

Tabitha

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Date: 24 February 2019

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[0 : 0 0] Now, as some of you will know, we've been looking in recent weeks at what we've called resurrection case studies, which are not so much resurrection technically as such, because they're not like the resurrection of our Lord, in the sense that when Jesus rose from the dead, he did so with his resurrection body, never to die again.

All those who we have been and shall be looking at are those instances where people have been raised from the dead by the agency of prophets or apostles or through our Lord himself, but raised from the dead back into this world, in their old, this-worldly bodies, and the essence of it is to die again.

Whether we're looking at Lazarus, whom our Lord raised from the dead, or the Shunammite son, whom Elisha raised, whom we looked at just last time, or Eutychus, and later on in the Acts, whom Paul was used to raise from the dead, or the widow of Zarebath's son that Elijah raised, or the widow of Nain's son, and so on.

All of these people who were raised from the dead would eventually die again. Theirs is not like the rising again of our Lord, who once he had risen from the dead, that was it.

He never dies again. He ascends into glory with that resurrection body, which is the same body in which he died, but which has different qualities. So, these people, all that we are looking at, we're calling it resurrection case studies, as we mentioned, but there is a difference between these and the resurrection of our Lord.

[1 : 3 4] These are simply, as it were, brought back into the world to carry on living in the world. But it is still a remarkable and, you know, miraculous work of God's grace, that he uses the agency of prophets, of apostles, and of himself, obviously, during his earthly ministry.

And we've mentioned in the past there are seven such instances, two in the Old Testament, two by the apostles, and the new, and three by our Lord. And it is the second such one of the apostles that we're looking at tonight.

We've looked in the past at Elijah and the widow of Zarephath's son. Then we looked at Eutychus, later on in the Acts of the Apostles, whom Paul was used to raise to life.

Then we looked back at the Old Testament, at the Shunammite's son, and Elisha was used to raise to life. Now we're looking at the case of Tabitha, whom Peter, the apostle, is used to raise to life again.

And thereafter, in subsequent weeks, we'll look at the three instances, which our Lord himself used to raise to life from the dead. So these are works of great grace.

[2 : 4 2] And the raising from the dead is the ultimate testimony of God's power over all the things and forces of this world, even over death itself.

To heal someone who is diseased, or to open the eyes of the blind, or to cleanse the lepers, or whatever, is wonderful and powerful and great. But to actually raise the dead is the ultimate testimony of God's power over the forces of this world and the next, of light over darkness, of life over death, because he is the Lord of life.

Now the context in which we find Peter coming down, initially to Lydda and then to Joppa, is that after the instances further, previously in Acts chapter 9, where we've got the conversion of Saul, and then all the hassle that is caused by Saul's conversion, and the reaction of the unconverted Jews, and the forces of the world reacting against Paul's conversion.

And then eventually, after his faithful testimony in Damascus and elsewhere, we read, you know, verse 29, he spake boldly in the name of the Lord Jesus, and disputed against the Grecians, but they went about to slay him, which when the brethren knew, they brought him down to Caesarea, which was the capital of the province of Judea, and the port, and sent him forth to Tarsus by sea.

Then had the churches rest throughout all Judea, and Galilee, and Samaria, and were edified, and walking in the feet of the Lord, and in the comfort of the Holy Ghost, were multiplied.

[4 : 15] Now this is a highly significant verse 31, just before where we began to read. The implication in the context is almost that, once all had been taken out of the picture, oh, well everybody read the side belief and settled down, because he was such a controversial figure.

In fact, that's almost incidental to actual history, because we know from outside sources, what we might call secular historians, that around this time, the Emperor Caligula, who had succeeded Tiberius as the Emperor of Rome, was in the process of seeking to bring an image, a statue of himself, into the Temple of Jerusalem, and seeking to set that up and make everybody worship it.

Naturally, that caused a huge reaction amongst the Jewish population, and amongst the people in Jerusalem. So we might say that, for want of a better description, all the focus and energy of the entire Jewish establishment was focused on resisting that act of provocative idolatry.

And because of what was going on at this time, they had better things to do, you might say, than persecute the fledgling church. But what we see at verse 31 is here, the churches, it's plural, they're being planted now up and down the Holy Land, all throughout Judea, that's the southern part of the Holy Land, Galilee in the north, where Jesus himself, of course, had lived and worked and ministered, Samaria, through which she had passed, and in which she had testified, to the woman Samaria and the other son about, all these were settled churches, were edified, that means literally built up, in the sense of an edifice being built up, and walking in the feet of the Lord, and in the comfort of the Holy Ghost, were multiplied.

