



The Scrolls

Helping **CENTRAL BIBLE CHURCH** Families Belong, Become and Go Beyond

V28 N21

May 24, 2026

POWER AND PURPOSE

“When Jesus Makes People Whole”

Acts 9:36-43

THIS WEEK'S CORE COMPETENCY

Jesus Christ

I believe Jesus Christ is the Son of God who became man, died for sinners, and rose from the dead.

“Long ago, at many times and in many ways, God spoke to our fathers by the prophets, 2 but in these last days he has spoken to us by his Son, whom he appointed the heir of all things, through whom also he created the world. 3 He is the radiance of the glory of God and the exact imprint of his nature, and he upholds the universe by the word of his power.”

Hebrews 1:1-3a



How does the gospel advance to the south from Jerusalem?

Jesus performed between thirty-five and forty miracles during his earthly ministry, which are commonly grouped by kind: approximately twenty *healing* miracles, ten *nature* miracles, five *exorcisms*, and on three occasions he resuscitated a dead person. No wonder, Peter declared to Cornelius, his relatives and close friends – all Gentiles (Ac 10:24): “Truly I understand that God shows no partiality, but in every nation anyone who fears him and does what is right is acceptable to him. As for the word that he sent to Israel, preaching good news of peace through Jesus Christ (he is Lord of all), you yourselves know what happened throughout all Judea, beginning from Galilee after the baptism that John proclaimed: how God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Spirit and with power. He went about doing good and healing all who were oppressed by the devil, for God was with him” (vv. 34-38).

According to Luke, Jesus continued to “do good healing all who were oppressed by the devil,” following his resurrection. In the introduction to the second of his two-volume work, Luke-Acts, he writes: “In the first book, O Theophilus, I have dealt with all that Jesus began to do and teach, until the day when he was taken up, after he had given commands through the Holy Spirit to the apostles whom he had chosen” (1:1-2). On the implication of Luke’s expression “began to do and teach,” one commentator writes: “The idea that Jesus began’ (*ērxato*) such activity may well suggest that he is still at work as Luke writes his story of the church in volume 2. Acts 9 describes Jesus’s direct involvement, but the claim is wider than his direct, visible involvement [in Saul’s conversion] (Bruce 1990:98). This link is important. What the early church said and did was rooted in and connected to activity in which the risen Jesus was involved. Indeed, the point is that without Jesus and his work, one cannot make sense of the church’s existence and activity”

(Darrell L. Bock, *Acts*, BECNT, 52-53).

Miracles like Jesus performed are also found in the book of Acts: healing miracles (3:1-10; 5:1-16; 9:32-35; 14:8-10; 28:7-9), exorcisms (5:16; 8:67; 16:16-18), resuscitations (9:36-42; 20:9-12), and more. Note the general reference to “signs and wonders” (2:1-13, 43; 6:8; 8:6-7, 13; 19:11-12), as well as the mention of miraculous judgments (5:1-11; 13:6-11), angelic rescues (5:17-21; 12:6-11), and other miraculous deliverances (16:25-26; 28:3-6). Jesus is continuing to perform miracles – but now through his apostles.

The similarity between Jesus’ healing of Jairus’ daughter and Peter’s healing of Tabitha is so striking commentators invariably comment on it. One writes: “Peter’s procedure here was almost identical to Jesus’ when He raised Jairus’ daughter (Mark 5:41; Luke 8:51-56). Peter’s praying shows that he was relying on Jesus for his power, just as his previous announcement, ‘Jesus Christ heals you,’ had showed that attitude when he healed Aeneas (v. 34). There is only one letter difference in what Peter said (*Tabitha qumi*) and what Jesus had said (*Talitha qumi*, lit. “Little girl, I say to you, get up”). This miracle is yet another evidence of Jesus’ working powerfully through His witnesses in word and deed (1:1-2; cf. John 14:12)” (Thomas L. Constable, “Notes on Acts,” 2026 ed., 213, soniclight.com/tcon/notes/pdf/acts.pdf). Another comments: “The mood of the passage is much like Luke 8:54-55. The parallel is no accident. Peters’ ministry shows that Jesus is still at work” (Bock, 378).

