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NEW ZEALAND BIBLE CLASSES

PREACHING THE RISEN CHRIST

Speaker: Bro. Roger Lewis

Study #6: Peter, Aeneas and Tabitha

Reading: Acts 9:32 to 43

Thank you brother chairman, and my dear brethren and sisters in the Lord Jesus Christ and my dear young people.

Well, this evening we come to the last few verses of Acts 9 as we've had them read, from verse 32 to the end of the chapter, and you'll remember in our last session, we looked at that story, did we not? of the apostle Paul as he went down, we believe, into the area of Sinai, that there he might prepare himself for the great work of preaching that was to lie upon him, in taking the truth of Christ to the Gentiles. We'll remember we looked at that principle of **the need for preparation** so that we can fulfil whatever work it is that God might call us to. Even these great men, such as Moses and Elijah and Paul had this moment of withdrawal, this time of preparation before they embarked upon the greatness of their labours. Remember, we looked at the fact that if that was true for them, that it should be true for us also, shouldn't it? that the great things of the truth will only be accomplished when great preparation has first been made. We noted particularly, that this was an exhortation perhaps for young people, that now is the time to get our heads into the Word; now is the time to take in those spiritual principles that will help guide our lives. Now is the time to develop those spiritual characteristics that will cause us to be fruitful in the service of God.

So in Acts 9 verse 31, just taking up the close of the record from our last study, we're told this, that Paul having been sent forth by the brethren to Tarsus, it says in verse 31, 'then had the ecclesias (and I've read that properly) then had the ecclesias rest throughout all Judea and Galilee and Samaria and were edified; and walking in the fear of the Lord, and in the comfort of the Holy Spirit, were multiplied'. So we notice that now that the great persecutor of the ecclesias has been transformed into a believer, that the ecclesia itself has rest. One of the greatest reasons that the ecclesia had rest at this time, was because the work of the persecutor had come to an end. With the conversion of Saul, sent forth to the brethren at Tarsus, there was a time of relative peace, where the ecclesias throughout all this area, the truth has gone to Judea and to Galilee, and to Samaria, and now they had a time for edification and for growth and for multiplication.

Verse 32 says, taking up the record for tonight, 'It came to pass, as Peter passed

throughout all quarters, he came down also to the saints which dwelt at Lydda'. Actually, you'll notice that the word 'quarters' in verse 32 is in italics, which means, of course, that it's not really there in the original. We could probably interpolate a number of other words, maybe the word 'ecclesia' as Peter passed throughout all ecclesias, as Peter passed throughout all the brethren, because the word 'quarters' is simply being added here at the whim of the translators. The fact is that Peter was busy here, not passing through all geographical regions but in particular, he was fulfilling, we believe, the work that was given to him by the Lord Jesus Christ.

Now hold your hand in Acts 9 and come back to these two references in the gospel records, because do you remember this in Luke 22 when it says, 'that Peter was passing throughout all quarters'? we believe what he was really doing was passing amongst all the ecclesias, and through all the brethren of those areas and he was doing that, we believe, in fulfilment of the Lord's command to him; because in Luke 22 we're told at the time of the last supper in verse 31 it says, 'And the Lord said, Simon, Simon, behold, Satan hath desired to have you that he may sift you as wheat. But I have prayed for thee, that thy faith fail not; and when thou art converted, strengthen thy brethren'. Now there was the instruction of the Lord Himself to Peter once he reached spiritual maturity, 'when thou art converted, Peter, **strengthen** thy brethren'. Again, if we come to the gospel of John 21 and you'll remember these famous words, at the time of the gathering on the shore, that they might partake of bread and fish with the resurrected Christ. We're told in verse 15 of John 21, 'When they had dined, Jesus said to Simon Peter, Simon, son of Jonah, lovest thou Me more than these? and he said, Yea, Lord; Thou knowest that I love Thee. Jesus said unto him, Feed my lambs. He saith unto him the second time, Simon, son of Jonah, lovest thou Me? He said unto Him, Yea, Lord; thou knowest that I love thee. He saith unto him, Feed my sheep. He saith unto him the third time, Simon, son of Jonah, lovest thou Me? Peter was grieved because He said unto him the third time, Lovest thou Me? And he said unto Him, Lord, Thou knowest all things; Thou knowest that I love Thee. Jesus saith unto him, Feed my sheep'. Now those words in John 21 verses 15 to 17 are the equivalent of that phrase in Luke 22, 'when thou art converted, **strengthen thy brethren**', and that's exactly what we find Peter doing on the occasion of Acts 9 verse 32, 'In came to pass, **as Peter passed throughout all quarters**', what was he doing? he was strengthening the brethren, he was moving through that region feeding the lambs, pasturing the sheep, developing the ecclesia. So he was fulfilling the very charge that Christ had given to him; here was a man now mature in the truth, who had truly become the shepherd of the flock.