The church of Jesus Christ is being multiplied. This is an early stage of the mushrooming, of the faith of Jesus Christ, as yet, as yet, which could be described, you know, from outside of the Jewish faith, as simply the sect of the Nazarenes, because so far, it is an exclusively Jewish sect, I suppose you could call it, at that stage.

[6 : 33] It is only amongst Jews, that the gospel is being preached, in the Holy Land. Because even where we get, what we read previously, at verse 29, Paul disputed against the Grecians, that doesn't mean Greeks, in the sense of Gentiles, Grecians, as opposed to Greeks, means Jewish people, who are from the dispersion, throughout the Roman Empire, who live in countries of Greek culture, and background, and are naturally influenced, by that to an extent, as opposed to those, who are native to the Holy Land.

But it is still Jewish people, it is still, an exclusively Jewish club, you might say, at this stage. And so far, you know, amongst what was the faith, of the Israelites, you would have people like, the Essenes, who were concerned with their purity, and ritual washings, and so on, those who were based, down at the Dead Sea, and Qumran, and so on, where the Dead Sea scrolls, were discovered.

You had the Pharisees, you had the Sadducees, you had the Zerets, who were more of a political force, and amongst all this, of course, you would have, what the Jews would refer to as, the Nazarenes, those who believed, that Jesus of Nazareth, was the Messiah.

But so far, it's only amongst, Jewish people. And one reason, why we have this, this account of Peter, going down to Lydda, and then to Joppa, is that it's when, he's at Joppa, that you see in chapter 10, the Acts, that Cornelius the Centurion, sends for him, and this is the beginning, of the Gospel, going out then, to the Gentiles, through the Romans, and there, to the Greeks, and then throughout, the entire Roman Empire, at the time.

So we have, if you like, the last instance, of it being, an exclusively, Jewish phenomenon, at this stage. The church, is at this point, still exclusively, Jewish, although not, necessarily intentionally, so the Lord, is about to open it out, and is sending Peter, down to Joppa, as the place, from which, he will be summoned, to Caesarea, to speak to Cornelius, to spread the Gospel, further.

[8 : 43] But this is a period, of growth. Then, you know, the edifying, walking, the feet of the Lord, the comfort of the Holy Ghost, were multiplied. And in this time, of comparative peace, Peter, passed throughout, all quarters.

It's almost like, he's sort of making, a kind of tour, of the churches, throughout the Holy Land. Whether he's going, with some of the other apostles, or whether he's going along, we don't know exactly.

But you remember, how after Paul, and Barnabas, had planted, different churches, throughout what is now, Turkey, and then into Greece, and so on. Paul would say, you know, afterwards, let's go and visit the churches, where we planted.

So they'd tour around them again, and seek to build them up, and strengthen them, and ordain you elders, and pray for them. So it's this kind of thing, that Peter is doing. He's going throughout, the different churches, in the Holy Land, seeking to strengthen them, pass throughout, all quarters.

You might say, that what we read here, at verse 32, is a continuation, on from what you see, in chapter 8, at verse 25, where after Peter, and John, had gone down, to Samaria, remember, and confronted, Simon the sorcerer, we read, they, when they had testified, and preached the word of the Lord, returned to Jerusalem, and preached the gospel, in many villages, of the Samaritans.

[10 : 00] So they're going, throughout Samaria, they're coming back, to Jerusalem, and then, this verse 32, came to pass, as Peter passed, throughout all quarters, he came down, also to the saints, which dwelt at Lydda.

Now, the word that we have here, is saints. This simply means, New Testament, believers. Okay, it could be Old Testament, believers as well, the saints of the Lord, those who are putting, their trust in Christ.

We tend now, with 2000 years, of Christian tradition, to think in terms of saints, as those who are, depicted in Christian art, or statually, those who are sort of, you know, looking up at the altar, sort of all, holier than holy, and purer, in the driven snow, and would never, put a foot wrong, and were almost, you know, superhuman, the idea of saints, with a capital S, and we think in terms of, Saint Peter, Saint Paul, and Saint Barnabas, and Saint Teresa, and all these things, but these people, were no better, and no worse, than any other believer.