As a result of the healing of Aeneas (9:32-35) and the resuscitation of Tabitha (vv. 36-43), Luke tells his readers: “And all the residents of Lydda and Sharon saw Aeneas, and they turned to the Lord” (v. 35). So too, regarding Tabitha, “And it became known throughout all Joppa, and many believed in the Lord” (v. 42). Jesus continued to build his church.

Read Acts 9:36-43

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

Cf. Mark 5:35-43

35 While he was still speaking, there came from the ruler's house some who said, "Your daughter is dead. Why trouble the Teacher any further?" 36 But overhearing what they said, Jesus said to the ruler of the synagogue, "Do not fear, only believe." 37 And he allowed no one to follow him except Peter and James and John the brother of James. 38 They came to the house of the ruler of the synagogue, and Jesus saw a commotion, people weeping and wailing loudly. 39 And when he had entered, he said to them, "Why are you making a commotion and weeping? The child is not dead but sleeping." 40 And they laughed at him. But he put them all outside and took the child's father and mother and those who were with him and went in where the child was. 41 Taking her by the hand he said to her, "Talitha cumi," which means, "Little girl, I say to you, arise." 42 And immediately the girl got up and began walking (for she was twelve years of age), and they were immediately overcome with amazement. 43 And he strictly charged them that no one should know this, and told them to give her something to eat.

After reading the text, practice your Observation skills by noting the following:

- Circle "Joppa" in v. 36.
- Underline "Tabitha" and "Dorcas" in v. 36.
- Highlight v. 36b.
- Circle "Lydda" in v. 38.
- Box "So" indicating *result* in v. 39.
- Circle "widows" in v. 39.
- Circle "showing tunics" in v. 39.
- Box "But" indicating *contrast* in v. 40.
- Bracket "Tabitha, arise" in v. 40.
- Underline "Simon, a tanner" in v. 43.

What one word would you use to describe the **TONE** of this passage? (i.e., stern, joyful, cautious, etc.)

What one thing do you not understand in this passage?

Try to summarize the **THEME** of this passage in one word. If you were going to describe these verses, you might say, "This text is about _____."



DIG DEEPER

Answer the questions to help you apply the passage and prepare for discussion

1. Tabitha and Dorcas – one woman or two? Explain.
2. Put what “full of good works and acts of charity” means in your own words and explain whether Luke *intends* for his readers to imitate Tabitha.
3. Tabitha was prepared for burial but not buried. *Why* do you suppose she was placed in an upper room and two men were sent to get Peter?
4. *Where* did the men find Peter, and *why* did they urge him to come with them without delay?
5. *Who* in particular mourned Tabitha’s death and *why*?
6. What makes you think the Lord, rather than Peter, *resuscitated* Tabitha?
7. Tabitha was *resuscitated* not *resurrected*. Explain the difference between the two.
8. Describe the *result* this miracle had on the community.
9. Explain *why* Luke would bother to tell his readers where Peter stayed while he remained in Joppa.
10. **Discussion.** Does Luke tell his readers this story because of what he wants them to *know, do, or be*. Talk about it.

Commentary On The Text

The stories of the healing of Aeneas (Ac 9:32-35) and the resuscitation of Tabitha (vv. 36-43) form a pendant pair. In Lydda, Peter heals a paralyzed man named Aeneas, and in Joppa he raises Tabitha, a.k.a. Dorcas, from the dead. On the historical setting of the two narratives, one commentator writes: “With Paul home in Tarsus, the narrative focuses once more on Peter. He last appeared in connection with the Samaritan mission (8:14-25). Now he participated in the greater Judean mission, evangelizing the coastal cities. Finally, he would witness to a Gentile, a key incident in establishing the mission ‘to the ends of the earth’ (10:1-11:18). This small section on Peter’s witness to the coastal towns consists of two miracle stories: the healing of Aeneas (vv. 12-15) and the raising of Dorcas (vv. 36-43)” (John B. Polhill, *Acts*, NAC, 245). Luke is apparently setting the stage for the next episode in his story of the expansion of the church beyond Jerusalem—both geographically and ethnically—in which Corneilius, a God-fearing Gentile, comes to faith in Jesus.