Verse 32 also tells us that on his journeys in this region, he came down to the saints which dwelt at Lydda. Now Lydda is actually down from Jerusalem because it's physically down on to the maritime plain; one comes off the Judean plateau and down onto the coastal plain, as one moves towards Lydda; it's moving towards the coast and geographically it was a descent down off the mountains. It's known as Lod in Old Testament times, in Nehemiah 11 verse 35, tells us that when the Jews came back from captivity that those of Benjamin settled in this area and that Lod was one of their

cities. So it's into this area now that he comes, it's about 40 kilometres northwest of Jerusalem but down on the coastal plain, and he came to the **saints**. 'He came to the saints that dwelt at Lydda and there he found a certain man named Aeneas, which had kept his bed 8 years and was sick of the palsy', and what we're going to be told in Acts 9 here is that there are going to be 2 remarkable miracles performed by Peter as he moves amongst the flock strengthening the brethren on this occasion. Now here's the first of these two miracles now about to occur in verse 33, and it's going to happen with a certain man named Aeneas (132). His name is a Greek name very well known and probably related to the idea of 'praise', and the implication is that he was a Greek person; and being a Greek person he was a Gentile; and I think that's important because I think the focus of these two miracles is going to be on the power of healing extended to the Gentiles. It's going to flow forth from the hands of Peter, because Peter was going to be 'he who would take the hope of the truth to the Gentiles in the first instance'. Paul might be the champion of the truth to the Gentiles ultimately, but we've already been told that Peter would carry the first responsibility to open the door of faith to the Gentiles in this way.

Well, he comes down there and there's a certain man there, this Greek man, Aeneas, but he's got a problem; it says 'he kept his bed 8 years'. He kept his bed, he was sick of the palsy and Rotherham translates that phrase in verse 33, it says, 'he had been lying prostrate upon a bed for he was paralysed; that's what the idea of the palsy was. When it says he 'kept his bed', he was lying prostrate upon a bed for he was paralysed, and the affliction of the palsy was a disease of the brain, but that disease of the brain affected the entire nervous system so that the body was paralysed. He was lying on his bed because he could do nothing else, b&s and young people, he was absolutely stricken with a crippling illness that rendered him powerless to move. How long had he been in this condition? why, 8 years; now that's interesting because 8 years, the suggested time for the conversion of Cornelius in Acts 10 is normally about AD 37, and depending on how we take or reckon the 8 years, the 8 years would take us back to the time of the death and of the resurrection of Christ, and the establishment of the ecclesia. For all that time that the ecclesia had been in existence, this man has been powerless on his bed. He's a Gentile, you see, he's outside the hope of the ecclesia. For the 8 years that the bride of Christ has been in existence, as it were, he had no part of these things! It's very similar to another miracle of a little girl, who was 12 years old, but was out of the synagogue by virtue of her age, she was not yet joined to the synagogues's system; well, this man has been on his bed for 8 years in this paralysed condition.