Saints, in the New Testament sense, means simply, small s, believers. That's the sense of it here, and it means simply, those who are set apart.

That's what holy, sanctified, sancta, saint, means, one who is set apart, to the Lord. And we find that this is used, not only by Luke here, and the Acts of the Apostles, but it's also used by Paul, extensively.

[11 : 30] When he writes to Philemon, he says about how, you know, he's been faithful, in refreshing the saints. When he writes to, almost all the churches, with the exception of Galatians, and the two letters, to the Thessalonians, which ironically, are thought by some Galatians, to be one of the first letters, he wrote to the Thessalonians, perhaps, later on, maybe not quite towards the end, but certainly, later on, he writes, addresses, almost all his letters, except Galatians, and Thessalonians, he writes it, to the saints, which are in those particular cities, Rome, Philippi, Ephesus, Colossi, and Ephesus, and so on.

So, it is addressed to the saints, the believers, those who put their trust in Christ, set apart to Christ. And he goes down then, Peter goes down to Lydda. Lydda is, in the Old Testament times, Lod, it was called.

It's just the set, the geographical context, going from Lydda, to Joppa, they're about 12 miles apart. Joppa is Jaffa, which was the ancient seaport, not especially great harbour, but was the best one they had, on the Mediterranean coast.

It's where the timber was floated down for the temple, remember, and it was taken from Joppa up to Jerusalem, to help build Solomon's temple. It was the port for the Holy Land, for many centuries, and it is the site, from which the ancient city of Joppa, or Jaffa, around which now, the modern city of Tel Aviv, has been built.

Jaffa is the ancient city, Tel Aviv, the modern city. And Lydda, which was, again, during the British protectorate in Palestine, from about 1920, to about 1948, roughly 30 year period, 28, 30 year period, Lydda was where the British put their airdrome, for their air force bases.

[13 : 23] That in due course, not unlike the one in Stornley, and so on, then became the airport, for that area, which is now the site, of the Ben-Gurion International Airport.

So, Lydda, was where, now the modern airport is, Jaffa, Joppa, where modern Tel Aviv is, and airports, of course, are usually a wee bit out, from any city that they represent.

So that's the sort of geography, we're talking about, but a dozen miles apart. So he comes down to Lydda, and there he found a certain man named Aeneas, which had kept his bed, eight years, and was sick of the policy.

Now just get that in context, first of all. Eight years. We don't know exactly how long this is, after the resurrection of Jesus, and his ascension into heaven, but it's probably only a very few years.

Remember that Stephen was not spared for long, after the deacons were made, in Acts chapter 6, and then Stephen was speaking, and preaching, and at 7, and then he is martyred, at the end of that, and then Saul goes about, seeking to persecute the church, then Saul gets converted.

[14 : 30] We're only talking about a very few years here. Almost certainly, during the time of Jesus' earthly ministry, by the time Jesus is active, in Galilee, and Judea, and Jerusalem, Aeneas is already bedridden, and paralyzed.

One reason, perhaps, why he could never be brought, to where Jesus is, later would be quite a long way, from Galilee, it would certainly be quite a bit, a hike from Jerusalem, up into the mountains.

He has been bedridden, almost certainly, since, before Jesus' earthly ministry, began, 80 years. And so, they found a certain man, named Aeneas, which had kept his bed, eight years, was sick of the policy.

It doesn't say that he was a disciple, unlike Tabitha, doesn't say that he was a believer, but, he must have been mixing with, or in the company of, believers, or saints, because it's as he comes down, to see the saints, that Peter encounters Aeneas.

And, Peter said to Aeneas, Jesus Christ, maketh thee whole, arise, and make thy bed. And he arose immediately, and all that dwelt at Lydda, and Sera, and saw him, and turned to the Lord.

[15 : 43] Now, when it says, all that dwelt at Lydda, and Sera, obviously, that is a, a, a linguistic term, called synecdoche. It means, like, putting all for many, or most of.

It's like, when it says of John the Baptist, you know, that went out to him, all Judea, and all Samaria, and all in Tyre, and Simeon, and so on. It doesn't literally mean, every single last person, in all of these places.

It doesn't mean that if you went through Tyre, and Simeon, and Judea, you'd say, where is everybody? There's not a soul in the place. They've all gone. The place is deserted. Oh, look, there they all are, with John the Baptist.

