



Submitted: 27/05/24

Revised: 20/06/24

Accepted: 27/06/24

A Comparative Study of the Events when Peter and Paul Raised the Dead (Acts 9:36-42 and Acts 20:7-12)

Carel Hot Asi Siburian ^{1*}, Rion Androfen Silitonga^{2*}

^{1,2}Jakarta Theological Seminary, Indonesia

*carel.siburian@stftjakarta.ac.id, *rion.silitonga@stftjakarta.ac.id

Abstract:

Apart from Jesus, Peter and Paul are the two great apostles of Christianity who are said to have raised the dead; Peter raised Tabitha (Acts 9:36-42) and Paul raised Eutychus (Acts 20:7-12). If Jesus raised the dead on His authority, then Peter is described as raising the dead with divine assistance. The problem is that Paul is not portrayed as raising the dead by Jesus' authority and it is worth exploring further where Paul's power to raise the dead came from. Through a literature study approach, a construction will be built that the events of Peter and Paul raising the dead did not come from their power, but with different approaches. However, where the power came from is the end of the comparative study of these two stories.

Keywords:

Peter; Paul; Tabitha;
Eutychus; Acts 9:36-42;
Acts 20:7-12

Copyright @2024.

Carel Hot Asi Siburian
dan Rion Androfen
Silitonga



INTRODUCTION

The Canonical Gospels show that Jesus' ministry was often connected to the miracle of raising the dead. At least the Synoptic Gospels record that Jesus raised the daughter of Jairus (Mk. 5:21-24, 35-43; Mt. 9:18-19, 23-26; Lk. 8:40-42, 49-56), raised a young man in Nain (Lk. 7:11-17), and raised Lazarus (John 11:1-44). The authority to grant resurrection power came from within Jesus Himself. In the Old Testament, two prophets raised the dead. They are Elijah who raised the son of a widow in Zarephath (1 Kings 17:17-24) and Elisha raises up the son of a woman in Shunem (2 Kings 4:18-37). It seems that these continuities appear "intentional" although research into them remains to be done. We do, however, see that Jesus' raising of Jairus' daughter seems similar to the theme of Elisha raises up the son of a woman in Shunem, while Jesus' raising of the young man at Nain seems similar to the theme of Elijah raising the son of a widow in Zarephath.

In the New Testament, after the Canonical Gospels testify to the ministry of Jesus, one of which is raising the dead, the two great apostles in the book of Acts are then said to have also "succeeded" in raising the dead. The two of them are Peter and Paul. Peter is said to have "successfully" raised a female disciple named Tabitha in Lydda (Acts 9:36-42) and Paul "successfully" raised a young man named Eutychus in Troas (Acts 20:7-12). Interestingly, we see an "element of intentionality" trying to be presented through this sequence of events. We try to narrate it through the table below.¹

Old Testament	New Testament-Jesus	New Testament-Apostles
Elisha resurrected the son of a woman in Shunem	Jairus' daughter resurrected by Jesus	A female disciple named Tabitha was raised up by Peter
A child (his mother was a widow) in Zarephath was raised by Elijah	A young man (his mother was a widow) in Nain was raised by Jesus	A young man named Eutychus was resurrected by Paul

Although not the same, these three stories have a similar feel to each other. The story of the Shunem woman's son is similar to that of Jairus' daughter. The picture shows that the parents of each child went to great lengths to seek help from someone who might be able to

¹ The story of Lazarus being raised independently appears in John. His name appears in Luke but his resurrection still only appears in John. We don't compare his story in this section due to its independence. Even though the goal is the same, namely to emphasize that Jesus has power over life and death, John's approach is different from that of Jairus and the young man in Nain. The final section of this article will attempt to show why.

save their child from death. The son of the mother in Shunem struggled to find the man of God on Mount Carmel, Elisha (2 Kings 4:25) and Jairus struggled to find Jesus in the crowd (Mk. 5:22; Mt. 9:18; Lk. 8:41). The son of the widow in Zarephath and the young man in Nain also have a similar picture, that is the mother of both of them was widowed and will be left behind by their children through death. When we enter the book of Acts, we parallel the story of the mother in Shunem and the son of Jairus with the female disciple in Lydda whom Peter raised and the young man in Zarephath and Nain with the young man in Troas, respectively. However, this article will not focus on the similarities that emerge, but rather on the differences that emerge from these three different accounts, specifically on the differences between the events that Peter and Paul experienced.

The noticeable difference between these six different similar stories is the way or what each character did before raising the dead. This comparison is mainly made by the two prophets and the two apostles above. Jesus Himself is not included in this comparison because He has the power over life and death. He has the authority to do so. This is not the case with the two prophets and the two apostles above.

Old Testament	New Testament-Apostles
In 1 Kings 17:20-21, it is mentioned that Elijah cried out to God, then stretched his body over the boy three times and again cried out for the boy's life to be returned to him.	In Acts 9:40, it is mentioned that Peter knelt down and prayed to the Lord before raising the dead.
In 2 Kings 4:33-34, it says that Elisha prayed to the Lord, then dried himself on the boy and walked back and forth.	In Acts 20:10, it is mentioned that Paul threw himself on the young man and held him close.

