the voice of an archangel, and with the sound of the trumpet of God. And the dead in Christ will rise first. Then we who are alive, who are left, will be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air, and so we will always be with the Lord. Therefore encourage one another with these words."* (1Th 4:16-18 ESV)

Third, these temporal, physical resurrection miracles serve as pictures of the full and final resurrection that awaits all the believers of the Lord Jesus Christ.

The day is coming when we will hear that trumpet blast and receive our new and glorified, resurrected bodies.

This miracle should remind us of that reality! Back to our story!

Vs 41 - Then Peter gave her his hand and he raised her up.

He then called the saints and the widows to come upstairs and he presented Tabitha to them. Tabitha alive from the dead. Tabitha, like Jairus' daughter (Mark 5), like Lazarus (John 11), and like the woman's son from Nain (Luk 7) dead, **but now once again alive!**

Can I say it again, these are miracles beyond our wildest comprehension of a miracle.

Vs 42 - As you might imagine, word of Peter raising Tabitha from the dead spread like wildfire throughout the city of Joppa and **many believed**.

Again, God is validating the messenger with mighty miracles so that the message that the messenger is proclaiming is validated.

People have to push against their own conscience, they have to reject the obvious, they have to argue against science and the supernatural to remain unbelievers. That is how merciful our God is.

Vs 43 - And Peter stayed in Joppa for many days with Simon who was a tanner, meaning he tanned animal hides.

This is an indefinite period of time, but it is likely longer than a few days, for it is as Luke records, many days.

It seems weird, why is this even mentioned. Why is Simon the tanner even in the text. Three quick observations:

- 1) Peter is going to stay with Simon for some time, in Acts chapter 10, Cornelius, a Roman Centurian, a Gentile will be directed to send me to Joppa and fetch Peter who is lodging with one named Simon, a tanner. This connects Lukes thoughts together.
- 2) A person who tans hides, who works with dead animals is perpetually unclean. This comes from Lev 11: *"And if any animal which you may eat dies, whoever touches its carcass shall be unclean until the evening, and whoever eats of its carcass shall wash his clothes and be unclean until the evening. And whoever carries the carcass shall wash his clothes and be unclean until the evening."* (Le 11:39-40 ESV)

David Guzek in his commentary wrote: *"According to the laws of that time, a tanner had to live at least 75 feet (25 meters) outside a village because of his constant ritual uncleanness."*

- 3) The fact that Peter, a devout Jew, would stay with a tanner for any period of time seems to point to him already starting to at least in some small way abandon, some of the Jewish rules that he had followed his whole life.

This point will really be tested in Acts chapter 10 as God saves Cornelius' entire household.

Repentance, Faith, and Spirit Baptism in Acts (An Overview)

Acts 2 The 12 and/or 120	Acts 2 Jews	Acts 8 Samaritans	Acts 9 Paul's Salvation	Acts 10 Gentiles	Acts 19 Disciples of John
They were already believers following Jesus.	Repentance (vs 38)	Faith (vs 5-6)	At some point faith (vs 6-17)	Faith while Peter is preaching (vs 44)	Faith (vs 4-5) John's message – "believe in the one who was to come"
As best we understand they had all been baptized in water.	Spirit Baptism (vs 38) "repent and you will receive λαμβάνω (lambano) the gift of the Holy Spirit"	Water baptism (vs 12)	(vs 17) When Ananias laid his hands on Saul he said: "... be filled with the Holy Spirit." This is interesting for it is not "receive" but πλήθω (pletho).	Spirit Baptism (vs 44-46) "while Peter is preaching the Holy Spirit fell..." "they were hearing them speak in tongues"	Rebaptized in water (vs 5) "on hearing this they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus"
On the evening of resurrection morning, we read this about the 12 (Joh 20): "22 And when he (Jesus) had said this, he breathed on them and said to them, Receive λαμβάνω (lambano) the Holy Spirit."	Water baptism (Vs 41) "those who received the word were baptized"	Apostles sent from Jerusalem to Samaria (vs 14-15) "prayed that they might receive λαμβάνω (lambano) the Holy Spirit"	Water baptism (vs 18)	(Vs 45) "And the believers from among the circumcised who had come with Peter were amazed, because the gift of the Holy Spirit was poured out even on the Gentiles."	(vs 6) "And when Paul had laid his hands on them, the Holy Spirit came ἔρχομαι (erchomai) on them, and..."
		Peter and John laid their hand on them (vs 15-17)		Water baptism (vs 47-48)	Spirit Baptism (vs 6) "they begin speaking in tongues..."
In (vs 2) "And they were all filled πληρόω (pleroo) with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other tongues as the Spirit gave them utterance."		And they received Spirit Baptism (vs 17) "... they received λαμβάνω (lambano) the Holy Spirit"			
The 12 or the 120 spoke in tongues when the Spirit fell.	** No mention of any of the 3,000 speaking in tongues. **	Although tongues are not mentioned most scholars believe, by implication, that is the gift that Simon tried to purchase.	** No mention that Paul spoke in tongues at his conversion.**	These Gentiles, we would assume, were saved as Peter preached, and they spoke in tongues.	These Jews, who were baptized by John, had not heard of Jesus, placed faith in him, received the spirit, and spoke in tongues.