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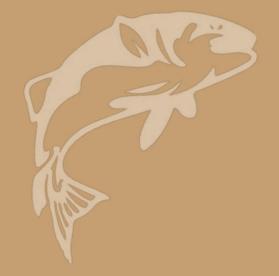
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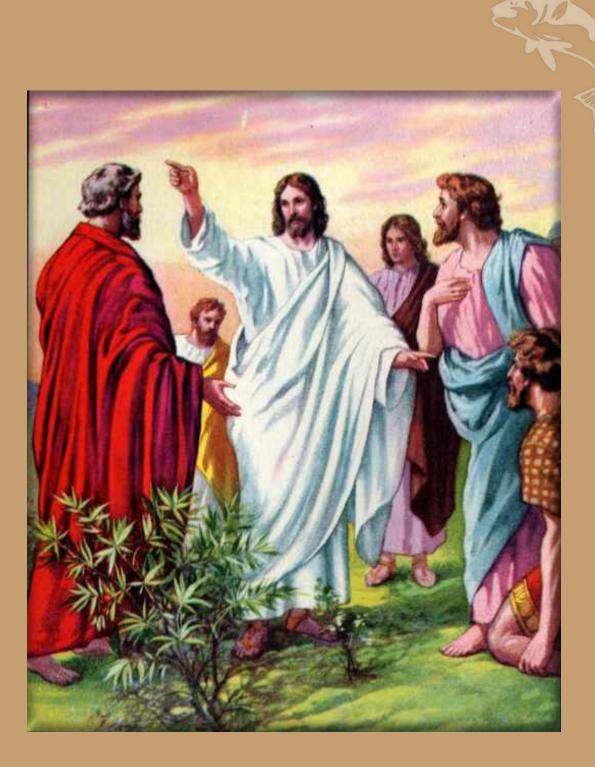
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SECTION ONE During the Life of Jesus on Earth

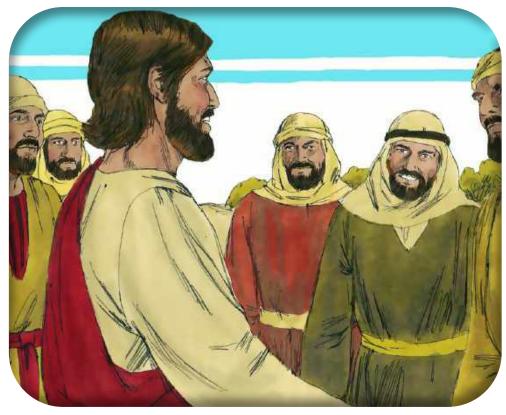




Have you ever played "follow the leader?" It can be fun. Let's play it for a few minutes.

Here is a story about one man who called twelve men to follow Him. His name is Jesus.

A few days after John the Baptist had baptized him, Jesus He was walking by the Sea of Galilee. A group of fishermen were doing what they did everyday. They were mending their nets for another night of fishing. That was how they made their living. They caught and sold fresh fish.



The group consisted of Peter and Andrew who were brothers and their fishing partners, James and John, who were also brothers. They worked in their family business. This little group worked together and were probably close friends. They assisted each other and I imagine they did things together when they were not working.

As Jesus walked along Peter and Andrew were the first two men He invited to "Follow Me, and I will make you fishers of men." I'm sure they did not understand what that

meant at that time, but they left their fishing boat and followed Jesus.

A little way down the path Jesus extended the same invitation to their partners, James and John. They also left the family business and followed Jesus. This was the man whom they would grow to love and eventually worship when they learned that He, Jesus, was indeed the Son of God.

Peter, James, and John were probably the closest friends Jesus had during His time on earth. On several occasions Jesus took these three men with Him as He accomplished special tasks. These are three men worked well together.