It does not mean, every single soul. It is a linguistic term. It's a use of language, which means that, all that, well, they all heard about it, and many people turned to the Lord.

So, what we have here, is a miracle, done by Peter, and part of the purpose of that miracle, is to build up, and strengthen the faith, of the church.

[16 : 43] You see how signs, and wonders, are almost never done, to convince, and convert, those who were previously skeptical. You know, people remember, said to Jesus, right, well, show us a sign.

Show us that you are the Messiah. You know, let's see something spectacular. Go on. And he says, a wicked and adulterous generation, looks for a sign. There's going to be no sign given you, except the sign of the prophet, Jonas.

And then went on to explain that. But where Jesus does do miracles, and where he and his apostles, do miracles, and signs, and wonders, it is one of two things.

It is either from, just pure compassion, just pure kindness, and pity, for the people, who are suffering, and, or, it is to build up the faith, of those who are already close to, believing in Christ, or putting their trust in Christ.

Because we've already read, verse 31, how the churches were multiplied. And we see here now, when Peter says, with authority, Christ Jesus, make it be whole. Arise, make thy bed.

[17 : 48] And he arose immediately. Peter doesn't say, I say to you, in my own name, Peter, or, I command you, in the name of Jesus. He just says, Jesus Christ, make it be whole.

It's a statement of fact. And all that dwelt at Lydda, and Sarah, and saw him, and turned to the Lord. In other words, this is used, of the Lord, as a further strengthening, and building up, of the faith, of the saints.

It's not for nothing, it's not just a firework, to go off in the sky, and say, ooh, ah, look at that, spectacular, healing, miracle. But rather, it is used, of the Lord, to build people up, in the faith, to extend, the kingdom of Christ, and to bring in more, believers to Christ.

So that's the background, then, coming then, to the actual instance itself. There was a Joppa, a certain disciple, named Tabitha. Now, right away, we've got something unusual here.

Almost always, when they talk about, a disciple, as it happens, they're talking in masculine terms. She's not described, as a widow, although there's no mention, of a husband, and it's unlikely, she would simply be, a single, unmarried girl, or woman.

[19 : 02] She's probably, a woman, of mature years. The fact, that no husband, is mentioned, means she's probably, a widow. The fact, that the other, widows are described, as those who, along with her, showed the coats, and the garments, and so on, that she had made, but we're not told, that she's a widow.

She's simply described, as a disciple. This means, that she is a believer. She's born again, believer. She's not like, Aeneas, whose spiritual state, we don't know, but she's definitely, a believer.

A certain disciple, named Tabitha, which by interpretation, is called Dorcas. Now, whether it's Tabitha, in the local Aramaic, not the Hebrew, but the Aramaic, or Syriac language, which was spoken, locally, in the Holy Land, at that time, or whether it's, in the Greek, which is Dorcas, it means the same thing.

It means a gazelle. That's what the name means. So, she is this faithful disciple, full of good works, and alms deeds, which she did, 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 for as much as Lydda, was now to Joppa, 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.

[20 : 19] Then you've got the widow, showing all the garments, and so on, that Dorcas had made. Now, it doesn't say, as we said, that she is a widow herself, but the likelihood, the context, implies it, not just that she was, bereft of a husband, but rather, almost like the, the kind of order, of widows.

Like, Paul is writing to Timothy, if you remember, when he says in 1 Timothy 5, verses 9 and 10, let not a widow, be taken into the number, the number of what? The number of those, who are financed, and sustained, and supported, by the local church.

Under three, four years old, having been the wife, of one man, and so on. Now, it says, don't let a widow, be taken into the number, but you can't reverse her widowhood. So, it's not her status, that is being talked about.

It's whether or not, she is to be admitted, to as it were, almost like a, a diagonal order, of widows, who, being sustained, and fed, and provided for, by the church, gave themselves, to good works, and charity, and making garments, for the poor, and so on.

Some have suggested, that what the widows, are showing to Peter, is, look at the garments, she made for me. The widows were the poor, the needy, and this is who Tabitha, provided for.

[21 : 32] That has caused, some to say, so she was a wealthy woman, who was looking after the widows. The context, would rather imply, she was probably, these widows, were her fellow widows.

That she was one, who was simply, full of good works, and alms deeds, and so on. Faithful, diligent, you know, like the woman, of Proverbs 31, always working away, seeking to help the poor, and be faithful, and diligent.