Verse 34 says that, 'Peter said unto him, Aeneas, Jesus Christ maketh thee whole: arise, and make thy bed. And he arose immediately'. **Jesus Christ maketh thee whole**, now of course, that's very typical, isn't it? of a number of the miracles that we're going to find in the Acts of the apostles. Do you remember on another occasion, Peter was to say, 'Silver and gold have I none, but such as I have, I give thee in the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, rise up and walk'? So when he says this in verse 34, this is really the **risen Christ**, isn't it? that he's preaching. In the name of this One who is

risen, I make thee whole! this is not my power, says Peter, but this is the power of Christ to heal, it's the power of the risen Christ. If there were those that doubted that the apostles in this dispensation of the Acts, would bring forward with them the power that was wielded by their Master, well, this miracle would prove it, wouldn't it? Would the apostles wield the same power as their Master? well, in the name of Jesus Christ I make thee whole, arise, and make thy bed, and he arose immediately'.

And verse 35 says, 'All that dwelt at Lydda and Saron saw him, and turned to the Lord'. Now in the Greek in verse 35, the definite article is there in front of the word 'Saron', so how it should be rendered is, 'And all that dwelt at Lydda and **the** Saron saw him, and turned to the Lord'. Now you'll know that Saron was a whole section of the fertile plain down on the coast. It ran all the way up to Mount Carmel, the whole region of the coastal plain from Mount Carmel sweeping down passed Joppa, was known as the region of 'the Saron', and it's this region now that are so amazed by the miracle of the healing of Aeneas, that not only did they see the miracle, verse 35, 'but they turned to the Lord'.

Now it's interesting, and if you hold your hands again in Acts 9, and come back just for a moment to Isaiah 35, well, here's an Old Testament prophecy that beautifully fits the story of the healing of Aeneas, 'I say unto thee, arise, make thy bed and he arose immediately and the Saron saw him and turned to the Lord'. Isaiah 35 had said this in verse 1, 'The wilderness and the solitary place shall be glad for them; and the desert shall rejoice, and blossom as the rose. It shall blossom abundantly, and rejoice even with joy and singing: the glory of Lebanon shall be given unto it, the excellency of Carmel and Sharon, they shall see the glory of the LORD, and the excellency of our God. Strengthen ye the weak hands, and confirm the feeble knees'. Verse 6, 'Then shall the lame man leap as a hart', and so those of Sharon were truly to see the glory of Yahweh and that this man's weak hands and feeble knees were strengthened so that he was able to arise off his bed and in the miracle of the healing of this man, there's was great conversion to the truth, by the mighty power that flowed forth from Peter on this occasion, and the excellency of God was indeed to be seen in this place.

Now verse 36 tells us, 'Now there was at Joppa a certain disciple named Tabitha, which by interpretation is called Dorcas'. Now where was Joppa compared to Lydda? and the answer is well, Joppa was out on the coast Joppa is almost in a line running from Jerusalem down on to the coastal plain to Lydda; if you keep that line you'd virtually come straight across to Joppa on the coast. Well, 'there was a certain disciple there named Tabitha, which by interpretation is called Dorcas. This woman was full of good works and alms-deeds, which she did. 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; and forasmuch as Lydda was nigh to Joppa, and the disciples had heard that Peter was there. They sent onto him 2 men desiring him that he would not delay to come to them'. So when it says that '**they heard that Peter was there**', obviously in verse 38, no doubt they had heard that Peter was at Lydda, but that a great miracle had been performed whereby the man sick of the palsy had been wondrously made whole by the power of

the disciple.