The story of the resuscitation of Tabitha (Gk. Dorcas), like all stories, has a setting, characters, and a plot. Put differently, in every story something happens to someone, somewhere. Regarding the *setting*, the plot of this story unfolds in Joppa—a city near Lydda where Aeneas was healed—in the upper room where Tabitha had been placed following her preparation for burial (vv. 37-39). Joppa was 25km from Lydda where Peter was, a long walk that would take the better part of a day. Tabitha was prepared for burial, “her body was washed” (v. 37), but rather than being buried immediately, she was placed in an upper room—apparently, to await the arrival of Peter. This somewhat unusual action on the part of the believers causes one commentator to speculate: “When she ‘died,’ the believers sent word to Peter in nearby Joppa asking him to come. Apparently they expected him to raise her back to life, just as Jesus had done, since they ‘washed her body,’ and ‘laid it in an upstairs room’” (Thomas L. Constable, “Notes on Acts,” 2026 ed., 213, soniclight.com/tcon/notes/pdf/acts.pdf).

The *major characters* in the story include Peter, not surprisingly, Tabitha, of course, and perhaps the widows, who mourned her death. *Minor characters* include the disciples who sent for Peter and the two men they sent (v. 38). Peter, the story’s protagonist, is sometimes referred to as *the apostle to the Jews* given Paul’s words in Galatians 2:7-9 to the effect that Peter

was entrusted with taking the gospel to the Jews and he, Paul, to the Gentiles. Peter was, however, involved in taking the gospel to those who were not strictly speaking Jews, Samaritans, for example (Ac 8:14-17) and to regions of Judea with mixed populations of Jews and Gentiles, Lydda and Joppa, for example (9:32-43), which were both Hellenistic cities. Jesus had previously performed healing miracles through Peter (3:1-11; 9:32-35), but in this episode, Jesus raises Tabitha from the dead through him. The second major character in the story, Tabitha, perhaps a widow herself, is portrayed by Luke as an exemplary disciple, who “was continually doing good deeds and acts of charity” (NET)—particularly for other widows in the Christian community (cf. 2:44-45; 4:32). When Paul arrived from Lydda, widows, who likely were the recipients of Tabitha’s benevolence, were present mourning her death, no doubt dressed in garments that she had made for them.

As the plot unfolds, Peter arrived and was taken to the upper room where he apparently found Tabitha surrounded by the widows. After putting all others out of the room, Peter knelt down and prayed; then turning toward Tabitha’s corpse he said: “Tabitha, arise” (v. 40). She immediately opened her eyes, and upon seeing Peter, sat up. She then took his hand, and he raised her up. On the miracle, one commentator writes: “In the footsteps of his Master, and through the power of his Master (the *prayer* shows that), Peter worked the same miracle of ‘resurrection.’ As with Jairus’s daughter, the widow’s son at Nain, Lazarus, and Dorcas, it was not a matter of resurrection but of resuscitation, of temporary restoration of life. But all the miracles of raising from the dead are in a real sense ‘signs,’ pointers to the one who has power even over death and is himself the resurrection and the life for all who believe and trust in him” (Polhill, 248). The story ends with Peter presenting Tabitha alive to the believers and widows. It didn’t take long for the story of her revivification to spread throughout all Joppa with the result that “many believed in the Lord” (v. 42). The story would explain the advance of the gospel in Judea and bolster Luke’s readers’ confidence in what they believed (cf. Lk 1:4).