Probably a widow herself, although, she's not described as such, but, there's no mention of a husband, or family, anywhere. So, she's died, and when they, they washed her, they laid her in the upper chamber, and they sent to Lydda, about a dozen miles away, because Peter is heard, to be there.

Notice, what they don't do. It doesn't say, get Peter to come, and raise her to life. They don't instantly say that, or presume that, but obviously, they are hopeful.

Why are they hopeful? Because, they don't bury her. They don't have a funeral, they don't, you know, put her in the tomb, or whatever. They leave her washed, and cleaned her, laid in the upper room.

[22 : 44] Now, however long it takes, to travel a dozen miles, and then get Peter, and come back again, it could be the work, of just one day. There wouldn't be too much, decomposition, or anything, in that time, but, she's not being buried, she's not being, given a funeral as such, she's simply being, prepared, and they're sending, for Peter.

Whatever they expect, or hope, that Peter is going to do, remember, that at this stage, other than Christ himself, nobody, as far as we know, has raised the dead.

Paul's raising of Eutychus, comes much later, in Acts 20. But, nobody, of the apostles, has actually done it, or, we have no record, of them having done so.

The fact, or the possibility, that they may have done so, is underlined, by the fact, that Peter himself, clearly has, this authority. In Acts chapter 10, we read at verse 8, where the Lord, sends out his disciples, two by two, he says, as you go, preach, the kingdom of heaven is at hand, heal the sick, cleanse the lepers, raise the dead, cast out devils, freely you have received, freely give.

So, Jesus has previously, given authority, to his disciples, to explicitly, raise the dead. Now, it may be, that they only had power, or felt they were able to do that, while Jesus was physically, with them.

[24 : 14] Certainly, we have no, written account, left to us, of any apostle, raising the dead, since the time, of Jesus ascension, until, this instance here.

But, Peter then, definitely, has, the authority, the commission, from Christ, to, raise the dead, maybe that's what, they're hoping for. Another thing, we should notice, is that, when they send off, these two men, when they send off, these two men, what does that tell us?

It tells us, that neither, these men, nor the saints, at Lydda, or Joppa, or anyone else, recognize themselves, or believe themselves, or any reason, to think, that they themselves, albeit, being New Testament, Christians, had the power, themselves, to raise, the dead.

Now this, puts in context, what we read, at the end of Mark's, account of the gospel, for example, in chapter 16, where we read, you know, that Jesus says, he that believeth, is baptized, shall be saved, he that believeth not, shall be damned, and these signs, shall follow, them that believe.

In my name, they shall cast out devils, they shall speak, with new tongues, they shall take up, servants, and if they drink, any deadly thing, it shall not hurt them, they shall lay hands, on the sick, and they shall, recover, and so on.

[25 : 34] All these signs, and wonders, this is explicitly mentioned, raising the dead, but it talks about healing, and so on, and casting out devils, but signs, and wonders, will follow, those who believe.

Now you could take that, to mean, so all the believers, that ever trust in Jesus, should have this, miraculous power, and if we don't, well it's just, our lack of faith.

The likelihood is, that the first generation, of Christians, remember, that this is still, within, a very few years, of Jesus earthly ministry, it's within, a very few years, of the pouring out, of the Holy Spirit, at Pentecost, it is still, within probably, a decade, or less, of Jesus, having ascended, into heaven, signs, and wonders, and healings, have been done, by the apostles, we don't read, of signs, and wonders, and miraculous things, being done, by ordinary Christians, it's not prohibited, we don't find, in the scriptures, in the New Testament, anywhere, say, Jesus, or the Lord, say, now it's only the apostles, nobody else is to do it, nobody else is allowed, to do it, and once the apostles, are dead, all the gifts cease, some people say, the scriptures teach, that the gifts cease, in the first generation, they don't actually, teach it explicitly, but we become, harder, and harder, pushed, to find, any instance, outside, of the apostles, of people, healing the sick, raising the dead, undertaking these signs, and wonders, and so on, so, the latter part, of Mark 16, simply, from what unfolds, in the course, of the New Testament, would seem, to imply, that it's not just, a general, sort of pouring out, of signs, and wonders, and miraculous deeds, and so on, which if you remember, we've said many times, in the past, is a phenomenon, which is comparatively, rare in scripture, there are only, the three occasions, the three periods, in the entirety, of salvation history, which is a period, the biblical period, covers approximately, 4,000 years, and in that, 4,000 years, there's only the three phases,