So Dorcas has got two names: Tabitha and Dorcas. Tabitha (5000) is Aramaic and Dorcas is Greek but they both mean the same thing and the margin is quite correct, it means 'a doe or a roe or a gazelle' (1393), which is probably the word that we would more commonly use, and she was a woman of good works, says verse 36. 'But 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'. I wonder why they did that? Well, I wonder if they went back in mind, to the Old

Testament, because do you know, that in the Old Testament record there are two examples of dead bodies laid in upper rooms, that were miraculously raised. Now do you remember those? let's go and have a look at them, in 1 Kings 17, 'they washed her body and they laid her in an upper chamber', says the record. That's interesting, because you see, in 1 Kings 17, we're told reading from verse 17, 'It came to pass after these things, that the son of the woman, the mistress of the house, fell sick and his sickness was so sore, that there was no breath left in him. And she said unto Elijah, what have I to do with thee, O thou man of God, art thou come unto me to call my sin to remembrance and to slay my son. He said unto her, give me thy son; and he took him out of her bosom and carried him off into a loft where he abode. He laid him on his own bed; and he cried unto Yahweh and said, 'O Yahweh, my God, hast thou also brought evil upon the widow with whom I sojourn, by slaying her son? and he stretched himself upon the child 3 times and cried unto Yahweh and said, O Yahweh my God, I pray Thee, let this child's soul come into him again. And Yahweh heard the voice of Elijah and the soul of the child came into him again, and revived and he took the child, and brought him down out of the chamber into the house, and delivered him unto his mother'. Actually, it's funny how when you read records, things sort of strike you; how old do you think the widow woman of Zarephath? and the answer is, maybe not as old as we thought because her son was as yet small enough, verse 19, for her to clasp in her bosom, and for Elijah to carry him up into the loft. She may have been only a young lady of 20 or 30 when this child died. The little boy is taken up into the upper chamber and miraculously revived by **the prayer** of Elijah.

Now in 2 Kings 4, you'll remember that strangely enough there is another remarkably similar episode, but this time, concerning the story of Elisha, because we're told there, and reading from verse 32 of 2 Kings 4, 'And when Elisha was come into the house, behold the child was dead and laid upon his bed. He went in therefore and shut the door upon them twain and prayed unto Yahweh. He went up and laid upon the child and put his eyes upon his and his mouth upon his mouth, and his eyes upon his eyes, and his hands upon his hands, and he stretched himself upon the child, and the flesh of the child waxed warm, and he returned and walked into the house, to and fro, and **went up and stretched himself upon him**, the child sneezed 7 times; the child opened his eyes and he called Gehazi and said, 'call the Shunammite. So he called her and when she was come in unto him, he said, 'take up thy son', and she went in and fell at his feet and bowed herself to the ground and took up her son and went out'. So here we have another occasion where we have a child here who, in fact, is taken up into an upper

chamber, and miraculously revived, this time, by the words and the care of the prophet Elisha.

So coming back to Acts 9 verse 37, you wonder you know, whether those who bathed the body, or washed the body of Dorcas, perhaps had those episodes in mind, when they laid her in the upper chamber in verse 37. But having done so, they nevertheless called for Peter that he might come from Lydda to Joppa, which was about 20 kilometres away. So verse 39 says, '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 showing the coats and garments which Dorcas made while she was with them'. Exactly, you see those words, '**coats and garments**', they're the same words in the Greek, found in the Sermon on the Mount, the discourse on the Mount, when in Matthew 5 verse 40, 'If any man will sue thee at the law, and take away thy **coat** (5509), let him have thy **cloak** (2440) also', and it's these same two words for 'coats and garments' which are being used here in verse 39, and we believe they have reference to both the inner and the outer garments that were worn, because that's the force of Matthew 5, isn't it? 'If any man asks for your outer garment, why not give him your inner robe as well! Well, here were the outer and inner robes here, which the widows were displaying as evidence of the fine workmanship and the good deeds which Dorcas had performed as a disciple in that particular place.