The significant difference between the four stories above is the matter of prayer. Before raising the dead, Prophet Elijah, Prophet Elisha, and Apostle Peter first prayed (or cried out) to God. In summary, this element confirms that it is not from the power of these three that the dead come back to life but from the Lord (God) who has the power. The textual problem arises in the story of Paul. Paul is not shown praying to the Lord at all. He may have done the same thing as the two prophets before him, lying on Eutychus (and for interpreters, this suggests a connection), but Paul did not pray. Even Peter performed the act of bowing down and praying. This is the focus of this article. By comparing the events of Peter and Paul, we discuss where Paul's power to raise the dead came from and what caused these two

accounts to be different. The comparison in this article leaves open the possibility that Paul did not actually raise the dead (through the power of God). This emphasizes the need for further exploration of the story of Paul raising Eutychus and the “kind of death” he experienced and the reason why the story of Paul and Eutychus needs to be told. Another question is where is the point of the story, Peter and Paul, Tabitha and Eutychus, or which part? This article seeks to answer that.

METHODS

This article will use a literature study approach. We will use commentaries that discuss the two stories of Peter and Paul raising the dead. Interestingly, only these two apostles are told in the Bible as being able to raise the dead, but with different approaches. It is the analysis of these differences that we try to present in this article and try to “uncover” where the authority of the power of the resurrection is. A simple reading reveals that before raising Tabitha, Peter prayed first, while Paul spoke immediately. The comparison of the two stories of the resurrection of the dead leads to the offer of research that there are differences between the resurrection stories carried out by Peter and Paul regarding the death of the resurrected figures, namely Tabitha and Eutychus.

DISCUSSION

Peter raised Tabitha (Acts 9:36-42)

Peter is said to have raised a female disciple named Tabitha. It is said that Tabitha (or Dorcas in Greek) was a good person and often gave alms, but she had died. At that time, Peter was in Lydda and the author of Acts mentions that Lydda was very close to Joppa (the place where Tabitha was). That’s why the disciples in Joppa asked Peter to come to Joppa immediately. The text does not explain why the disciples at Joppa called Peter, but their purpose certainly was to ask Peter to raise Tabitha. Finally, all the people in the room where Tabitha’s body was were asked to come out by Peter. He knelt and prayed and then turned to Tabitha’s body and said, “Tabitha, arise!” (Acts 9:36-42).

According to Craig S. Keener, this story depicts an apostolic movement away from Jerusalem.² Keener also said that Luke seemed to have great respect for the female disciple Tabitha. He said that Luke placed Tabitha above Eneas by saying “Ἐν Ἰόππῃ δέ τις ἦν μαθήτρια ὀνόματι Ταβιθά” or “a female disciple”, whereas Luke only refers to Eneas as “a man.”³

Joseph A. Fitzmyer states that Acts 9 concludes the story of Saul’s conversion. Luke (who is believed to be the author of Acts) lays the foundation for Saul’s mission in the chapters that follow and begins his story with the missionary journey to the Gentiles through chapter 9. He gives the authority of the story to Peter as the leader of the apostles who began his evangelistic journey outside Jerusalem.⁴ Before arriving in Joppa and making many people there believe in God, Peter had performed another miracle first in Lydda. In Acts 9:32-26, we are told that Peter healed a man named Eneas who had been paralyzed for eight years. This miracle also made many people in Lydda and Sharon believe in God (Acts 9:32-35).

Fitzmyer says that the two miracles Peter performed above are familiar to the Synoptic Gospels. Both stories show that ultimately the miracles Peter performed were in the name of Jesus. Peter healed a paralyzed man in the name of Jesus (Acts 9:34) and prayed to Jesus when he would raise the dead (Acts 9:40). Both miracles were signs that it was not Peter who was in charge, but Jesus.⁵ This Greek sentence “... ὁ Πέτρος καὶ θεὸς τὰ γόνατα προσήυξατο ...” (NA-28, Acts 9:40) confirms that Peter raised Tabitha not by any other power or his power, but by prayer to God.⁶

According to Keener, it is likely that the story of Peter raising the dead is a little far-fetched. Luke most likely used a similar story of Jesus to imagine the story of Peter raising the dead, namely through the story of Jairus (Mk. 5:21-43, Mt. 9:18-26; Lk. 8:40:56).⁷ In all three passages, Jesus also drove out many people who were in the room where Jairus’ son was laid and then took her by the hand and raised her up.⁸ Heidi J. Hornik and Mikeal C. Parsons, on

² Craig S. Keener, *Acts: An Exegetical Commentary – 3:1-14:28 (Vol. 2)* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2013), 1710.

³ Keener, 1715.

⁴ Joseph A. Fitzmyer, *The Acts of the Apostles – A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary* (London: Bantam Doubleday Dell Publishing, 1998), 443.

⁵ Fitzmyer, 443.

⁶ Fitzmyer, 445.

⁷ Craig S. Keener, *Acts – New Cambridge Bible Commentary* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2020), 290–91.