Moses, and Joshua, coming out, to Egypt, and into the promised land, Elijah, and Elisha, and Christ, and the apostles, all the rest, of the work, and time, of salvation history, is the ordinary, saints, with their faith, in the Lord, putting their trust, in Christ, the Lord, does wondrous things, yes, but they themselves, do not undertake, signs and wonders, they themselves, are not, you're confined, with this mighty power, just these three periods, so it would be, in line with scripture, for the signs and wonders, to be, in the days of Christ's, earthly ministry, and in the days, of the apostles, and as a means, of building up, the faith, of the believers, but it would imply, that once they are, grounded, upon the foundation, of God's word, and spirit, that should, be sufficient, that should be, in fact, all that they need, so the believers, themselves, at Joppa, and at Lydda, do not say, ah, it's okay, she's died, no bother, you know, we're first generation Christians,

New Testament Christians, let's just gather round, pray over her, and that's her back to life again, not a hint of that, but what they do say, is Peter's not far away, maybe he can do something, let's go and bring him, and if he can help, great, and if he can't, well we're no worse off, she's already dead, wash her, lay her in the upper room, don't bury her, and if Peter can do anything, that's great, remember that our Lord, does not desire, to keep us, as babies, constantly, now a baby, if it needs attention, it cries, if it's got a dirty nappy, it cries, it gets a change, if it's hungry, it cries, it gets fed, if it's feeling frightened, it cries, and it gets picked up, and every time, it opens its mouth, it just cries, and it gets attention, we are taught, in scripture, not to stay, as babies, not to stay, as those, who constantly, must have, immediate, attention, and comfort, and so on, and milk, we've got to go on, to meet, we've got to go on, to stronger food, we've got to be able, to walk, by faith, and not just, by sight, signs, and wonders, are things, you see, faith, in God's word, and trust, in his guidance, and help, is what you believe, in, we're taught, verse, to Olympians,

[30 : 20] I think it's 521, we walk, by faith, not by sight, and faith, is the substance, of things, hoped for, the evidence, of things, not seen, the knowledge, was that if, Tabitha, could not be raised, to life, then she would be, with the Lord, then pardon me, with Christ, which is far better, but, if Peter, can do anything, bring him here, let's see, if he can help, at all, so this, is what, they are asking for, this is what, they are seeking, so Peter, is brought down, by these two men, designing him, that he would not, delay to come to them, Peter arose, went with them, when he was come, they brought him, into the upper chamber, and all the widows, stood by him, weeping, and throwing, the clothes, endowments, which darkness made, while she was with them, again, while she was with them, sort of implies, she was part, of the sort of, church order, of the widows, that Peter, put them all forth, and kneeled down, and prayed, now we do not read, in any of Jesus miracles, that he did, that he ever, kneeled down, and prayed, he had the authority, he had the presence, the power, of the son, he was the master,

Peter is not the master, he is the servant, he is conscious, that he himself, does not have the power, in and of himself, to raise the dead, he may have the commission, but if he is, asking for something, which is the reversal, of the power, of nature itself, then he needs, to beseech the Lord, as a suppliant, Peter, kneeled down, and prayed, he doesn't pray, to the body, because we read, that then, having prayed, he turned him, to the body, and the fact, that it is described, as the body, means it's not just, oh she was just asleep, sort of thing, no, she's dead, she's well, and truly dead, they all know, she's dead, and Peter, kneeled down, and prayed, this is as we say, something Jesus, did not do, in the doing of his miracles, because he had the authority, of a son, Peter, has the suppliant, position, of a servant, and turning him, to the body, he said, Tabitha, arise, and she opened her eyes, and when she saw Peter, she sat up, see the, see the, the sixth, the tiny little description,