Verse 40 says, '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 and he gave her his hand and lifted her up and when he had called the saints and widows, presented her alive, and it was known throughout all Joppa, and many believed on the Lord. And it came to pass that he tarried many days in Joppa, with one Simon a tanner'. So there it is, we've got these 2 remarkable miracles by Peter, as he moves around as a shepherd of the flock caring for the ecclesias, for the saints, in these particular places. Now you know, one of the things that we need to understand from both the record of the gospels and the record of the Acts, is that these sorts of miracles are, in fact, extremely rare! Although there are certain famous cures of those with the palsy, in the time of Christ and here by His disciple, and on another occasion, a crippled man by the apostle Paul, there were many other sick people that were never cured in the time that Christ was alive upon the earth. For whatever ones that were healed in the ministry of Christ, there were many others that never experienced that healing power; and for the handful that ever experienced the miracle of resurrection from the dead, there were 10,000 others who went to the grave and who never had that healing power. These were unique things, these miracles when they were performed. I think sometimes, that we imagine, that because they were written up in the gospel record, that they were happening every day. They weren't, b&s, all the miracles, even those performed by Christ, were special, they were unique, they were unusual and they are there for a reason. I believe that when the record tells us, in Acts 9, when it sets forth these two miracles at the hand of Peter, that this wasn't just an ordinary everyday occurrence. The hand of providence was somehow marking out deliberately, what had gone on at this particular time, in order to teach certain

remarkable lessons. We believe that these two miracles, were in the providence of God, recorded that they might be **a witness to the truth**, the truth of the resurrected Christ, that was being taken forth by the apostles at this time.

Now we've got a white board here tonight, because there are a couple of things that we want to try and write up here, and you know how we talked about having good bible marking boxes at the bottom of our chapters; because if we can use those things at the bottom of our bibles, they are excellent places to build little charts. So what we're going to do tonight is, we're going to try and build two charts now that summarize the power and the amazing teaching of the two miracles that Peter performs here, in Acts 9. Now here's the first thing to notice: do you realize that the two miracles of Acts 9 are an **exact** and a **deliberate repetition**, of two miracles that the Lord Himself performed. And when I say deliberate, I mean deliberate in as much as they are deliberately written in Acts 9 so that they are without question, a repetition of a certain miracle or a certain 2 miracles that, in fact, the Lord Himself performed. Both these miracles have happened before! So let's have a look at the first one:

Acts

9

Mark 2

-Peter performs it on behalf of the risen Christ.	-Christ performs it.
-he kept his bed - v.33	-he's confined to his bed-v.4
-arise, make thy bed - v.34	-arise, take up thy bed -v.11
-he arose immediately - v.34	-immediately he arose - v.12
-all saw him and turned to the Lord - v.35	-witnesses were amazed which lead them to glorify God - v.12

Now hold your hand in Acts 9 and come back to Mark 2, and let's just trace those points of parallels through together and see how we go. So in Mark 2, we're told in verse 1, 'That again He entered into Capernaum after some days; and it was noised that He was in the house. And straightway many were gathered together, insomuch that there was no room to receive them, no, not so much as about the door: and He preached the Word unto them. And they come unto Him, bringing one sick of the palsy'. So here it is, the miracle of the healing of one sick of the palsy in Mark 2. Now let's see if we can find these 4 points that are displayed for us in Mark 2. Now here's the first one, verse 4 says, 'they let down the bed wherein the sick of the palsy lay; so he's confined to his bed. Then we have in verse 11, the words of Christ, 'I say unto thee, arise, and take up thy bed', so the command to arise is in verse 11. What is the response that's recorded in Mark 2 verse 12, 'and **immediately** he arose', so the record comments on the absolute immediacy, the urgency, the speed, of the response to the miracle - the man stood up straight away. And finally, what was the reaction of those who witnessed the miracle in Mark 2? verse 12 says, 'and he went forth before them all; insomuch that they were all amazed, and glorified God, saying, We never saw it on this fashion', so those who witnessed the miracle, verse 12, were amazed, but the amazement lead them to glorify God.

