

Acts Chapter 9:32-43

Theme of Acts: The Holy Spirit and the Birth of the Church

Personal Reflection

Complete this section in one sitting or little by little during the week. Begin with prayer, inviting the Holy Spirit into your time. Spending time in the Bible, studying the original intent, meaning and cultural context helps you to understand how it applies to you now.

Further Study: with your small group or on your own

Complete with your small group if you are in one; or complete on your own, spending time with God.

Song for the week: Rattle - Elevation Worship

Song links: <https://youtu.be/xrAdbH28gIq?si=HTw8CqzU7j7LdWv3>

Read Acts 9:32-43. Click on any Bible verse in the study to read it or use your own Bible.

Personal Reflection

Peter went to Lydda and then to Joppa. Lydda was about 25 miles northwest of Jerusalem. In Lydda, Peter met Aeneas who was paralyzed.

The name Aeneas is Greek so he may have been a Gentile or a Grecian Jew (Hellenistic Jew). It was rare that the name of the person being healed was named. Luke wrote that he carefully investigated all he wrote about. With the people living in two prominent cities (Lydda and Sharon) hearing of Aeneas' healing, the story could be confirmed. *Optional, read Luke 1:3-4*

Read Acts 9:34-35. In whose name does Peter heal Aeneas?

The healing benefited Aeneas, but who else benefited from his healing? How did they benefit?

Not every miracle of Jesus was recorded but we know He healed the paralyzed man at Bethesda and the paralyzed man who was lowered through the roof. Luke recorded the latter. *Optional, read John 5:1-9, Luke 5:17-26*

Why might Luke have noted the healing of the paralyzed by both Jesus and Peter? How do they both point back to Jesus as God?

Acts is known as the Acts of the Apostles and also the Acts of the Holy Spirit. How was Peter's healing the paralyzed man both an act of an apostle (Peter) and an act of the Holy Spirit? (Apostle: The 12 sent by Jesus to tell others the gospel.)

Peter next traveled 11 miles from Lydda to Joppa, a wealthy Jewish port. It is the same city Jonah fled to, getting on a ship headed to Tarshish, after God told him to go to Nineveh. Today Joppa is known as Jaffa; it is inside the modern city of Tel Aviv. *Optional, read Jonah 1:1-3*

Tabatha lived in Joppa. Luke used both her Hebrew name, Tabatha, and her Greek name, Dorcus. Both are translated gazelle. She was known for being good and helping the poor. Commentaries say that in the Mediterranean world many women of means were benefactors, helping sponsor people in need. Her dying would have left a huge void in the lives of the poor, many of whom were widows.

What purpose might Luke have had in providing her name in both Hebrew and Greek?

Peter knew Tabatha was already in heaven with God and that bringing her back to life would not be for her benefit.

Who would benefit from Tabatha being raised from the dead?

Read Acts 9:40-42. How did bringing Tabatha back to life help spread the gospel?

Luke used contrasts in these two stories. Paralyzed, Aeneas was unable to do anything for himself. Tabatha was “full of good works” for others. What does this show us about God and who He cares for?

God created all living things, animals, fish and people. Whenever people were raised from the dead, it showed God as the source of Life.

Elijah the prophet prayed and asked God to bring life back to the son of a widow he stayed with. When the boy came back to life, his mom said “Now I know that you are a man of God and that the word of the Lord from your mouth is the truth.” *Optional, read 1 Kings 17:17-24*

Elisha, another prophet, regularly stayed with a wealthy, childless couple. He told them they would have a son. The wife asked to not be misled with hope, but within a year, they gave birth to a son. Later, when their son died, his mom pleaded with Elisha to come back to their home. He returned, prayed to God and the boy came back to life. *Optional, read 2 Kings 4:8-37*

The third time a man was raised from the dead was when he was thrown into Elisha’s grave and his dead body touched Elisha’s bones. *Optional, read 2 Kings 13:20-21*

These are the only times recorded in the Old Testament where a dead person was brought back to life. Of the three people mentioned, two were women whose sons were raised. What might these stories reveal to you about God’s heart towards women?

Some believe that lying on the ground of deceased people (called grave soaking) will help them connect with or gain the power of the Holy Spirit that was with the deceased when they lived. With the dead man thrown into Elisha’s grave, the dead man was not seeking a miracle nor the power of the Holy Spirit. God chose to raise the dead man, which honored Elisha.

Read John 14:16 and Romans 8:9. Who gives the gift of the Holy Spirit?

How long will the Holy Spirit remain with a person who believes in Jesus as their Savior?

How might these verses help you address the false belief?

In the New Testament it is recorded that Jesus brought three others back to life: Jairus's daughter, the widow's son and Lazarus. *Optional, read Mark 5:21-43, Luke 7:11-17, John 11:1-45*

Jesus also was raised from the dead. His resurrection was the first permanent resurrection. Many people were raised en masse at the time of Jesus' death. *Optional, read John 20:11-18, 1 Corinthians 15:20, Matthew 27:50-53*

Who got the glory for each of these instances?

Jesus' resurrection was the only permanent resurrection. Everyone else must die before entering eternity with God (heaven) or separation from Him (hell). God is the source of life. How does belief in Jesus give a person "new life"?

Putting it into practice:

The healing of Aeneas and raising of Tabatha validated that Peter was an apostle (sent by Jesus). And that what Peter said about Jesus being God was true.

Aeneas may have believed he could do nothing as he lay paralyzed. "But God chose him to be the catalyst for bringing his whole region to faith in Christ. If God could use a paralyzed man like Aeneas to accomplish much, He can use each of us, too (Got Questions)."

Healing without change or a willingness to share the story does not bring God glory nor non-Christians to His kingdom. We have a responsibility to use the gifts God has given us as well as share our stories of life with Him and the prayers He has answered to live out the great commission to GO and introduce Jesus to those who do not know Him and to encourage other believers.

Where are you noticing God using you? Where is He asking you to GO?

BE an example of agape love in your community. BE alert for practical needs you can help meet. BE aware of prayer needs and faithfully lift them up. BE ready to share your personal testimony. What can you do this week to GO and BE?

Spend some time in prayer, asking Him to direct your steps for His use and then listening to what He may be prompting you to do next.

Further Study - with your small group or on your own

Acts 9 begins with Saul (also known as Paul) and then switches to Peter. There are many parallels between the two apostles in Acts:

Peter	Saul (Paul)
Sermon in Jerusalem (2:22-36)	Sermon in Pisidian Antioch (13:26-41)
Lame man healed (3:1 - 10)	Lame man healed (14:8-11)
Filled with Spirit (4:8)	Filled with Spirit (13:9)
Extraordinary healings (5:15, 9:32-35)	Extraordinary healings (19:12)
Laying on hands to receive Spirit (8:17)	Laying on hands to receive Spirit (19:6)
Conflict with magician (8:18-24)	Conflict with magician (13:6- 11)
Tabitha raised from the dead (9:36-41)	Eutychus raised from the dead (20:9-12)
Miraculously released from jail (12:6- 11)	Miraculously released from jail (16:25-41)

Why do you think Luke identified these parallels?

Read 2 Corinthians 12:12. What parallels from above point to the men being called by Jesus (apostles) to be His witnesses?

Aeneas was healed. How might his telling of his story have been part of his being part of the body of Christ? How would telling the story encourage believers and also witness to unbelievers?

Tabatha helped the poor and widows. How was helping them Tabatha's being part of the body of Christ? How was her life an example to both believers and unbelievers?

In what ways were the poor and widows part of the body of Christ?

Is there anything from this week's personal reflection time which you would like to discuss more with your small group?