

Acts 9:40

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

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.

Analysis

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. Peter's methodical approach—removing crowd, kneeling in prayer, speaking to corpse—demonstrates dependence on divine power while exercising apostolic authority, resulting in dramatic resurrection.

Put them all forth created private space for prayer, avoiding spectacle. This parallels Jesus raising Jairus's daughter (Mark 5:40)—removing unbelieving or disruptive crowd before miracle. Genuine ministry seeks God's glory, not public acclaim. The exclusion also protected against skepticism or mockery if nothing occurred.

Kneeled down and prayed demonstrates complete dependence on God. Peter possessed apostolic authority but no inherent power. The prayer (content unspecified) sought divine intervention. Reformed theology emphasizes miracles require prayer because God alone holds power over life and death.

Turning to the body said, Tabitha, arise combines prayer with command. Like Jesus at Lazarus's tomb (John 11:43), Peter spoke to corpse with authority. She opened her eyes and sat up confirms genuine death and genuine resurrection—not resuscitation of nearly-dead person but restoration of dead to life. This miracle

authenticated apostolic ministry while demonstrating Christ's continuing power through His church.

Historical Context

The resurrection account parallels Jesus' miracles (Jairus's daughter, widow's son at Nain, Lazarus) and anticipates Eutychus (Acts 20:9-12). Apostles continued Christ's work, demonstrating His promised presence (Matthew 28:20). Unlike later legendary accounts, Luke provides sober, clinical narrative—no magical formulas, no elaborate rituals, just prayer and command.

The miracle's publicity (Acts 9:42) established Christianity's credibility throughout Joppa and region. This occurred around 38-39 CE, shortly before Cornelius encounter. God was demonstrating through Peter that resurrection power available in Jesus overcomes death—ultimate human enemy. Tabitha's restoration foreshadowed final resurrection hope central to Christian proclamation.

Related Passages

Romans 1:17 — The righteous shall live by faith

Hebrews 11:1 — Definition of faith

Study Questions

1. What role does private prayer play before public demonstrations of God's power?
2. How does removing crowds before ministry distinguish genuine spiritual power from showmanship?
3. In what ways do apostolic miracles authenticate gospel claims about Jesus' resurrection?
4. What distinguishes biblical resurrection accounts from legendary miracle stories?
5. How should believers balance expecting God's miraculous intervention with accepting His sovereign will regarding healing and death?

Interlinear Text

ἐκβαλὼν δὲ ἔξω πάντας ὁ Πέτρον θεὸς τὰ
put **And** **forth** **them all** G3588 **Peter** **and kneeled down** G3588
G1544 G1161 G1854 G3956 G4074 G5087

γόνατα προσηύξατο καὶ ἐπιστρέψας πρὸς τὸ σῶμα
G1119 **and prayed** **and** **turning** **him to** G3588 **the body**
G4336 G2532 G1994 G4314 G4983

εἶπεν Ταβιθά ἀνάστηθι ἡ δὲ ἤνοιξεν τοὺς ὀφθαλμοὺς
said **Tabitha** **arise** G3588 **And** **she opened** G3588 **eyes**
G2036 G5000 G450 G1161 G455 G3788

αὐτῆς καὶ ἰδοῦσα τὸν Πέτρον ἀνεκάθισεν
G846 **and** **when she saw** G3588 **Peter** **she sat up**
G2532 G1492 G4074 G339

Additional Cross-References

Matthew 9:25 (Parallel theme): But when the people were put forth, he went in, and took her by the hand, and the maid arose.

Acts 7:60 (Parallel theme): And he kneeled down, and cried with a loud voice, Lord, lay not this sin to their charge. And when he had said this, he fell asleep.

Luke 8:54 (Resurrection): And he put them all out, and took her by the hand, and called, saying, Maid, arise.