⁸ James D.G. Dunn, *The Acts of the Apostles* (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2016), 164–65.

the other hand, focus on another reading of the name Peter called. Peter does not call Dorcas by name, but Tabitha, when resurrecting him. According to them, the text is performing an attempt at decolonization by invoking the name “Tabitha” rather than “Dorcas.” Peter chose to call her in Aramaic rather than Greek.⁹

The two words that are the focus of this analysis are *θεῖς* and *προσηύξατο*. These two words are the key to where Peter’s power to raise the dead came from. C.K. Barret says that Peter’s act of kneeling and praying before calling Tabitha, reminds the reader of Peter’s healing of the lame man in chapter 3 when Peter said something like this: “... why do you marvel at this, and why do you look at us as if we had made this man walk by our own power or godliness?” (Acts 3:12).¹⁰ This is in contrast to Paul’s attitude which will be discussed later; that Paul did not appear to ask God for power or blessing when raising Eutychus.

However, according to Richard I. Pervo, Peter’s miracle of raising a dead man named Tabitha is more accurately viewed as a healing story. Pervo says that the resurrection that took place in this event was not a resurrection like that of Jesus. According to him, miracles usually have a dimension of revelation of God’s promise to people, but this dimension is not present in Tabitha’s story. Nevertheless, this story signifies the extension of Christ’s victory over sin and death to the Gentiles.¹¹ Peter’s prayer mirrored that of Elisha in 2 Kings 4:33.¹²

The similarities between the story of Peter and Jesus above,¹³ also includes Elisha and Elijah when performing the same miracle (1 Kgs 17:17-24; 2 Kgs 4:18-36; or Jesus in Luke 7:11-17)¹⁴ shows that the historicity of this story is getting thinner. We agree with Keener that the story of Peter raising the dead seems a little far-fetched. Nevertheless, Tabitha had indeed died. In verse 37, the Greek word *λούσαντες* appears which means bathing or

⁹ Heidi J. Hornik and Mikeal C. Parsons, *Acts of the Apostles Through the Centuries* (Malden: John Wiley & Sons, 2017), 125.

¹⁰ C.K. Barrett, *Acts 1-14 – International Critical Commentary* (Edinburgh: T & T Clark International, 1994), 485.

¹¹ Richard I. Pervo, *Acts: A Commentary*, ed. Harold W. Attridge (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2009), 254–55.

¹² Pervo, 256.

¹³ Jaroslav Pelikan, *Acts* (Grand Rapids: Brazos Press, 2005), 127.

¹⁴ Ronald J. Allen, *Acts of the Apostles – Fortress Biblical Preaching Commentaries* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2013), 91.

being bathed.¹⁵ The bathing of the dead was a common practice in ancient times.¹⁶ Hence, it is clear that before Peter proclaimed the miracle of Tabitha's resurrection, he first prayed to Jesus. The reason why Tabitha was resurrected is not explained in the text, even though we think it also needs to be examined further. But more than that, Peter has so far shown that it was not he who raised Tabitha, but Jesus. The people who saw that Tabitha came back to life also believed in the God (Acts 9:42).

Paul raised Eutychus (Acts 20:7-12)

Paul is said to have resurrected a young man named Eutychus. In Acts 20:7, the personal pronoun ἡμῶν appears, which refers to "we", which indicates that the story is told in the "second person from the event" of Paul raising Eutychus.¹⁷ Eutychus itself means "the lucky one."¹⁸ We are told that at that time Paul and the brothers in the city of Troas were gathered together breaking bread. Paul was going to Miletus the next day and chose to talk with the brothers there. The conversation lasted until midnight (Acts 20:7). There was a young man named Eutychus sitting at the window. He also attended the meeting. But Paul talked too long and he became sleepy and fell from the third floor. He was already dead when people began to pick him up (Acts 20:9). Paul then came and lay down on the young man and told the people, "Don't worry, he is still alive" (Acts 20:10). After that Paul continued the conversation until the day began to brighten.

Before discussing Eutychus, Keener focuses first on verse 8, where it is mentioned that there were many lamps burning. The Greek word λαμπάδες may refer to a "torch", "lamp", or "lantern", where the device was only lit when olive oil was applied. Some scholars suspect that the smell of oil from the device contributed to Eutychus' drowsiness. But on the other hand, the possibility of why Luke used the word λαμπάδες ἱκαναὶ (many lights) rather leads the reader to imagine the number of people present or the size of the room where the

¹⁵ Hasan Sutanto, *Perjanjian Baru Interlinear Yunani-Indonesia – Jilid 1* (Jakarta: Lembaga Alkitab Indonesia, 2019), 680; Hasan Sutanto, *Konkordansi Perjanjian Baru (PBIK) – Jilid 2* (Jakarta: Lembaga Alkitab Indonesia, 2019), 463.

¹⁶ Allen, *Acts of the Apostles – Fortress Biblical Preaching Commentaries*, 92.

¹⁷ Bartosz Adamczewski, *The Acts of the Apostles – A Hypertextual Commentary* (Oxford: Peter Lang Publishing, 2023), 154.

