

LESSON 69

Lesson Truth

After the Holy Spirit came, the number of believers increased rapidly.

Procedure

Before returning to heaven, Jesus had told the disciples to go to Jerusalem and wait for the Holy Spirit. After the coming of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost, the disciples began preaching everywhere in Jerusalem, and the number of believers mushroomed into the thousands.

Turn to page 35. Complete exercises 1-3 by writing the number of believers indicated by each reference.

This increasing number of believers got the attention of the Jewish leaders. Peter's preaching also got their attention. Locate the references in exercises 4-6, and write the message that Peter kept repeating in his sermons ("You..., but God...").

How do you think the Jewish leaders felt about what Peter was saying to them? Read the paragraph beneath the section entitled "One Problem," and write in exercises 7-8 the reason the Jewish leaders were unable to take action against Peter and the disciples.

Read the Lesson Truth. Why do you think the church grew so rapidly after the Holy Spirit came? Discuss. The Holy Spirit gave believers boldness to tell others about Christ. He also gave the apostles power to do miracles, which won the crowds and made it hard for anyone to oppose them.

LESSON 70

Lesson Truth

God can forgive the most terrible of sins.

Procedure

Turn to page 35. A martyr is someone who gives his life for a religious cause. Read the references and fill in the blanks of the workbook story to discover who was the martyr and who was the martyr. All references are from the book of Acts. Check student work, adding:

1. When someone in our country who has committed a terrible crime is put to death, it is called "capital punishment." Capital punishment in Bible times was carried out by stoning. Stoning was a very harsh form of capital punishment and was usually carried out in a public place so that everyone could see it. Stoning is still practiced today in some Islamic countries.

2. It was Jewish law that the witnesses who testified against a guilty person had to cast the first stones (Deuteronomy 13:9).

In Stephen's case, the witnesses who began the stoning were false witnesses. They knew they were stoning an innocent man.

3. Saul, who was there, also knew that Stephen was an innocent man, because it was the leaders of the synagogue who found the false witnesses. Saul himself was one of the leaders of the synagogue, and he may have personally got the false witnesses.

Read the lesson title. Saul was not just a cold-blooded martyr, he was also a cold-blooded murderer. The phrase "cold-blooded murderer" is a modern phrase that describes a person who can kill another person and not feel any emotion. The murderer's actions are described as being "calm" or "unconcerned." How would you describe Saul's actions as he watched Stephen being stoned? So calm that he was more concerned about guarding the false witnesses' clothes than protecting an innocent man. What sins was Saul guilty of in Stephen's death? Bearing false witness because he undoubtedly knew that the witnesses were false, and murder because he undoubtedly had a part in the sentencing of an innocent man to death. What should have happened to Saul? He should have been stoned himself for lying and murder. Could God possibly forgive Saul for what he had done? What do you think happened to Saul?

Read the Lesson Truth. Saul would later become Paul, one of the greatest Christians of all time. If God could forgive Saul, can God forgive you of your sins?

YOUR ATTENTION PLEASE

Counting Heads...this got their attention!

- Number of Believers Before Pentecost (Acts 1:15) 120
- Number of Believers on Day of Pentecost (Acts 2:41) 3,000
- Number of Believers Shortly After Pentecost (Acts 4:4) 5,000

Peter's Message...this got their attention, too!

- Acts 2:23b-24a: You nailed Him to the cross, but God raised Him up again.
- Acts 3:15: You killed the Prince of Life, but God raised Him from the dead.
- Acts 4:10: You crucified Christ, but God raised Him up.

One Problem...

The growing number of converts and Peter's to-the-point preaching certainly got the attention of the Jewish leaders. The high priest and elders wanted to put a stop to Peter's preaching, but there was one problem...

- Acts 4:14-16: Religious leaders could not deny that miracles were happening.
- Acts 4:21: Religious leaders feared the people.

COLD-BLOODED MARTYRER

The martyr's name was (6:8) Stephen, and he did wonders and miracles, signs.

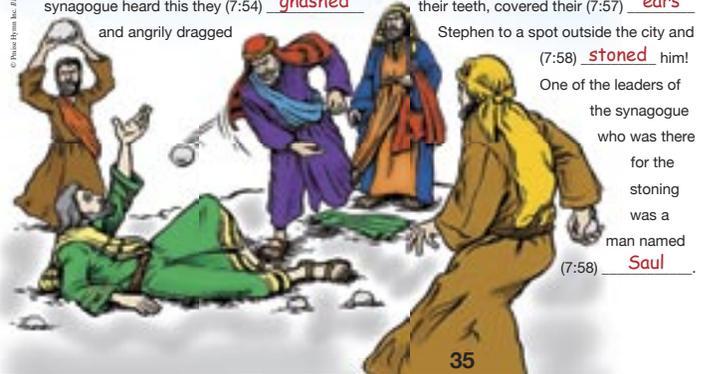
The leaders of the synagogue were not able to debate Stephen because of his (6:10) wisdom and the Spirit by whom he spoke. The synagogue leaders found (6:13) false witnesses who testified against him. Stephen told them that their (7:51) stiff

necks and hard hearts were causing them to resist the Holy Spirit. When the leaders of the synagogue heard this they (7:54) gnashed their teeth, covered their (7:57) ears and angrily dragged

Stephen to a spot outside the city and (7:58) stoned him!

One of the leaders of the synagogue who was there for the stoning was a man named (7:58) Saul.

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LESSON 71

Lesson Truth

You cannot buy what God gives for free.