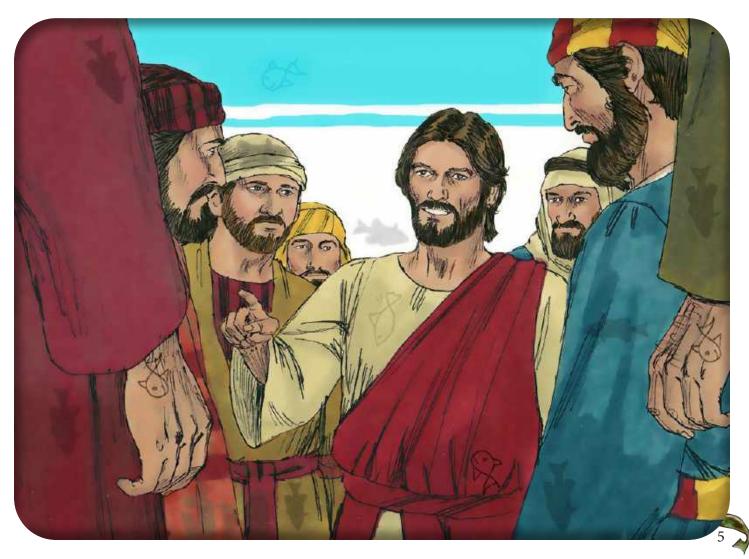
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During the next three years as Jesus spoke to various groups of people, crowds began to follow Him. They listen to His messages of God's love and forgiveness. Soon Jesus had chosen twelve men out of a large group of followers whom He called disciples. These twelve followers He called apostles. They were the inner circle of Jesus' friends and the ones He trusted with the fact that He was God's Son.

It must have taken courage and a sense of adventure to leave their secure livelihood and follow a little known man who made no promise of a good life ahead.

Today Jesus says "Follow me" to each of us. He offers eternal life, the love of God, and fellowship with other followers if we choose to follow Him. It's not always easy but it's challenging to follow Him, to learn about Him, and to serve Him.

Jesus called twelve (12) disciples to follow him. Many of them were fishermen. Some were not, but Jesus uses fishing in much of his teachings. Hidden in this drawing are twelve fish, see if you can find all twelve and then circle them.



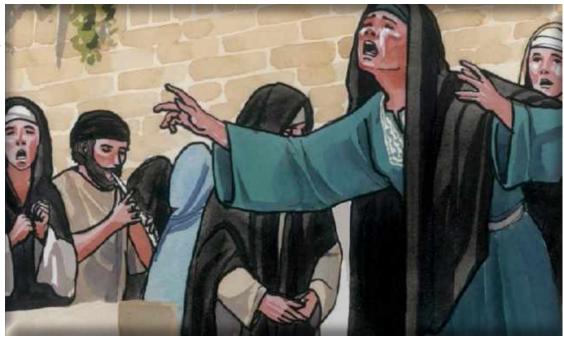
Lesson 2 My Daughter Is Dying!

EXX

C broken hearted father, Jairus, who was one of leaders of the synagogue, fell at Jesus feet. "Please help us, my daughter is dying," Jesus, full of compassion, agreed to go with him.

As they walked down the road to Jairus' home a large crowd followed them as they often did. In that crowd was a woman who had suffered from a blood disorder for fourteen years. No one had been able to help her.

She thought to herself, "If only I could touch the hem of His cloak I could be made well." She got close to





Jesus and bent over and touched the bottom of his cloak and was instantly healed of her suffering. What a happy woman she was!

Jesus immediately knew that power had gone out from Him, so He asked, "Who touched Me?" Peter responded, with all the people crushing in around Him, how could He possibly ask that question.

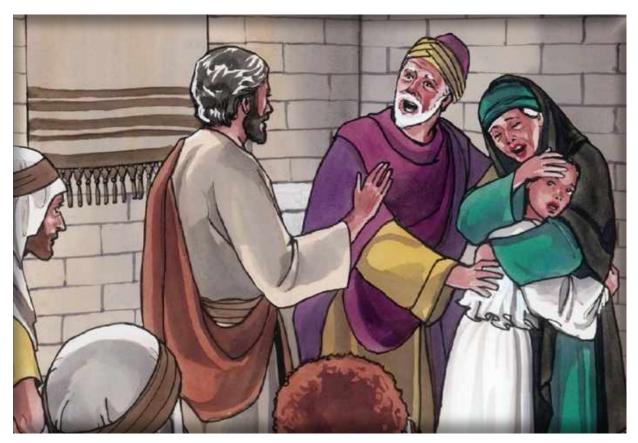
However Jesus insisted that He knew that power had gone out from Him. When the woman

realized that she could not hide it she confessed that she was the one who did it and that she was indeed immediately healed. Jesus told her, "Go in peace. Your faith has made you well." They continued down the road, a messenger came from Jairus' home saying, "Your daughter is dead. Why bother the teacher any more."

Jesus said to Jairus, "Have faith. She is sleeping," and they kept going toward the home. Those around Him argued because they KNEW the girl was really dead. Jesus took Peter, James and John as well the girls' mother and father into the room where she had been laid. Then He made everyone else leave the house.