¹⁸ C.K. Barret, *Acts 15-28 – International Critical Commentary* (London: T & T Clark International, 2004), 953.

meeting was held. Even the reason why Eutychus sat in the window was most likely due to the crowdedness of the room.¹⁹

The Greek word τριστέγου (the third floor) shows the seriousness of Eutychus' falling asleep.²⁰ Even the Greek word for "fall" is ἔπεσεν (direct fall) and not καταβαίνω (down to the bottom).²¹ There are suggestions that Eutychus was not really dead at this point. Keener says that this has a connection to Luke 8:52 when Jesus says that Jairus' son did not die but fell asleep (although we don't think this is true, because in the next verse, 55, it says that Jairus' son's "spirit" returned to his body. Jairus' son was really dead). Nevertheless, Keener says that this event should still be seen as a literary connection from the time of Jesus to Peter who is also said to have raised the dead.²² The scene of Paul laying his body on the boy reminds the reader of the similar scenes of Elijah and Elisha in 1 Kings 17:21 and 2 Kings 4:34-35.²³ Paul does not report a scene where the resurrected one sits or does anything else, but only says that Eutychus is still alive.²⁴ Unfortunately Keener does not focus on Paul's "action" when stating that Eutychus was still alive.

J.B. Lightfoot surmises that the Greek word ἐπέπεσεν (fall down) may be associated with prayer, although textually it is not mentioned.²⁵ Mikeal C. Parsons "equates" Jesus' resurrection of the young man at Nain in Luke 7:11-17 with Peter's resurrection of Tabitha in Acts 9:36-42, even saying that these three figures "restored life" to people who were only thought to be dead, but were not.²⁶ Luke Timothy Johnson says that whether the young man named Eutychus was actually or merely near death is not important in this incident, and there is no "verbal echo" of Paul's embrace of Eutychus.²⁷

¹⁹ Craig S. Keener, *Acts: An Exegetical Commentary – 15:1-23:35 (Vol. 3)* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2014), 2969–70.

²⁰ Keener, 2973.

²¹ Adamczewski, *The Acts of the Apostles – A Hypertextual Commentary*, 154.

²² Keener, *Acts: An Exegetical Commentary – 15:1-23:35 (Vol. 3)*, 2977.

²³ William H. Willimon, *Acts – Interpretation: A Bible Commentary for Teaching and Preaching* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 2010), 154–55.

²⁴ Keener, *Acts: An Exegetical Commentary – 15:1-23:35 (Vol. 3)*, 2978.

²⁵ J.B. Lightfoot, *The Acts of the Apostles – A Newly Discovered Commentary* (Downers Grove: IVP Academic, 2014), 262.

²⁶ Mikeal C. Parsons, *Acts – Paideia Commentaries on the New Testament* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2008), 286.

²⁷ Luke Timothy Johnson, *The Acts of the Apostles – Sacra Pagina* (Collegeville: The Liturgical Press, 1992), 356.

Luke himself was a physician or doctor in his time and was an educated man.²⁸ It is believed that he is the author of the Gospel of Luke and the book of Acts.²⁹ On this basis, we think it should have been easy for Luke to determine whether someone was dead or not. Even if this event is not told with Luke in the second person (but rather Luke writes it as a result of second-person testimony; hence Luke is in the third person), it would have been good if he had first ascertained whether or not Eutychus was indeed dead. The Greek word νεκρός (originates from the word νεκρώω) means *to cause to die*.³⁰ Therefore, whether Eutychus died or not should also be the main focus of this event.

According to J. Bradley Chance, when Paul said, “μή θορυβείσθε, ἡ γὰρ ψυχὴ αὐτοῦ ἐν αὐτῷ ἐστίν”, or, if translated, “Don't worry, he's still alive” means that Eutychus' fall didn't have too many consequences. However, Chance still criticizes the use of the word νεκρός in the previous verse.³¹ On the other hand, according to Darrell L. Bock, the statement that “...when he was taken up, he was dead” must be read together with Paul's statement “...he was alive.”³² Whereas F.F. Bruce sees that Luke may want to say that the power of resurrection was present when Paul embraced him.³³ Eutychus may really be dead³⁴ although some say that Paul's statement in this instance was more of a diagnostic statement than a miraculous healing statement.³⁵

The explanation above focuses more on who Eutychus was, the event of Paul holding his body to Eutychus, and Paul's statement that Eutychus was still alive. Not many commentaries focus on the “technique” or the scene that Paul performed when raising

²⁸ J.D. Douglas, ed., *Ensiklopedi Alkitab Masa Kini (Jilid 1:A-L)* (Jakarta: Yayasan Komunikasi Bina Kasih, 2016), 654.

²⁹ Stephen M. Miller, *Panduan Lengkap Alkitab* (Jakarta: BPK Gunung Mulia, 2020), 382; Samuel B. Hakh, *Perjanjian Baru: Sejarah, Pengantar, Dan Pokok-Pokok Teologinya* (Jakarta: BPK Gunung Mulia, 2019), 289–90.

³⁰ Franco Montanari, *Greek English – The Brill Dictionary of Ancient Greek* (Leiden: Brill, 2015), 1385.

³¹ J. Bradley Chance, *Acts – Smyth & Helwys Bible Commentary* (Peake Road: Smyth & Helwys Publishing, 2007), 367.

³² Darrell L. Bock, *Acts – Baker Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2007), 770–71.

³³ F. F. Bruce, *Acts – The New International Commentary on the New Testament* (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing, 1990), 385.

³⁴ David G. Peterson, *The Acts of the Apostles – The Pillar New Testament Commentary* (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing, 2009), 600.

³⁵ Leander E. Keck, ed., *Acts; Introduction to Epistolary Literature; Romans; 1 Corinthians – The New Interpreter's Bible* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 2002), 277.