Procedure

Select students to read Acts 8:9-25.

Turn to page 36. Read the sentence beneath the lesson title. Locate the references in boxes 1 and 2 and write the reasons why some people think Simon was saved and others think that he was not. Check student work, adding:

Saved Saint Simon: Acts 8:13 and 24 indicate that Simon believed, was baptized, and even asked for prayer. This seems to be a very strong case for a "saved" Simon.

Self-Serving Simon: However, Acts 8:18-23 contains Peter's strong rebuke of Simon and seems to indicate that Simon did not quite understand what salvation was all about. So what is the answer? The answer may be found in another question: What did Simon believe? Did he believe in Jesus, or did he just believe that the miracles were real? Peter's rebuke seems to indicate that Simon did not believe to receive salvation, he believed to receive power to do miracles. Simon believed the miracles were real, and hoped that he would have

access to the Holy Spirit so that he too could perform miracles like the disciples.

How did Simon try to get the Holy Spirit's power? He tried to buy it. Read Acts 8:20. The world is full of "Simons" who try to buy their way into heaven. They pay religious leaders to pray for them, or bless them, or give them some kind of guarantee that they will enter heaven when they die. "Simple Simons" believe they can buy God's approval. Some real Christians think they can "bribe" God into blessing them by giving large offerings to the church. Write the following message inside box 3 for the Simons of the world: Write on the chalkboard the lesson truth for students to write in their workbooks. Spiritual blessings from God are not for sale. They are free to true believers.

LESSON 72

Lesson Truth

Salvation should produce an amazing turnaround in a person.

Procedure

Do you remember Saul who was standing nearby while the false witnesses stoned Stephen? Today you are going to study one of the most amazing turnarounds in history. It was done by Saul.

Turn to page 36. Use your pencil to trace Saul's path through the maze, arriving at rooms 1-3 in numerical order. Following these maze rules:

1. Begin at "Enter Saul." End at "Exit Paul."
2. Exit a room by a different way than you entered.
3. As you enter and exit a room, place the letter you crossed over at the top of the lesson in the "Cross-Overs" space. Be sure to write the letters in the order that you crossed them.
4. Look up the references in each room, and place a "X" beside each true sentence. Begin your maze now.

What letters do you have in the Cross-Overs spaces? AMAZED.

Saul's turnaround amazed Jewish leaders. One day Saul hated Christians and wanted to kill them. The next day Saul was a Christian. Saul did so much of a turnaround that even his name changed. Saul became Paul.

Read the Lesson Truth. Do you think Saul's conversion experience was unusual? Discuss. Although the way Saul met Christ was unusual, what happened afterward was not. Read 2 Corinthians 5:17. Everyone should become a new person and do a turnaround after becoming a Christian. Are you going the same way you were going before you became a Christian, or have you done a turnaround and become a new person?

LESSON 73

Lesson Truth

Peter and Paul were given special power to raise people from the dead.

Procedure

Turn to page 37. Locate the references from the book of Acts and answer questions 1-8. Check student work, adding:

1-4. This is the first of only 2 people whom the disciples raised from the dead.

5-8. This is the second and last person in the New Testament whom the disciples raised from the dead.

Can followers of Christ raise people from the dead

IT'S SIMPLE SIMON

Simon: Saved Saint or Self-serving Sorcerer?

1. Saved Saint Simon (Acts 8:13 and 24)

He believed and was baptized and continued following Phillip. Simon asked for prayer.

2. Self-Serving Simon (Acts 8:18-23)

He tried to buy the Holy Spirit. Peter said, "you have no share with the Holy Spirit, your heart is not right with God, your heart is full of bitterness, and you are a captive to sin."

3. It's Simple, Simon

You cannot buy what God gives for free.

A-MAZE-ING TURNAROUND

Cross-Overs A M A Z E D

Enter SAUL →

Exit PAUL ←

1. ACTS 9:1-2
 Helped the disciples.
 Threatened disciples.
 Followed the Way.
 Received letters from the high priest.
 Searched for men and women to capture.

2. ACTS 9:3-9
 Saw a light and heard a voice.
 Ignored it and went on.
 Answered, "Who are you, Lord?"
 His servants ran away.
 Was blinded.

3. ACTS 9:17-25
 Received vision again.
 Arrested disciples.
 Began to preach about Christ.
 Almost killed.
 Escaped over the wall in a basket.

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THE LIVING DEAD

She was a disciple who helped the poor.

1. What was her name? (9:36)
Tabitha.

2. What was her condition? (9:37)
She was sick and died.

3. Who brought her back to life? (9:40)
Peter.

4. What happened as a result of this miracle? (9:42)
Many people believed.



He was listening to a long sermon.

5. What was his name? (20:9)
Eutychus.

6. What happened to him? (20:9)
He fell asleep, fell out the window and died.

7. Who brought him back to life? (20:10)
Paul.

8. What happened after the boy revived? (20:11)
They ate and talked until day-break.

PIGS ON A SHEET

9. The Lord (10:13):
Get up, Peter. Kill and eat.

10. Peter (10:14):
No, Lord, I have never eaten anything unholy or unclean.

11. The Lord (10:15):
What I have cleansed is no longer unclean.

12. Peter (10:34-35):
God is no respecter of persons. He accepts those who fear Him.

Jews, Gentiles, Samaritans, Ethiopians, Whites, Blacks, Arabs, Asians, English, French, Spanish, Russian, Indian, and all believers everywhere should be known by one title only. They should be called (Acts 11:26)...

C H R I S T I A N S