

Before Christ set toward, Jerusalem, before he was put on trial, before he was hung on the cross, before he died and was placed in a tomb, before he was raised again to life... before he appeared risen and gave his Spirit to the disciples, Jesus was directly asked if he was the Messiah.

What seems to be happening here is that those questioning Jesus are looking for a particular type of answer and Jesus is not giving it to them. It is not that Jesus had not answered the question, but Jesus did not answer the question in the way that they expected to hear it.

Those questioning Jesus perhaps wanted a yes or no. Jesus, however, notes that his actions have been clear and plain. The things that Jesus is able to do come not from human power but God's power.

Hear now **John 10:22-30** (NIV)

Then came the Festival of Dedication [That is, Hanukkah] at Jerusalem. It was winter, and Jesus was in the temple courts walking in Solomon's Colonnade. The Jews who were there gathered around him, saying, "How long will you keep us in suspense? If you are the Messiah, tell us plainly."

Jesus answered, "I did tell you, but you do not believe. The works I do in my Father's name testify about me, but you do not believe because you are not my sheep. My sheep listen to my voice; I know them, and they follow me. I give them eternal life, and they shall never perish; no one will snatch them out of my hand. My Father, who has given them to me, is greater than all; no one can snatch them out of my Father's hand. I and the Father are one."

In the gospels, miracles are signs. They are demonstrations of the power of God (and by extension they also signify a relationship between the one performing the miracle and God; only a few had the privilege of raising the dead). Like road signs, miracles in the text also act as guideposts, leading people to God. Moreover, miracles are intended to serve as fuel for our faith; they compel witnesses to believe, to believe in a powerful God who is able and willing to intervene on their behalf.

The story of Tabitha's miracle is told within the context of another miracle. While in Lydda, Peter found Aeneas, a paralyzed man who had been bed-ridden for eight years. Peter tells Aeneas: "Jesus Christ heals you; get up and make up your bed" (Acts 9:34). As a result of this miracle, all the residents of the town turn to the Lord.

Acts 9:36-43 (NIV)

In Joppa there was a disciple named Tabitha (in Greek her name is Dorcas); she was always doing good and helping the poor. About that time she became sick and died, and her body was washed and placed in an upstairs room. Lydda was near Joppa; so when the disciples heard that Peter was in Lydda, they sent two men to him and urged him, "Please come at once!"

Peter went with them, and when he arrived he was taken upstairs to the room. All the widows stood around him, crying and showing him the robes and other clothing that Dorcas had made while she was still with them.

Peter sent them all out of the room; then he got down on his knees and prayed. Turning toward the dead woman, he said, "Tabitha, get up." She opened her eyes, and seeing Peter she sat up. He took her by the

hand and helped her to her feet. Then he called for the believers, especially the widows, and presented her to them alive.

This became known all over Joppa, and many people believed in the Lord. Peter stayed in Joppa for some time with a tanner named Simon.