Word Studies/Notes

v. 36 *Joppa* “The story takes place in Joppa, the main port city of Judea, located on the Philistine coast some ten or eleven miles northwest of Lydda” (John B. Polhill, *Acts*, NAC, 247). The city is repeatedly mentioned in chaps. 9-11.

v. 36 *Tabitha, Dorcas* “Tabitha” was her Aramaic name, whereas “Dorcas” was her Greek name. Luke provides the Gk. translation of “Tabitha,” i.e., “Dorcas,” for his readers. Both words mean “gazelle” in English. “‘Female disciple’ (*mathētria*) occurs only here in the NT, although it is not uncommon in Greek literature” (Polhill, 247).

v. 36b *full of . . .* Cf. “She was continually doing good deeds and acts of charity” (NET); “this woman was abounding with deeds of kindness and charity which she continually did” (NASB1995). “‘Acts of charity’ (*eleēmosynōn*) refers to providing alms—acts of mercy through charitable giving. Almsgiving was highly regarded in Judaism (Tob. 1:3, 16; 3:2; 4:7-8; Sir. 7:10). The detail suggests that she is wealthy and generous. The alms may involve widows if verse 39 points in that direction” (Darrell L. Bock, *Acts*, BECNT, 377).

v. 38 *Lydda* “‘Lydda’ (Old Testament and modern Lod, the site of Israel’s international airport) lay on the Mediterranean coastal plain about 10 miles from the sea. It was about 25 miles northwest of Jerusalem. It stood at the junction of the roads from Joppa to Jerusalem and the highway from Egypt to Syria. There were already ‘saints’ (believers in Jesus) there (cf. vv. 13, 41)” (Thomas L. Constable, “Notes on Acts,” 2026 ed., 211, soniclight.com/tcon/notes/pdf/acts.pdf). The city is “about a day’s journey by foot from Joppa” (Bock, 376)—or nearly 25km.

v. 39 *widows* The recipients of Tabitha’s “good deeds and acts of charity” mourn her passing. “The stress on Tabitha’s works of charity, especially to widows, adds a unique dimension to this resurrection [better *resuscitation*] story. Although the details of the internal life of the church are scanty, the narrator emphasized the sharing of wealth with the needy in the early Jerusalem church (2:44-45; 4:32-37). This included a daily provision for widows (6:1). As the mission moves into new areas, the narrator finds opportunity to hold up further models of active concern for the needy . . . As the gospel spreads, people like Tabitha appear in these

new areas showing the power of the gospel through lives ‘full of good works and charities’ (9:36)” (Robert C. Tannehill, *The Narrative Unity of Luke – Acts*, vol. 2, *The Acts of the Apostles*, 127).

v. 39 *showing tunics* Perhaps “showing on themselves.” “The middle voice (*epideiknymenai*) perhaps indicates that what is shown is what they are wearing. Barrett (1994:485) suggests that the expression indicates only that they own what is shown. Either sense is possible” (Bock, 378).

v. 40 *“Tabitha, arise”* “Peter’s procedure here was almost identical to Jesus’ when He raised Jairus’ daughter (Mark 5:41; Luke 8:51-56). Peter’s praying shows that he was relying on Jesus for his power, just as his previous announcement, ‘Jesus Christ heals you,’ had showed that attitude when he healed Aeneas (v. 34). There is only one letter difference in what Peter said (*Tabitha qumi*) and what Jesus had said (*Talitha qumi*, lit. ‘Little girl, I say to you, get up’)” (Constable, 213). “The mood of the passage is much like Luke 8:54-55. The parallel is no accident. Peter’s ministry shows that Jesus is still at work” (Bock, 378). “To avoid ceremonial defilement (cf. Lev. 21:1; Num. 5:2; 9:6-10; 19:11), **Peter** did not touch her until after God restored her to life” (Stanley D. Toussaint, “Acts,” in *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: New Testament*, 379).

v. 43 *Simon, a tanner* “Occupations were frequently used with personal name to further identify individuals (see 16:14; 18:3; 19:24; 1Ti 4:14), but in this case it is especially significant. A tanner was involved in treating the skins of dead animals, thus contacting the unclean according to Jewish law, so Simon was despised by many. Peter’s decision to stay with him show already a willingness to reject Jewish prejudice and helps to prepare the way for his coming vision and the mission to the Gentiles” (*The NIV Study Bible*, note on Ac 9:43).