Tabitha, arise, he speaks to the dead, she opened her eyes, when she saw Peter, she sat up, the first thing, that is done, for the dead, whether we're talking, physical, or spiritual, is their eyes, are opened, we see this, for example, in Acts 26, at verse 18, where, where Paul is explaining, you know, to Agrippies, says, you know, that delivering me, from the people, and from the Gentiles, unto whom now I send thee, to open their eyes, and to turn them, from darkness, to light, from the power of Satan, unto God, that they may receive, forgiveness of sins, and inheritance, among them, which are sanctified, by faith, that is in me, but before you can see, all the wonder, of what God does, you have to open your eyes, and the implication, is that how we are, by nature, is that we go around, with our eyes shut, by nature, we go around, simply, not seeing, what the Lord has done, simply, not seeing, the wonder, of creation, and the beauty, of his providence, and his work, in the lives of others, simply, not recognizing, the intricacy, and design, and providence, of all that he has done, we go around, like the blind, leading the blind, and the first thing, that is done, whether one is being raised, from the dead, physically, or more commonly, since then, being raised, from the dead, spiritually, is to open, their eyes, and we saw that, earlier in this chapter, we're reading just now, in Acts 9, where Paul, is visited, by Ananias, and Ananias, went his way, and entered into the house, putting his hands on him, he said, brother Saul, the Lord, even Jesus, that appeared unto thee, in the way as thou camest, hath sent thee, that thou mightest, receive thy sight, and be filled, with the Holy Ghost, notice how these two, go together, your eyes are opened, and you're filled, with the Holy Ghost, you see the natural world, as it really is, as the work of God, and God at work, in it, and through it, and you're filled, with the Holy Ghost, you're brought alive, spiritually, you see you're not, even really alive, in the physical sense, until your eyes are opened, and you're not alive, in the spiritual sense, until you're filled, with the Holy Ghost, hath sent me, that thou mightest, receive thy sight, and be filled, with the Holy Ghost, and immediately, there fell, from his eyes, as it had been scales, and he received, sight forthwith, and arose, and was baptized, and was baptized, once we are enabled, to see, then the first thing, we must do, is run to the person, who gives us sight, run to the person, come to the one, who alone enables us, to receive that sight, now you could say, well, but you just said, we walk by faith, not by sight, that is true, but as we have, our eyes open, as we are enabled, to believe, we see more, and more, it's like somebody, so often the case, is people say, well, you prove to me, about God, and about the reality, of what you're saying, then I'll believe, prove it to me first, and then I'll believe, but what the Lord, asks of us is, believe in me first, walk by faith, not by sight, faith is the substance, of things, hope for the evidence, of things not seen, trust me, and when you have, trusted me, then you'll have, all the proof you need, it's like, two people, who love each other, and meeting a guy, says to the girl, and he says, look,

I may look poverty stricken, but I've actually got, more resources, and wealth, and money, that you could, possibly imagine, come with me, be mine, marry me, and come with me, wherever we're going, and you'll see, all the wealth, that I have, and you'll see, all the life, that I can give you, and she looks around, and she sees all the rags, and all the, the poverty, and said, well you know, why don't you just show me, only a bit of it first, and then I might trust you, then I might just know you, but trust me first, look into my eyes, do you believe, that I have this, do you believe, that I'm telling the truth, and she will either, look into his eyes, and say, yes I trust you, yes I'll go with you, wherever it takes, wherever you lead, I'll share my entire life with you, and even if there's no money, even if there's no wealth, I'll follow you to the ends of the earth, and then all the wealth is revealed, and then all the goodness comes out, and so on, or she'll say, nah, I don't believe you, actually, if she doesn't believe him, what is that saying, it means she doesn't really, love him for himself, and I would suggest to you, that this is what the Lord requires of us, this asking, this if you like, little test of faith, are you prepared, to put your faith, your trust, your love, into my hands, when you don't see, the evidence, that's what faith, is asked to be, put your trust, in Christ, give in your faith, your love, first, then you'll see, all the evidence you need, your eyes will be opened, you'll have all the evidence, you'll be filled with the spirit, you'll think, how did I not see this before, it was always there, staring me in the face, when we couldn't see it, if somebody is staring you in the face, you will not see them, if your eyes are shut, doesn't matter how close they may be, you may even feel their breath, upon your face, and you know somebody is there, but you can't see them, if your eyes are shut, and so it is, the Lord can be so close, and we can be conscious, almost, of the breath of his spirit, but we see nothing, while our eyes are shut, it is the first thing, that changes, when the Lord speaks, to the dead,