Eutychus. The commentaries only say that this event reminds the reader of Jesus and Peter who also did something similar, but do not discuss what the two did that made them different from Paul. The following discussion will explore these differences to see if Peter and Paul were given the power to raise the dead and where this power came from.

A distinction to be explored: “Resurrect” or “Resuscitates”?

Jesus’ authority to raise the dead

From the explanation above, most of the commentaries see the resurrection of the dead by Peter and Paul as the same, and some even call it not a resurrection story but a healing story. Not a few commentaries also “spiritualize” the meaning of each story, especially the meaning of the word ὑπνω βαθεῖ (falling asleep) which is often associated with divine emptiness, symbols of death, and so on. There are not many commentaries that focus on the scenes of these two characters raising the dead. We think it’s worth exploring the three stories that we think are different.

The Canonical Gospels record at least three stories of Jesus raising the dead, namely Jesus raising Jairus’ daughter (Mk. 5:21-24, 35-43; Mt. 9:18-19, 23-26; Lk. 8:40-42, 49-56), raising a young man in Nain (Lk. 7:11-17) and raising Lazarus (John 11:1-44). These three stories of Jesus raising the dead happened under Jesus’ authority. For example, in Mark 5, Jesus said to Jairus daughter, “Talita kum” which means, “Son, I tell you, arise” (Mk. 5:41). Matthew does not give the scene of the command from Jesus as present in Mark, while Luke only witnesses Jesus saying, “Son, arise!” (Lk. 8:54). Only Matthew does not mention Jairus by name. Matthew chose to refer to him with “certain ruler” (Mt. 9:18).

In Mark, it is only mentioned that Jairus’ daughter was about to die (Mk. 5:23). The indication that the daughter is dead comes in verse 35 when one of Jairus’ family says, “Your daughter is dead; what need have you to trouble the teacher?” However, the word used in the text does refer to the death of the body.³⁶ In Matthew, it is mentioned from the very beginning of the story that Jairus’ daughter had died (Mt. 9:18). Meanwhile, Luke has the same story structure as Mark. According to Mark L. Strauss, the phrase “what need have you to trouble the teacher” indicates that many people saw at that time, that even Jesus himself could not

³⁶ Robert H. Stein, *Mark – Baker Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2008), 273.

deny death.³⁷ Sharyn Dowd says that this story is a sign that Jesus is not only in charge of life but also death.³⁸ This is the fundamental difference between Jesus, Peter, and Paul. Jesus did not need prayers, rituals, or mantras. On his authority, He said, “Child, arise!”³⁹ Jairus’ daughter had indeed died (in Luke’s version, it is even mentioned that the girl’s spirit returned to her body),⁴⁰ yet Jesus resurrected her.⁴¹

The story in Matthew is much shorter when compared to Mark and Luke. However, David L. Turner says that the simplicity of this story should not undermine the fact that Jesus really did perform the miracle of raising the dead.⁴² Just by touching and talking, Jesus was able to resurrect her.⁴³ This happened again in the case of Jesus raising a young man in Nain (Lk. 7:11-17). In verse 12, Luke mentions that a dead man was carried out of town. According to Mikeal C. Parsons, the funeral was in progress when the story was written and out of His mercy, Jesus raised the mother’s son to life.⁴⁴ Joel B. Green says that in this event, the resurrection of the dead was not done based on miracles but based on mercy. A widow was left for dead by her only son; this moved Jesus to raise her son back to life.⁴⁵ The dimension present is also the same as when Jesus raised Jairus’ daughter. Jesus simply touched the child and said, “Son, arise!” From His words, life is given to the dead.⁴⁶

On the other hand, the story of Jesus raising Lazarus is much more complex and difficult to discuss. The main difference lies in the fact that Lazarus had been dead for 4 days. His body had been smelling and long before that, he had been buried (John 11:39). This

³⁷ Mark L. Strauss, *Mark – Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2014), 232.

³⁸ Sharyn Dowd, *Reading Mark – A Literary and Theological Commentary on the Second Gospel* (Peake Road: Smyth & Helwys Publishing, 2000), 51.

³⁹ Strauss, *Mark – Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament*, 234.

⁴⁰ R. Alan Culpepper, *Mark – Smyth and Helwys Bible Commentary* (Peake Road: Smyth & Helwys Publishing, 2007), 179.

⁴¹ Mary Ann Beavis, *Mark – Commentaries of the New Testament* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2011), 97.

⁴² David L. Turner, *Matthew – Baker Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2008), 260; Margaret Davies, *Matthew*, 2nd ed. (Sheffield: Sheffield Phoenix Press, 2009), 83–84.

⁴³ Daniel M. Doriani, “Matthew,” in *ESV Expository Commentary: Matthew-Luke*, ed. Iain M. Duguid, James M. Hamilton Junior, and Jay Sklar (Wheaton: Crossway, 2021), 155.

⁴⁴ Mikeal C. Parsons, *Luke – Commentaries on the New Testament* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2015), 121.

⁴⁵ Joel B. Green, *The Gospel of Luke – The New International Commentary on the New Testament* (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing, 1997), 291.