So hold your hand in Mark 2 and just see those similarities in Acts 9, and see how remarkably similar it is. Whereas in Mark 2 it says that he was on the bed, lying on the bed, Acts 9 says 'he kept his bed' (verse 33). Whereas in Mark 2 verse 11, the command was, 'arise, and take up thy bed', the command of Peter in Acts 9 was in verse 34, 'arise, and make thy bed'. Whereas in Mark 2 it says, 'immediately he arose', in Acts 9 verse 34 it says, 'and he arose immediately'. Whereas Mark 2 verse 12 says that 'they were all amazed and glorified God', Acts 9 says in verse 35, 'and all saw him, and turned to the Lord'. So here we have it then, verse 33 in terms of him being confined to his bed; verse 34, verse 34, and verse 35. So the miracle that occurred therefore, of this one sick of the palsy that Peter performs in Acts 9 is almost a mirror image of a miracle that Christ has already performed in Mark 2. Alright, so that's the first one!

Now let's see if we can have a look at the same thing, in the context of the second miracle.

Four points for the second miracle.

Acts 9

- Peter put them all forth of the room - v.40
- the command to 'arise' - Tabitha cumi - v.40
- v.41
- Peter gave her his hand - v.41
- it was known throughout all Joppa; and many believed in the Lord - v.42

Mark 5

- Jesus put everyone out of room - v.40
- the command to arise - Talitha cumi - v.41
- Jesus took her hand - v.41
- they were astonished with a great astonishment - v.42

But this miracle has already occurred. Christ has already performed this miracle, and He performed it in Mark 5. So let's go to Mark 5 now, and just see if we can pick up those particular points of comparison. In Mark 5 we're told this reading from verse 39, 'And when He was come in, He said unto them, why make ye this ado and weep? the damsel is not dead, but sleepeth. And they laughed Him to scorn. But when He had put them all out, He taketh the father and the mother of the damsel, and them that were with Him, and entereth in where the damsel was lying. And He took the damsel by the hand, and said unto her, Talitha (5008) cumi (2891), which is being interpreted, Damsel, (I say unto thee), arise. And straightway the damsel arose, and walked; for she was of the age of 12 years. And they were astonished with a great astonishment'. So hold your hands now in Mark and come back to Acts, and let's just see again, those points of comparison. So the first thing is that we notice that Jesus in verse 40 put everyone else out of the room; that's exactly what Peter does in Acts 9 verse 40 when it says, 'Peter put them all forth', so he did the same thing. Then comes the command to 'arise'; now what's the command in Mark 5? the command is (and I want you to listen to these words carefully, because I'm going to give it to you in the Aramaic) Talitha cumi (which is being interpreted, Damsel, I say unto thee, arise). Do you know what the command was in Acts 9 verse 40 in Aramaic? 'Tabitha cumi', which is being interpreted, Tabitha, I say unto thee, 'arise'. The words are almost identical, the one word of course, means 'damsel', the other word was the name of the woman who is being raised up; the

shout, the cry that is brought forth on these two occasions is, in fact, almost identical. We're told in verse 41 of Mark 5, 'He took the damsel by the hand', and again, in Acts 9 verse 41, it says of Peter, 'he gave her his hand'. And finally, what was the reaction of those to the miracle of Christ? well, exactly what we'd expect because in verse 42 of Mark 5 it says, 'they were astonished with a great astonishment'. Then what's the reaction of Acts 9 to the work of Peter? verse 42, 'and it was known throughout all Joppa and many believed in the Lord'. So you see how again, we have this deliberate parallel that's being drawn. Let's just put those verses down, verses 40, 41, 40, 42.

So, you see, Peter is not doing anything new, is he? or is he? and the answer is, 'oh yes, he is! because whereas the miracles of Christ in the gospel of Mark are to the Jews, we believe, that the miracles of Peter in Acts 9, are to the Gentiles; and that one of the reasons why these two miracles were selected was **to show that the great saving truth of the healing power of Messiah, which was available to the Jew first, would also now come to the Gentile.** Therefore, these 2 miracles as it were, were deliberately selected that that teaching might be brought forth. This again, was the work of the risen Christ and the miracles are performed in His name; it's really a fulfilment of these words when Christ said to His disciples this on one occasion, 'he that believeth on Me, the works that I do, shall he do also and greater works than these shall he do', John 14 verse 12. So these apostles that believed on the Lord, they went forth and the works that Christ did, they did also but it's as if God marked out, according to His providence that these things should happen at this time, that there might be an illustration of that principle, that the same truth to the Jew would now become the power of salvation to the Gentile. Because you see, on what basis was it decided that Dorcas would be raised? by the sovereign power of God, who decided that He would listen to the prayer of Elijah that the widow woman of Zarephath's child should be raised. Who decided He would listen to the prayer of Elisha that the Shunammite's son should be raised. **It was the sovereign privilege of God** as to whom might be raised or not! and on this occasion, the prayer of Peter was heard, and Tabitha lying in that upper chamber was miraculously brought back to life, and we believe for a reason that these miracles might teach marvellous lessons.