Tabitha, arise, and she opened, her eyes, this is both, the spiritual, and the physical response here, and when she saw Peter, she sat up, now this is a perfect, this proves, if you like, the truth of the narrative here, because you know, it's not a case of, oh she rolled over him better, oh Peter, it's you, nice to see you, she probably doesn't know, what Peter looks like, the believers in Lydda, and in Joppa, will have heard, about the apostles, they will have heard, the good news, about Jesus Christ, they will have put, their trust, their faith in, they probably haven't seen, any of the apostles, face to face, as Peter goes, round the tour, round the holy land, this is probably, the first time, many of them, have set eyes, on them, so she, wakens up, and the first thing, she sees, is a strange man, in her bedroom, now, or in the place, where she's lying, now what are you going to do, hide under the covers, or simply say, oh it's you Peter, oh blah blah blah, or you're going to sit up, now a woman, who wakes up, with a man, a strange man, in the same, she's going to sit up, suddenly, because it's a more, defensive if you like, or more surprised position, she sits up, because the first feeling, will be, disorientation, or alarm, she will not be conscious, that she's been dead, but she wakes up, and she sits up, and he gave her his hand, and lifted her up, this is exactly, what he had seen, his Lord do, with Peter's own, mother-in-law,

[40 : 14] Mark chapter 1, verses 30 and 31, Simon's wife's motherly, sick of a fever, and then on they tell him of her, and he came, and took her by the hand, and lifted her up, and immediately, the fever left her, and she ministered unto them, and this is then, what Jesus, what Peter is now doing, for a tablet, he takes her hand, lifts her up, and so, she gets up, out of the bed, he gave her his hand, lifted up, when he had called, the saints, and widows, he presented her alive, and it was known, throughout all Joppa, and many, believed, in the Lord, again, notice the purpose of it, it's not just, oh wasn't that great, wasn't that nice, a little act on its own, it becomes that, which builds up, the church, and you might say, ah yeah, but you said, signs and wonders, wouldn't be used, to convert people, who didn't believe, remember, that Peter, puts everybody out, nobody actually, sees, this, happen, there are those, who know, that she is dead, before, and they know, that she is alive, afterwards, so they know, what must have happened, there will be others, who probably, were not in the vicinity, when they heard, that she was dead, and then she is alive again, they might have seen, or known Tabitha before, and then they see her afterwards, she was alive before, she is alive afterwards, in the meantime, people said she was dead, do we believe that, many people did, because they heard, the testimony, and the witness, of others, and again, people are being asked, to put their faith, in what they have not seen, they've heard about it, they've heard of this woman, being raised from the dead, and it was known, throughout all Joppa, and many believed, in the Lord, it was used, to if you like, drive forward, the growth of the gospel, the growth of the church, this is partly, the purpose, of these acts, these works, of the gospel, these miraculous, raisings from the dead, to drive forward, the kingdom of God, the gospel, of Christ, he gave her his hand, lifted her up, he called the saints, and would have, presented her alive, and it was known, throughout all Joppa, and many, believed, in the Lord, this far, the miracle, this far, the growth, of the gospel, but a greater work, is about to come, in chapter 10, where the good news, of salvation, without, any signs, and wonders, or miracles, in particular, of them, the speaking in tongues, that we do, chapter 10, you know, without spectacular, fireworks, or anything, we find, the Gentiles, receiving the gospel, and the springboard, that that becomes, for spreading, the good news, throughout all the world, and we ourselves, as Gentiles here, in these islands, these barriers, of the western ways, we are the recipients, both of the generations, and also, the spread, of that gospel, if it hadn't spread, to the Gentiles first, we wouldn't have received it, and likewise, if we hadn't received it, we would be lost, in trespasses, and sins, by the grace of God, if our eyes, have been opened, if we have been able, to put our trust, and our love, in the Lord Jesus Christ, it is not because, of what we have seen, it is not because, of any fireworks, we may have witnessed, or miracles, that may have suddenly, changed our minds, it is because, the Lord, by his spirit, has enabled, our eyes, to be opened, and our hearts, to love, that to which, we were previously, blind, and indifferent, it is a miracle,

of God's grace, it is life, from the dead, far greater, than the miracle, worked on Tabitha, if you were in Christ, greater, than the miracle, worked on Tabitha, is the miracle, that has been worked, on you, and if you are not, yet in Christ, then that same, invitation, is there, for you, to put your trust, and faith, in the Lord, trust, first, and then, see what the Lord, will do, with the faith, you have placed, in him, let us pray, To the leap, to the ■■■■■■, to the ■ yes, to the wife, you have ranny, or to the drug, you have ranny, stop, and smile, it's a good example,