Peter, James and John were witnesses to what happened next. Jesus took the hand of the twelve year old girl and said, "My child, get up!" She got up and walked around, completely well. Jesus showed His concern for the girl by telling her parents to give her something to eat.

Then Jesus told the family and the apostles not to tell anyone what had happened. It would certainly become obvious and common knowledge soon enough.



Jesus healed Jairus' daughter, the family was very thankful. Why do you think Jesus asked them to keep it a secret?



Can You Keep a Secret?



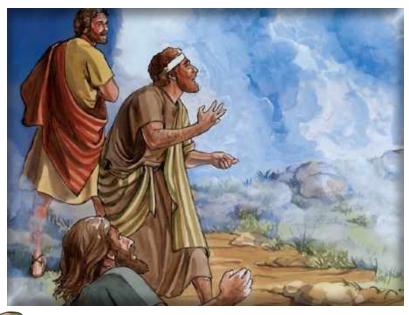
C t one time or another almost all of us have been asked, "Can you keep a secret?" Many of us have asked a good friend not to tell anyone – but. Sometimes the request comes after the secret has been told, seen or happened.

Peter, James and John went to the top of the mountain with Jesus. He had invited only those three men to accompany Him. They probably talked as they walked up the side of that mountain.

In their heads they knew that Jesus was the Son of God. He had told His twelve apostles, but they really did not understand that this was a real relationship. It was perhaps too much for them to understand at that time.



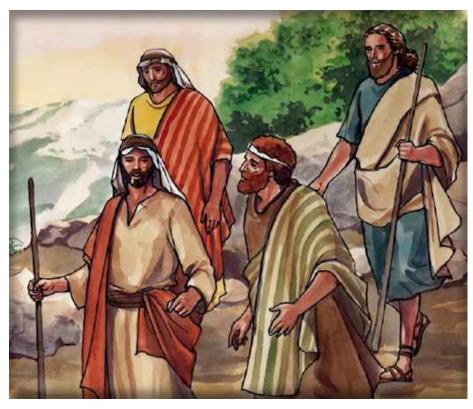
But everything changed that day on that mountain top. While they were talking, suddenly a very bright light from heaven appeared and they were all in the middle of a cloud, a very bright cloud. Suddenly Jesus' appearance changed and there were two other men talking with Jesus.



The two men who were talking with Jesus were Moses and Elijah. They spoke as old friends and talked about the things that were about to happen to Jesus. He would soon be killed.

A voice from heaven spoke words these three earthly men would never forget. It was Gods' voice speaking. "This is My Son. With Him I am well pleased. Listen to Him."

The cloud lifted and the four men,



Peter, James. John and Jesus were once again alone on the mountain. These three disciples were terrified, amazed, totally in awe of Jesus and what they had just witnessed. Peter suggested that they build three shelters to honor Moses, Elijah, and Jesus. He was really just so frightened that he didn't know what he was saying. He just had to say something.

On the way down the mountain Jesus told them they could not tell anyone what had happened until He had risen from the dead. At that time they did not understand what Jesus meant, however they

did keep the secret until Jesus DID rise from the dead and returned to His Father in heaven.

Then Peter, James, and John fully understood what Jesus meant about rising from the dead.

Six people were there when Jesus went up to the clouds and saw his old friends. Who were these six people? They all fit only one way in this crossword. We gave you the first letter, try to fill in the rest.



Lesson 4 In The Garden

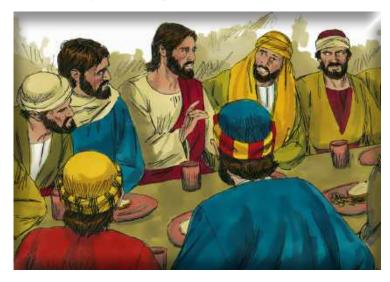


For three years Peter, James, and John, along with nine other men had faithfully followed Jesus. He had called them and they never turned back, through good times and hard times they had walked with their Teacher, Master, Lord and friend – Jesus.

It was a festive time in Jerusalem. It was time to celebrate the Passover – which had become "party time" for many of the Jewish people. Even the religious leaders had lost the true meaning of this feast.

Jesus knew what was ahead for Him. He would soon suffer, die, and in three days come back to life before finally returning to Heaven. He would suffer the worst kind of death at the hands of the leaders who were sure that He was a liar, fake and fraud.

On Friday evening, when the feast started, Jesus had His twelve apostles join Him for



this Passover meal. This special meal at this one time in history has become known in the Christian faith as The Lord's supper.