So there we are, we're half way through! Now that's an interesting box, isn't it? Now imagine if we had that box at the bottom of our bible how that helps to bring those two parables to life. If you think that's interesting; look, we're only half way there! because I think that these miracles are fantastic when you see why these two miracles in particular are chosen. Why these two miracles out of all the miracles that Christ performed, are these two in particular chosen? and I think they are chosen, b&s, to **present a fantastic parable of the work of Christ at His first and second advents.** So now let's try another box.

So here we have with the miracle of Aeneas then, the following:

The emphasis of the miracle as far as the man is concerned, **is on his absolute inability to move.** He's kept his bed, he's prostrate on a bed totally paralysed. There is nothing he can do, there's nothing he can do for himself, or of himself. So

what's the focus then of the miracle? Well, this miracle is on **the power to conquer sin and to master the weakness of the flesh**. It represents victory over the mind, and the reason for that is, if you remember what we said about palsy; that palsy was a disease of the brain, which totally paralysed the body. So the miracle is not just a miracle of the body, it's actually a miracle of the brain; it's a transformation of the mind, and the Lord showed the connection with that, because when He healed the man of the palsy in Mark 2, He said, 'which is easier to say, thy sins be forgiven thee or take up thy bed and walk?' but that thou mayest know that the Son of man hath power on earth to forgive sins, I say unto thee , arise take up thy bed'. but He linked the state of palsy to the principle of sin in the life of the individual. So this particular miracle therefore represents the victory over **the mind**, but it's the mind of the flesh, and notice what it says! It says on this occasion that Peter went down to the saints at Lydda, verse 32, but in verse 33, what is Aeneas described as? he's **not** described as a disciple, he's simply called a certain man. He's there with the saints but he's not counted or called a 'believer' at this stage, he's simply a man, and as such he represents the principle of **justification as a sinner by faith**, where the emphasis is on the complete inability of the person to save themselves. This is the first great stage of justification isn't it? where a person comes to God and says, 'there's nothing I can do, I'm a cripple, I'm paralysed, I'm struck with the disease of sin in the mind that renders me unable to accomplish anything at all. So there's simply faith in the power of healing that this man had when Peter approached.

Alright, if that's true, then let us come down through the story of Dorcas and see if we can pick up the other side then, of this particular story. So whereas with the man Aeneas, the emphasis is on his complete inability to move; **the emphasis with Dorcas is on the woman's abundance of good deeds** Verse 36, 'this woman was full of good works and alms deeds which she did'; there was no lack of movement here, no lack of activity here, in fact, there was a fullness, there was an outpouring and a overflowing of activity from this particular woman. So what's the focus then of this second miracle? Well, this miracle is on the **power to conquer death and to harness the strength of the Spirit**, and it represents victory over the body itself. Notice what she's described as! in verse 36 it says, 'There was at Joppa, (now it doesn't say 'certain woman' this time) it says 'a certain **disciple**'; so whereas in the case of Aeneas he's simply a certain man, representing the principle of justification as a **sinner by faith**, here she is a certain disciple, and do you know, that she's the **only woman** so described anywhere in the New Testament, a certain disciple, and it represents justification as a **saint by works**, which is the emphasis of what she has done in the story of this particular miracle. When will that happen? why, at the second advent of Christ.

