

## Arise – May 16, 2020

### 1. Introduction:

a. In our study today we will be discussing the raising (resurrection) from the dead of a woman named Tabitha (Dorcas in Greek) who lived in Joppa. Peter was in Lydda when he was asked to come to Joppa (see map below).

b. BTW, medical resuscitation is not resurrection. Resuscitation, although lifesaving, simply restarts operations such as breathing and heart function it does not restore life that has been permanently lost. A cardiac or respiratory arrest can be either permanent or just a temporary suspension of these functions. What we read about in Acts 9:40 is true resurrection!



**2. Read: Acts 9:36-43** <sup>36</sup> Now there was in Joppa a disciple named Tabitha, which, translated, means Dorcas. **She was full of good works and acts of charity.** <sup>37</sup> In those days she became ill and died, and when they had washed her, they laid her in an upper room. <sup>38</sup> Since Lydda was near Joppa [*about 11 miles away*], the disciples, hearing that Peter was there, sent two men to him, urging him, **'Please come to us without delay.'** <sup>39</sup> 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. <sup>40</sup> 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. <sup>41</sup> And he gave her his hand and raised her up. Then, calling the saints and widows, he presented her alive. <sup>42</sup> And it became known throughout all Joppa, and many believed in the Lord. <sup>43</sup> And he stayed in Joppa for many days with one Simon, a tanner."

a. The background for this passage is found in Acts 9:32-35, <sup>32</sup> Now as **Peter went here and there among them** all, he came down also to the saints who lived at Lydda. <sup>33</sup> There he found a man named Aeneas, bedridden for eight years, who was paralyzed. <sup>34</sup> And Peter said to him, "Aeneas, **Jesus Christ heals you**; rise and make your bed." And immediately he rose. <sup>35</sup> And all the residents of Lydda and Sharon saw him, and they turned to the Lord."

d. Question: According to Acts 9:32 what was Peter doing when he came down to Lydda?

e. Question: According to Acts 9:34 who does Peter say healed the paralyzed man?

f. Although we commonly say that Peter raised Tabitha from the dead or that this or that Apostle performed a miracle the fact is that neither Peter nor any other ordinary human had or currently has supernatural powers in and of themselves to perform miracles let alone raising someone from the dead.

g. The ESV Study Bible note for this passage explains that, "In the case of Tabitha the Lord had showed Peter what he was going to do in response to Peter's prayer, and he imparted to Peter's heart the knowledge and faith that he was going to restore Tabitha to life as Peter spoke."

h. Question: According to Acts 9:35 all the residents of Lydda and Sharon saw him and they turned to the Lord. Do you think there is a connection between the number of miracles being performed in the early church era and the fact that the frequency of miraculous healings and resurrection dramatically diminished after the New Testament was written and the church became more organized?

i. Question: Have you witnessed a miracle? Are miracles still common today?

j. Question: What are some “common” miracles that occur each day that we too often take for granted?

k. Question: How has the role of miracles changes from the 1<sup>st</sup> century to today?

l. Unlike Jerusalem, Joppa had a diverse cosmopolitan population perhaps because of the large number of ships that would have visited its seaport. You might recall that the Cedars of Lebanon used to build the Temple were shipped from Lebanon to Joppa and then transported overland to Jerusalem.

m. Question: According to verse 36 what was Tabitha recognized for within her community?

n. Question: Jewish custom was to bury the dead on the same day as their death and to do so before sundown. How could this explain the sense of urgency expressed in verse 38 where we are told that Peter was asked by the 2 men to, “Come to us without delay?”

o. Question: According to verse 40 what did Peter do after sending the women out of the upper room? What does this tell us about the priority of prayer?

p. Question: After Tabitha was raised (saved) verse 41 tells us a very interesting detail, “And he gave her his hand and raised her up.” You might recall another time when a hand was extended to a person and that person was lifted up. Matthew 14:28-31 records Peter **briefly** walking on water. As Jesus was walking on the sea and approaching the boat during the storm Peter says, ‘Lord, if it is you, command me to come to you on the water.’<sup>29</sup> He said, ‘Come.’ So, Peter got out of the boat and walked on the water and came to Jesus.<sup>30</sup> But when he saw the wind, he was afraid, and beginning to sink he cried out, ‘Lord, save me.’<sup>31</sup> Jesus **immediately reached out his hand and took hold of him**, saying to him, ‘O you of little faith, why did you doubt?’” Do you think Peter was recalling this event as he reach his hand out to Tabitha?