

ADULT BIBLE STUDY - ACTS 9:32 – 10:33

THE TWO MIRACLES OF PETER 9:32-43

The Healing of Aeneas (Acts 9:32-35)

³² Now as Peter went here and there among them all, he came down also to the saints that lived at Lydda. ³³ There he found a man named Aeneas, who had been bedridden for eight years and was paralyzed. ³⁴ **And Peter said to him, "Aeneas, Jesus Christ heals you; rise and make your bed." And immediately he rose.** ³⁵ And all the residents of Lydda and Sharon saw him, and they turned to the Lord.

Jesus Heals a Paralytic (Luke 5:17-26)

And behold, men were bringing on a bed a man who was paralyzed, and they sought to bring him in and lay him before Jesus; but finding no way to bring him in, because of the crowd, they went up on the roof and let him down with his bed through the tiles into the midst before Jesus. And when he saw their faith he said, "Man, your sins are forgiven you." And the scribes and the Pharisees began to question, saying, "Who is this that speaks blasphemies? Who can forgive sins but God only?" When Jesus perceived their questionings, he answered them, "Why do you question in your hearts? Which is easier, to say, 'Your sins are forgiven you,' or to say, 'Rise and walk'? **But that you may know that the Son of man has authority on earth to forgive sins**" -- he said to the man who was paralyzed -- "I say to you, rise, take up your bed and go home." And immediately he rose before them, and took up that on which he lay, and went home, glorifying God. And amazement seized them all, and they glorified God and were filled with awe, saying, "We have seen strange things today

- The Gospel account is one of healing but even more deals with authority.
 - o "Who is this that speaks blasphemies?" (Lk 5:21)
 - o "Who can forgive sins but God only?" (Lk 5:21)
 - o "But that you may know that the Son of man has authority on earth to forgive sins..." (Lk 5:24)
- Jesus had been given authority from the Father to do those things that were reserved for God only.
 - o And Jesus came and said to them, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, to the close of the age." (Mt 28:18-20)
 - o "Truly, truly, I say to you, he who believes in me will also do the works that I do; and greater works than these will he do, because I go to the Father. (Jn 14:12)

- In the healing of Aeneas Peter demonstrates the authority that he understands has been given to him
 - “Aene’as, **Jesus Christ heals you**; rise and make your bed.” (Acts 9:34)
- The Healing of the Paralytic comes shortly after the call of Peter in the same chapter 5 of Luke’s Gospel
 - And he saw two boats by the lake; but the fishermen had gone out of them and were washing their nets. Getting into one of the boats, which was Simon’s, he asked him to put out a little from the land. And he sat down and taught the people from the boat. And when he had ceased speaking, he said to Simon, "Put out into the deep and let down your nets for a catch." And Simon answered, "Master, we toiled all night and took nothing! But at your word I will let down the nets." And when they had done this, they enclosed a great shoal of fish; and as their nets were breaking, they beckoned to their partners in the other boat to come and help them. And they came and filled both the boats, so that they began to sink. But when Simon Peter saw it, he fell down at Jesus' knees, saying, "Depart from me, for I am a sinful man, O Lord." For he was astonished, and all that were with him, at the catch of fish which they had taken; and so also were James and John, sons of Zeb'edee, who were partners with Simon. **And Jesus said to Simon, "Do not be afraid; henceforth you will be catching men."** And when they had brought their boats to land, they left everything and followed him. (Lk 5:2-11)
 - The two miracle stories are linked to the vocation and authority of the Apostles; especially Peter.

The rising of Tabitha at Joppa (Acts 9:36-43)

³⁶ Now there was at Joppa a disciple named Tabitha, which means Dorcas or Gazelle. She was full of good works and acts of charity. ³⁷ In those days she fell sick 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 entreating him, “Please come to us without delay.” ³⁹ So Peter rose and went with them. And when he had come, they took him to the upper room. All the widows stood beside him weeping, and showing coats and garments which Dorcas made while she was with them. ⁴⁰ But Peter put them all outside and knelt down and prayed; then turning to the body he said, **“Tabitha, rise.”** And she opened her eyes, and when she saw Peter she sat up. ⁴¹ And he gave her his hand and lifted 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.

The rising of Jairus’ Daughter (Lk 8:41-42; 49-56)

And there came a man named Ja’irus, who was a ruler of the synagogue; and falling at Jesus’ feet he besought him to come to his house, ⁴² for he had an only daughter, about twelve years of age, and she was dying. ⁴⁹ While he was still speaking, a man from the ruler’s house came and said, “Your daughter is dead; do not trouble the Teacher anymore.” ⁵⁰ But Jesus on hearing this answered him, “Do not fear; only believe, and she shall be well.” ⁵¹ And when he came to the house, he permitted no one to enter with him, except Peter and John and James, and the father and mother of the child. ⁵² And all were weeping and bewailing her; but he said, “Do not weep; for she is not dead but sleeping.” ⁵³ And they laughed at him, knowing that she was dead. ⁵⁴ But taking her by the hand he called, saying, **“Child, arise.”** ⁵⁵ And her spirit returned, and she got up at once; and he directed that something should be given her to eat. ⁵⁶ And her parents were amazed; but he charged them to tell no one what had happened.