So there's first justification as a sinner by faith which represented the victory over the mind of the flesh that we might stand upon our feet and walk; but when Christ comes the second time, there will be the victory over the body itself, when we're justified as a saint by our works that we have performed. Then, the miracle will be complete! Do you know, b&s, in those miracles, when you think about it, the whole work of Christ has been embraced Hasn't it? the whole work of Christ has been embraced in those two

records; it's a marvellous story, and we believe that miracle of salvation which had already been given to the Jews, is now through the risen Christ, made available to the Gentiles as well.

Now it's interesting you know, because you see what it says in verse 36 that this woman was full of good works and alms deeds; so what do you think the exhortation is then, of these two parables or these two miracles? Well, surely the exhortation is this, that if we have like Aeneas been given the liberty that we might now walk in the truth, but we have not yet received victory over the body itself because justification that will finally conquer death itself, has not been given to us. what's our great responsibility now? but to perform the works of Dorcas! that we might have the same hope of bodily redemption that she herself enjoyed on this occasion!

Now just stop and think about this! So when it says in verse 36, 'that this woman was full of good works and alms deed which she did', and we know, by the way, that represented the work of her hands. Now hold your hand in Acts 9 and come back to (where's the alphabet of wifely excellence?) the book of Proverbs 31 and how's the virtuous woman described, and by the way, the virtuous woman is also a type or symbol of the bride of Christ, the perfect woman, what is she described as? what is she like? Well, she embodies the very spirit of Dorcas, because it says of her in verse 13, 'She seeketh wool and flax and worketh willingly with her hands. Verse 19, 'She layeth her hands to the spindle, and her hands hold the distaff. She stretches out her hands to the poor; yea, she reaches forth her hands to the needy. She is not afraid of the snow for her household: for all her household are clothed with (and the margin says, 'double garments'). Do you know the garments that were recorded in Acts 9? Come back and have a look at this, it says in verse 39, 'When Peter was come, they brought him into the upper chamber and all the widows stood by weeping, and showing the inner and outer garments which Dorcas with her hands had made, when she stretched them forth for the needy'. So all her household were clothed with double garments and were therefore not afraid of the cold of snow. See the word '**showing**' (1925) in verse 39, that word in the Greek is used in the middle voice (now I don't know much about Greek, but the middle voice means that this is something that you do within or by yourself). The force of the Greek is that when it says that they were showing Peter the coats and the garments that Dorcas's hands had made, the way that they were showing them was, they were wearing them! These were the poor and needy ones who were wearing the clothes that Dorcas had made; they showed Peter the fruits of her hands by referring to the garments that clothed their very bodies. If Dorcas, b&s, represents us now, awaiting the hope of final redemption, therefore, the great responsibility that we have, is that we should go forth so that the fruit of our hands, the fruit of our labours should be seen; and where should it be seen? Why, in the ecclesia, that we might clothe one another with those principles of the truth, that we might feed one another, that we might nurture each other towards the kingdom. The fruit of Dorcas's labours were **seen** amongst the brethren and sisters of the ecclesia, that's where her hands were seen. That was the proof that she was full of good works and alms deeds which she did.

So for that parable to be fully outworked in our lives, b&s, we need to jump up on our feet, be thankful that we can run the race of the truth, with as much speed and enthusiasm as Aeneas when he left his bed, but to remember that now we're in the epoch of time, where our hands should take up the labours of caring for one another, and reaching forth to the poor and needy that we might clothe each other with the garments of salvation, and be found accepted thereby by Christ when He returns, even if, in the meantime, we fall into the article of death as did Dorcas!

O Israel, make the LORD thy hope,
Thy help, thy refuge and thy rest;
For He shall build thy ruins up,
Yea, all His Israel shall be blest.
The dead praise not Thy goodness, LORD,
Neither the silent in the grave.
But all who live shall bless Thy word,
And sound Thy mighty power to save. (Hymn 56 - 2002 green

book)

'And he gave her his hand, and lifted her up, and when he had called the saints and widows, presented her alive'.