⁴⁶ Thomas R. Schreiner, “Luke,” in *ESV Expository Commentary: Matthew-Luke*, ed. Iain M. Duguid, James M. Hamilton Junior, and Jay Sklar (Wheaton: Crossway, 2021), 828.

contrasts with the story of Jesus raising Jairus' daughter and the young man in Nain. Both of them had not been dead for long. Jairus' daughter was indicated to be "almost dead" when Jairus met Jesus and only died when Jairus arrived home with Jesus. The young man in Nain was also just about to be buried. Lazarus, on the other hand, had been in the grave covered with a shroud for 4 days. Another major difference is that John shows Jesus looking up to heaven (above) before raising Lazarus and appearing to pray to the Father (John 11:41-42). This element is not present in the Synoptic Gospels.

Lightfoot said that Lazarus' death for 4 days in the text is not explained whether it was 4 days since he was buried or 4 days since he died. But certainly, there was an assumption at that time that the spirit of a dead person still hovers in the world for 3 days and will leave if the body begins to deteriorate.⁴⁷ Carmia Margaret says that the narrator in the story of Jesus raising Lazarus is omniscient. He provides many explanations and perceptions of each character that perhaps not all characters at that time knew anything about.⁴⁸ Unfortunately, Margaret is not in a position to interpret the two elements we mentioned earlier. Marianne Meye Thompson says that the story of Jesus raising Lazarus (John 11:1-44) marks the culmination of Jesus' earthly ministry and confirms Jesus' authority over life and death. It can be seen that textually, John 11:45 already speaks of Jesus' assassination plot.⁴⁹ According to him, the "type" of resurrection by Lazarus is a resurrection, not the anticipated resurrection on the "last day" or "last judgement."⁵⁰

The main focus of this section is the prayer that Jesus offered to God. According to Thompson, this prayer was not intended by Jesus as a plea for God to act, but rather an expression of gratitude that God had heard Jesus. This prayer also attests to the unity between God and Jesus and this was stated earlier in John 10:30 that, "I and my Father are one."⁵¹ This prayer of thankfulness shows that Jesus had already prayed for the resurrection of Lazarus. According to George R. Beasley, Jesus is the channel of the Father's saving action, especially in

⁴⁷ J.B. Lightfoot, *The Gospel of St. John – A Newly Discovered Commentary* (Downers Grove: IVP Academic, 2015), 199.

⁴⁸ Carmia Margaret, "Eksplorasi Makna Kematian Dan Kehidupan Melalui Tafsir Naratif Kisah Lazarus," *GEMA TEOLOGIKA: Jurnal Teologi Kontekstual Dan Filsafat Keilahian* 7, no. 2 (October 25, 2022): 165, <https://doi.org/10.21460/gema.2022.72.730>.

⁴⁹ Marianne Meye Thompson, *John: A Commentary – The New Testament Library* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 2015), 237–38.

⁵⁰ Thompson, 242.

⁵¹ Thompson, 250.

this story of Lazarus' resurrection.⁵² The phrase "I knew that You hear me always" shows a true emotional connection or bond from Jesus to God.⁵³

The "stinks" that Martha refers to in verse 39 probably does not correlate with the length of time Lazarus' body was buried, but rather with the illness that Lazarus had (John 11:3). The cry of Jesus calling Lazarus, "Lazarus, come out!" (John 11:43) is directly related to the event of Jesus' death, as He also cried out with a loud voice when He was on the Cross (Mt. 27:50; Mk. 15:37; Lk. 23:46).⁵⁴ Jesus' giving of life to Lazarus on earth today refers to a sign of His power over eternal life that is realized eschatology and as a promise that He who raised Lazarus is also the same One who will raise the dead on the day of judgment.⁵⁵ Jesus' prayer of thanksgiving is also not interpreted only as a prayer to God, but as a sign that Jesus' work is also God's work.⁵⁶ Only Jesus is capable of this kind of prayer.⁵⁷

Therefore, the prayer of thanksgiving that Jesus gives to the Father shouldn't be seen as a prayer of "dependence", especially with the presence of the narrative "... that You sent Me." According to Herman Ridderbos, this work of resurrection is the work of Jesus and the Father. The phrase "... You sent Me" must be seen as a living personal interaction between Jesus and the Father (John 5:19-20) which elsewhere in John (John 17) also reappears.⁵⁸ Thus, despite the differences between the stories of Jesus raising Jairus' daughter and the young man in Nain and the story of Jesus raising Lazarus, the life-giving authority remains in Jesus. The Synoptic Gospels have testified to this (especially the story of Jairus' daughter) and specifically the Gospel of Luke (in the story of the young man at Nain). The reason why John's Gospel shows a different element from the Synoptic Gospels, by presenting a scene where Jesus looks up and prays, may be more practical; that John wants to emphasize the personal relationship

⁵² George R. Beasley-Murray, *John – Word Biblical Commentary* (Nashville: Thomas Nelson Publishers, 1999), 194.

⁵³ Jerome H. Neyrey, *The Gospel of John – The New Cambridge Bible Commentary* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), 200–207.

⁵⁴ David F. Ford, *The Gospel of John – A Theological Commentary* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2021), 251–53.

⁵⁵ Raymond E. Brown, *The Gospel According to John I–XII – The Anchor Bible* (New York: Doubleday and Company, 1966), 436–37.

⁵⁶ Jo-ann Brant, *John – Paideia Commentaries on the New Testament* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2011), 177.