APPLY THE TEXT

CENTRAL MESSAGE OF THIS PASSAGE

Many people in Lydda and Joppa believe in the Lord as the gospel is taken to Judea by Peter through whom Jesus continues to perform miracles.

CENTRAL MESSAGE FOR YOUR LIFE

(Rewrite the Central Message above to personally apply to your own life)



3 LIVING QUESTIONS

The “Living Questions” are simple questions we may ask of any text in order to apply the Bible to our life. Answer the questions below as personally as you can.

1. What does the author of this passage want me to *know*?

2. What does the author of this passage want me to *do*?

3. What does the author of this passage want me to *be*?



PARENT CONNECTION

Do you know your child's spiritual gift? What skill has God blessed them with to reflect His glory? Do you actively encourage that gift? Sometimes as parents we get caught up in what we think our child needs to be or do as opposed to how God has truly gifted them. One of my kids was always the tallest and biggest in his class. Because of his build we were often asked if he was a football player. The men who asked generally had a twinkle in their eye with a little drool as if they were planning his college career right in front of us. The funny thing is that this particular child has always had a love for the arts. In his preschool years we would find him dressed in a Power Ranger costume drawing the most beautiful pictures. He is incredibly gifted musically and plays virtually any instrument by ear. His path is different and far better than the one I had in mind. One of his gifts is leading people in worship, telling God's story and sharing why He is important through music. When we release our perception of our child and chase hard after God's will and plan, we're better able to begin to cultivate spiritual growth in our kids. I'll get up crazy early, drive all around town or sacrifice my own time and comfort to foster this gift that brings God glory. Parents, I'm praying God reveals your child's spiritual gift and you are able and willing to foster this gift for His glory.

What Does The Bible Say?

Skim Acts 9:35-43.

1. What do you learn about Tabitha from this passage?
2. What did Peter do when he saw that Tabitha was dead?
3. How did people respond to Tabitha being raised from the dead?

What Do You Think?

Why were people sad when Tabitha died?

What Do You Do?

Tabitha used her gifts to glorify God. This week, use your gifts to encourage someone and glorify God (color a picture, write a letter, do a chore for a friend or family member).

CORE COMPETENCY: Jesus Christ

I believe Jesus Christ is fully God and perfectly man and died for my sins.

MEMORY VERSE: Psalm 46:1

"God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble."

KidPIXCOUPON

Earn 1 KidPIX Token by completing the CENTRALKids Bible Study on this page and another token by memorizing and reciting the memory verse for this week.

Questions: kids@wearecentral.org

- I completed my Bible Study
- I memorized this week's verse
- I brought my Bible to church
- I brought a friend



CHILD'S NAME

GRADE

PARENT SIGNATURE

OUR CORE COMPETENCIES

CENTRAL BELIEFS

Authority of the Bible (2 Timothy 3:16-17)
I believe the Bible is the Word of God and has the right to command my belief and action.

Church (Ephesians 4:15-16)

I believe the church is God's primary way to accomplish His purposes on earth today.

Eternity (John 14:1-4)

I believe there is a heaven and a hell and that Jesus Christ is returning to judge the earth and to establish His eternal kingdom.

The Holy Spirit (Romans 8:9)

I believe the Holy Spirit convicts, calls, converts and changes me as a child of God.

Humanity (John 3:16)

I believe all people are loved by God and need Jesus Christ as their Savior.

Identity in Christ (John 1:12)

I believe I am significant because of my position as a child of God.

Jesus Christ (Hebrews 1:1-4)

I believe Jesus Christ is the Son of God who became man, died for sinners and rose from the dead.

