

Bringing New Life to Those In Need

Key Verse:
*“Forasmuch as
Lydda was nigh to
Joppa, and 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.”*
—Acts 9:38

Selected Scripture:
Acts 9:32-43

HAVING RECEIVED THE Holy Spirit on the Day of Pentecost, the eleven apostles (prior to the selection of Paul) were imbued with various ‘gifts’ of the Spirit, given by God for a limited time in order that the authority of the apostles could be established as being directly from God. Once the apostles fell asleep in death, these gifts were no longer needed. Another purpose served by these gifts was to illustrate future events in God’s plan of salvation for mankind. Such is the focus of today’s lesson.

As the Apostle Peter passed through the regions of Palestine, most assuredly preaching as he went the Gospel of Christ, he came to a group of believers residing at Lydda. Among their little group was a man named Aeneas who had been bedridden for eight years with palsy. “Peter said unto him, Aeneas, Jesus Christ maketh thee whole: arise, and make thy bed. And he arose immediately.”—Acts 9:34

Earlier, in Acts 3, Peter took the occasion, after healing a lame man, to point out that this healing work illustrated

the greater healing and restoration that would eventually come about to all mankind during the “times of restitution of all things.” (Acts 3:21) Peter spoke there of the great work of Christ’s future kingdom, in which Adam and all his progeny will be restored to the perfection of body, mind, and character enjoyed by our first parents in the Garden of Eden, before they fell into sin. Peter’s healing of Aeneas was a similar foregleam of the blessings of that kingdom. The healing of disease in Christ’s kingdom was even prophesied in the Old Testament. Speaking of that future day, the prophet Isaiah had said, “The inhabitant shall not say, I am sick.”—Isa. 33:24

Our lesson continues with the account of a woman who lived in Joppa named Tabitha, also called Dorcas, a believer in Jesus and known for her good works, especially on behalf of others. (Acts 9:36) Sadly, she became sick and died. The disciples at Joppa heard that Peter was close by, so they sent for him to come to them, as stated in the Key Verse. When Peter arrived, they immediately took him to the “upper chamber” where they had laid Tabitha’s body. How Peter must have been touched when he saw so many there, weeping together and recalling all the many good deeds she had done on behalf of the brethren. (vs. 39) The account continues, “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.”—vss. 40,41

As with the healing of Aeneas, the raising of Tabitha from the dead, in addition to being a wonderful blessing to those there, was illustrative of another grand work during Christ’s kingdom, that of raising all mankind from the dead. Jesus himself had promised this, when he said, “The hour is coming, in the which all that are in the graves shall hear his voice, And shall come forth.” (John 5:28,29) How we long for that glorious day! ■