- In Luke's Gospel this story is followed by the commissioning of the disciples and an investment of authority.
 - o And he called the twelve together and gave them power and authority over all demons and to cure diseases, and he sent them out to preach the kingdom of God and to heal. (Lk 9:1-2)
- **"She was full of good works and acts of charity" (Acts 9:36)**
 - o You see that a man is justified by works and not by faith alone... For as the body apart from the spirit is dead, so faith apart from works is dead. (Jas 2:24,26)
 - o For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision nor uncircumcision is of any avail, but faith working through love. (Gal 5:6)
 - o For by grace you have been saved through faith; and this is not your own doing, it is the gift of God -- not because of works, lest any man should boast. For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them. (Eph 2:8-10)
- **And he stayed in Joppa for many days with one Simon, a tanner. (Acts 9:43)**
 - o According to the Old Law this made Simon ritually "unclean"
 - Lev 5:2; 11:26-28, 39-40, 45-47
 - And he called the people to him and said to them, "Hear and understand: not what goes into the mouth defiles a man, but what comes out of the mouth, this defiles a man." (Mt 15:10-11)

PETER AND CORNELIUS (10:1-8)

- a devout man who feared God with all his household, gave alms liberally to the people, and prayed constantly to God (10:2)
- About the ninth hour (10:3)...Your prayers and your alms have ascended as a memorial before God. (10:4)
 - o Ninth hour = 3:00pm; the time of the evening liturgy when prayers and sacrifices were offered up in the Jerusalem Temple. It is also the hour in which Jesus gave up his life on the cross (Mk 15:34,37)
 - o Go and learn what this means, 'I desire mercy, and not sacrifice.' (Mt 9:13)
 - o Cornelius' righteousness is what is now pleasing and acceptable in God's sight
- And now send men to Joppa, and bring one Simon who is called Peter; (10:5)
 - o The first Gentile convert is set up by God himself, and this opening of the mission of salvation to the Gentiles is revealed directly to Peter by God. Because of this miraculous revelation and guidance of God, Peter pronounces authoritatively what God is saying by this (10:47-48).
 - o His unique role in this story cannot be overlooked.

PETER'S VISION (10:9-16)

- "he fell into a trance" (10:10)
 - o Paul was also led by God to serve the Gentiles while "in a trance" (22:17)
- "No, Lord; for I have never eaten anything that is common or unclean" (10:14)
 - o "You will never wash my feet" (John 13:8)

QUESTION: WHERE IS PETER AT PERSONALLY AND WHERE DOES GOD WANT HIM TO BE?

- **What God has cleansed you must not call common (10:15)**
 - o "Allegorically, Peter was to learn that God was cleansing the hearts of the Gentiles" (ICSB notes)
 - And he has made no distinction between us and them, but cleansed their hearts by faith (15:9)
- **This happened three times, and the thing was taken up at once to heaven (10:16)**
 - o Let's look at John 21:15-19
 - Do you love me? (3x)
 - Feed my lambs, feed my lambs, feed my sheep
- **And while Peter was pondering the vision, the Spirit said to him, "Behold, three men are looking for you. Rise and go down, and accompany them without hesitation; for I have sent them." (10:19-20)**
 - o There is nothing new that has been revealed, but God has opened Peter's mind and heart to the words Christ had spoken and entrusted to the Church

FROM THE CATECHISM OF THE CATHOLIC CHURCH

God has said everything in his Word

65 "In many and various ways God spoke of old to our fathers by the prophets, but in these last days he has spoken to us by a Son."²⁶ Christ, the Son of God made man, is the Father's one, perfect and unsurpassable Word. In him he has said everything; there will be no other word than this one. St. John of the Cross, among others, commented strikingly on *Hebrews* 1:1-2:

In giving us his Son, his only Word (for he possesses no other), he spoke everything to us at once in this sole Word - and he has no more to say. . . because what he spoke before to the prophets in parts, he has now spoken all at once by giving us the All Who is His Son. Any person questioning God or desiring some vision or revelation would be guilty not only of foolish behavior but also of offending him, by not fixing his eyes entirely upon Christ and by living with the desire for some other novelty.
27

There will be no further Revelation

66 "The Christian economy, therefore, since it is the new and definitive Covenant, will never pass away; and no new public revelation is to be expected before the glorious manifestation of our Lord Jesus Christ."²⁸ Yet even if Revelation is already complete, it has not been made completely explicit; it remains for Christian faith gradually to grasp its full significance over the course of the centuries.

THEN THEY BOTH ASK FOR EXPLANATIONS OF THEIR VISIONS

- "You yourselves know how unlawful it is for a Jew to associate with or to visit any one of another nation; but God has shown me that I should not call any man common or unclean. So when I was sent for, I came without objection. I ask then why you sent for me." (10:28-29)
- Now therefore we are all here present in the sight of God, to hear all that you have been commanded by the Lord." (10:33)