Life Purpose (Acts 20:24)

I believe I am a steward of God's resources and have been redeemed to participate in His Kingdom purposes for His glory.

Personal God (Psalm 121:1-2)

I believe God is involved in and cares about my daily life.

Salvation by Grace (Ephesians 2:8-9)

I believe a person comes into a right relationship with God by His grace, through faith in Jesus Christ.



CENTRAL VIRTUES

Love (1 John 4:10-12)

I sacrificially and unconditionally love and forgive others.

Joy (John 15:11)

I have inner contentment and purpose in spite of my circumstances.

Peace (Philippians 4:6-7)

I am free from anxiety because things are right between God, myself and others.

Patience (Proverbs 14:29)

I take a long time to overheat and endure patiently under the unavoidable pressures of life.

Kindness/Goodness (1 Thessalonians 5:15)

I choose to do the right things in my relationships with others

Faithfulness (Proverbs 3:3-4)

I have established a good name with God and with others based on my long-term loyalty to those relationships.

Gentleness (Philippians 4:5)

I am thoughtful, considerate and calm in dealing with others.

Self-Control (Titus 2:11-13)

I have the power, through Christ, to control myself.

Grace (Colossians 3:13)

I demonstrate forgiveness, mercy and generosity to others, even when they have offended me.

Hope (1 Peter 1:3-5)

I have a growing anticipation of God's promises and my secure eternity with Him.

Humility (Philippians 2:3-4)

I choose to esteem others above myself.



CENTRAL PRACTICES

Bible Study (Hebrews 4:12)

I study the Bible to know God, the truth, and to find direction for my daily life.

Biblical Community (Acts 2:44-47)

I fellowship with other Christians to accomplish God's purposes in my life, others' lives, and in the world.

Compassion (Psalm 82:3-4)

I seek to serve the last, the least and the lost in my community.

Disciple-Making (2 Timothy 2:2)

I multiply godly beliefs, virtues and practices in others to encourage their spiritual growth in Christ.

Evangelism (Acts 1:8)

I share Jesus with others through personal proclamation and demonstration of the gospel.

Generosity (2 Corinthians 9:6-11)

I gladly give my resources to fulfill God's purposes.

Prayer (Psalm 66:16-20)

I pray to God to know Him, to lay my request before Him and to find direction for my daily life.

Single-Mindedness (Matthew 6:33)

I focus on God and His priorities for my life.

Spiritual Gifts (Romans 12:4-6)

I know and use my spiritual gifts to accomplish God's purposes.

Worship (Psalm 95:1-7)

I worship God for who He is and what He has done for me.

Tom Bulick (M.A. in Educational Leadership, Eastern Michigan University, Th.M. in Old Testament, and Ph.D. in Bible Exposition, Dallas Theological Seminary). For more than forty years, Tom has served as pastor, faculty member, and administrator. Tom was Vice President for Student Life and Associate Professor of Religious Studies at Trinity Western University (Vancouver, B.C.) from 1986 to 1998 and Spiritual Formation Pastor at Central Bible Church (Fort Worth, TX) from 1998 to 2022. He and his wife Ruth have one son, Zach.

Stephanie Thomas (B.B.A University of Texas at Arlington). Stephanie is married to James and they have five children: Elijah, Levi, Bo, Ella and Simon. Stephanie has attended Central Bible Church for more than 20 years, has been on staff since 2014, and now serves as Children's Minister.

The Scrolls Bible Study is a spiritual growth resource of Central Bible Church, Fort Worth, Texas.

© 2026 Central Bible Church.

Material researched, written and supervised by Dr. Tom Bulick. All Scripture referenced from the English Standard Version unless otherwise noted. This resource is freely distributed and may be copied without permission.



**CENTRAL
BIBLE CHURCH**

8001 Anderson Boulevard
Fort Worth, Texas 76120
817-274-1315
wearecentral.org

OUR MISSION
Making God known by making disciples who are changed by God to change their world.