⁵⁷ Karoline M. Lewis, *John – Fortress Biblical Preaching Commentaries* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2014), 159.

⁵⁸ Herman Ridderbos, *The Gospel of John: A Theological Commentary* (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing, 1997), 405.

between Jesus and the Father. We see that this doesn't change the theological and factual message that Jesus has power over life and death. When raising the dead, Jesus simply gave the command to "arise" to the dead.

Where was the authority of Peter and Paul?

The above explanation shows that Jesus has power over life and death. When He was about to raise the dead, He simply touched the dead person and said "arise!" Unlike Peter (as well as Prophet Elijah and Prophet Elisha as mentioned in the introduction), he had to pray to God first when raising the dead,⁵⁹ and as repeatedly stated in this article, it indicates that the authority of the power of resurrection does not rest with Peter, Elijah, and Elisha, but with the Lord God. However, the story of Paul raising Eutychus does not work this way. Paul is shown not praying or crying out to God when raising Eutychus. This is certainly very surprising when compared to his "predecessors" who even prayed or cried out to God first (confirming that the power of resurrection was not in them). Even in the story of Jesus raising Lazarus, Jesus prayed first to the Father (although as explained above, this prayer does not refer to Jesus' dependence on the Father). Paul, however, did not do so.

Most commentaries do not focus on this detail. From our analysis, they only say that Paul's act of laying on Eutychus reminds the reader of the Old Testament stories of Elijah and Elisha who both did this to the dead. However, we think that even if it is true that Paul did the same thing as Elijah and Elisha, the missing element [i.e. prayer] should be "suspected." Someone might say that what we are discussing is unimportant since the point of the story is God's resurrection of the dead. But where does it say that God had authority over Eutychus' return to life in the text? If what we are discussing is not important, then why does the narrator in Peter's story record that Peter knelt and prayed before raising Tabitha, while Paul did not? Or some might say that when Paul lay down or embraced, he was praying there too. But if this is the case, what is the reason for the author of the story to omit the "praying" element when Peter, Elijah, and Elisha are even mentioned as praying first?

Therefore, to answer the question where the authority of Peter and Paul is, we answer that in the case of Peter, the authority of the resurrection power lies with God. Peter

⁵⁹ See the table on page 2.

prayed to God to raise Tabitha and God granted it. But in the case of Paul, we choose to conclude that the text does not explain where the power of Paul's resurrection came from. On the other hand, as we stated in the beginning, we also suspect a difference between the deaths experienced by Tabitha and Eutychus. Tabitha may have died, but not Eutychus. The many "theological interpretations" of the Eutychus story seem to correlate with our assumption. Even if the story happened in history, it seems that Eutychus was not dead when he was taken up. He was only "presumed" dead, especially since the story was written by a doctor of his time (Luke). It is no wonder that the reason why the narrator did not or omitted the element of "praying" was because he knew Eutychus was not dead, so Paul in this case only briefly examined him when he came down from the third floor:

If the assumption above is correct, then only Peter is said to have resurrected the truly dead, while Paul's "ostensible" resurrection of Eutychus is for another reason. However, if the reader believes that Paul is indeed said to have raised Eutychus from the dead, then the question of the authority of the resurrection must be questioned as Paul does not appear to have prayed to God first.

CONCLUSION

This article only shows the dialectic that emerges insofar as we read the stories of Peter raising Tabitha and Paul raising Eutychus. With a comparative analysis of the two stories, coupled with a brief analysis of similar events in the Old Testament, it is found that there is one element that is present in the three events of Elijah, Elisha, and Peter but absent in Paul's event; namely, the matter of "praying." The absence of this element leads us to investigate where Paul's power came from. We offer two views: 1) that Paul apparently raised the dead not on the authority of Jesus⁶⁰ or 2) that Eutychus may not have actually died. Further research recommendations from this article might touch on the understanding of the three Gospels and Paul himself regarding the meaning of the word "dead" and begin to

⁶⁰ This view can be easily refuted by saying that for most of Paul's life, Paul always received God's blessings and even served God with all his heart. But we question why in this story, Paul is not mentioned as praying to God. Reductively, this isn't very clear. Even Peter, part of Jesus' twelve disciples, is mentioned as praying to God first before raising Tabitha. So we also offer the second view above.

explore the historical side of the two stories without any particular theological intentions so that it can be concluded whether both had the power to raise the dead.

REFERENCES

- Adamczewski, Bartosz. *The Acts of the Apostles – A Hypertextual Commentary*. Oxford: Peter Lang Publishing, 2023.
- Allen, Ronald J. *Acts of the Apostles – Fortress Biblical Preaching Commentaries*. Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2013.
- Barret, C.K. *Acts 15-28 – International Critical Commentary*. London: T & T Clark International, 2004.
- Barrett, C.K. *Acts 1-14 – International Critical Commentary*. Edinburgh: T & T Clark International, 1994.
- Beasley-Murray, George R. *John – Word Biblical Commentary*. Nashville: Thomas Nelson Publishers, 1999.
- Beavis, Mary Ann. *Mark – Commentaries of the New Testament*. Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2011.
- Bock, Darrell L. *Acts – Baker Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament*. Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2007.
- Brant, Jo-ann. *John – Paideia Commentaries on the New Testament*. Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2011.
- Brown, Raymond E. *The Gospel According to John I-XII – The Anchor Bible*. New York: Doubleday and Company, 1966.
- Bruce, F. F. *Acts – The New International Commentary on the New Testament*. Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing, 1990.
- Chance, J. Bradley. *Acts – Smyth & Helwys Bible Commentary*. Peake Road: Smyth & Helwys Publishing, 2007.
- Culpepper, R. Alan. *Mark – Smyth and Helwys Bible Commentary*. Peake Road: Smyth & Helwys Publishing, 2007.
- Davies, Margaret. *Matthew*. 2nd ed. Sheffield: Sheffield Phoenix Press, 2009.
- Dorioni, Daniel M. "Matthew." In *ESV Expository Commentary: Matthew-Luke*, edited by Iain M. Duguid, James M. Hamilton Junior, and Jay Sklar, 21–450. Wheaton: Crossway, 2021.
- Douglas, J.D., ed. *Ensiklopedi Alkitab Masa Kini (Jilid 1:A-L)*. Jakarta: Yayasan Komunikasi Bina Kasih, 2016.
- Dowd, Sharyn. *Reading Mark – A Literary and Theological Commentary on the Second Gospel*. Peake Road: Smyth & Helwys Publishing, 2000.
- Dunn, James D.G. *The Acts of the Apostles*. Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2016.

- Fitzmyer, Joseph A. *The Acts of the Apostles – A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary*. London: Bantam Doubleday Dell Publishing, 1998.
- Ford, David F. *The Gospel of John – A Theological Commentary*. Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2021.
- Green, Joel B. *The Gospel of Luke – The New International Commentary on the New Testament*. Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing, 1997.
- Hakh, Samuel B. *Perjanjian Baru: Sejarah, Pengantar, Dan Pokok-Pokok Teologinya*. Jakarta: BPK Gunung Mulia, 2019.
- Hornik, Heidi J., and Mikeal C. Parsons. *Acts of the Apostles Through the Centuries*. Malden: John Wiley & Sons, 2017.
- Johnson, Luke Timothy. *The Acts of the Apostles – Sacra Pagina*. Collegeville: The Liturgical Press, 1992.
- Keck, Leander E., ed. *Acts; Introduction to Epistolary Literature; Romans; 1 Corinthians – The New Interpreter’s Bible*. Nashville: Abingdon Press, 2002.
- Keener, Craig S. *Acts: An Exegetical Commentary – 15:1-23:35 (Vol. 3)*. Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2014.
- . *Acts: An Exegetical Commentary – 3:1-14:28 (Vol. 2)*. Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2013.
- . *Acts – New Cambridge Bible Commentary*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2020.
- Lewis, Karoline M. *John – Fortress Biblical Preaching Commentaries*. Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2014.
- Lightfoot, J.B. *The Acts of the Apostles – A Newly Discovered Commentary*. Downers Grove: IVP Academic, 2014.
- . *The Gospel of St. John – A Newly Discovered Commentary*. Downers Grove: IVP Academic, 2015.
- Margaret, Carmia. “Eksplorasi Makna Kematian Dan Kehidupan Melalui Tafsir Naratif Kisah Lazarus.” *GEMA TEOLOGIKA: Jurnal Teologi Kontekstual Dan Filsafat Keilahian* 7, no. 2 (October 25, 2022): 163. <https://doi.org/10.21460/gema.2022.72.730>.
- Miller, Stephen M. *Panduan Lengkap Alkitab*. Jakarta: BPK Gunung Mulia, 2020.
- Montanari, Franco. *Greek English – The Brill Dictionary of Ancient Greek*. Leiden: Brill, 2015.
- Neyrey, Jerome H. *The Gospel of John – The New Cambridge Bible Commentary*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007.
- Parsons, Mikeal C. *Acts – Paideia Commentaries on the New Testament*. Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2008.
- . *Luke – Commentaries on the New Testament*. Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2015.

- Pelikan, Jaroslav. *Acts*. Grand Rapids: Brazos Press, 2005.
- Pervo, Richard I. *Acts: A Commentary*. Edited by Harold W. Attridge. Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2009.
- Peterson, David G. *The Acts of the Apostles – The Pillar New Testament Commentary*. Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing, 2009.
- Ridderbos, Herman. *The Gospel of John: A Theological Commentary*. Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing, 1997.
- Schreiner, Thomas R. "Luke." In *ESV Expository Commentary: Matthew-Luke*, edited by Iain M. Duguid, James M. Hamilton Junior, and Jay Sklar, 703–1106. Wheaton: Crossway, 2021.
- Stein, Robert H. *Mark – Baker Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament*. Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2008.
- Strauss, Mark L. *Mark – Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament*. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2014.
- Sutanto, Hasan. *Konkordansi Perjanjian Baru (PBIK) – Jilid 2*. Jakarta: Lembaga Alkitab Indonesia, 2019.
- . *Perjanjian Baru Interlinear Yunani-Indonesia – Jilid 1*. Jakarta: Lembaga Alkitab Indonesia, 2019.
- Thompson, Marianne Meye. *John: A Commentary – The New Testament Library*. Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 2015.
- Turner, David L. *Matthew – Baker Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament*. Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2008.
- Willimon, William H. *Acts – Interpretation: A Bible Commentary for Teaching and Preaching*. Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 2010.