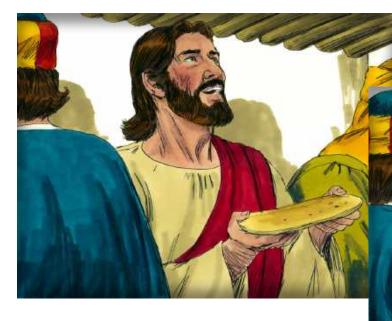
The group of thirteen men sat at a table. They ate the meal and talked together as men do. At this time these men did not understand the meaning of what was happening. Jesus became very serious with these faithful followers. He gave them bread which He told them represented

His body which was going to be sacrificed for all who would believe in Him.

In a little while Jesus gave each one a drink of wine which He told them represented His blood which would soon be spilled for them and all who would come to believe that through faith in Him they would receive eternal life. After this they sang a song and left.

Jesus had a favorite spot where He prayed called the Mount of Olives. As they walked along He explained what was going to happen. He told them they would all run away. Then, as He had done from time to time He asked Peter, James, and John

into the garden where He prayed for strength. Jesus was comforted by hav-



ing His three closest friends with Him. Three times He prayed for strength. Then Jesus went back to the three men

and they joined the eight of the nine apostles. The ninth apostle, Judas, had chosen to betray Jesus. Just then Judas arrived with a group of men and showed them who Jesus was by kissing Him. These men arrested Jesus.

The next day there was a trial. Men lied about what Jesus had said and done. So the ruler of the area allowed them to crucify Jesus. He died and was buried in a cave. On the first day of the next week God brought Jesus back to life. For forty days He taught his apostles, then Jesus was taken to heaven in a cloud right before the eyes of His followers.

Let's talk to our pastor about taking communion.





The Master Returns to His Heavenly Home

Jesus lived 33 years on this earth. He taught people about God. He fed large groups of hungry people. He healed many people of various illnesses and disabilities. Even though He had done all these things the religious leaders were sure He was a fraud so they had Him killed. End of story? Not quite!

Actually it was only the beginning. Three days after Jesus was killed God brought Him back to life. For



the next forty days He encouraged His apostles. He taught them what they needed to know, how to live, and what to expect. They would be hated, beaten, put in prison, and many would be killed because of their faith in Jesus and His Father, God.

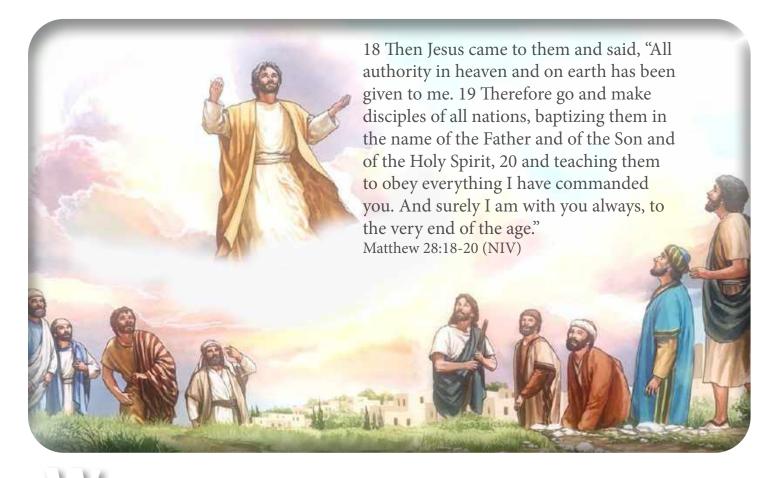
He assured them that The Holy Spirit, Whom the Father would send, would be with them, reminding them of everything He had taught them. This Holy Spirit would give them the words to say as well as strength to go through trials and testing. This same Holy Spirit would also share in the many joys that would be theirs.

Jesus commissioned His apostles, saying, "You will be my witnesses in Jerusalem (the city they were in), Judah (the country around them,) Samaria (the area next to them,) and to the whole world." They were to preach the gospel, teach the truth about Jesus Christ, and make disciples (followers of Christ who would do what they were doing.)

These promises were to go on for years and years, even centuries to come. Each generation of believers has received this same plan of action.

One day, as Jesus was talking to His disciples, a bright cloud came down and He was taken up to heaven. They all saw Him go up. They were startled. Two angels suddenly stood beside them and assured them that "This same Jesus you saw go up will some day return in the same way you saw Him leave."

Jesus had indeed promised to come back some day and take all who believe in Him to heaven where they will be rewarded for what they have done on earth.



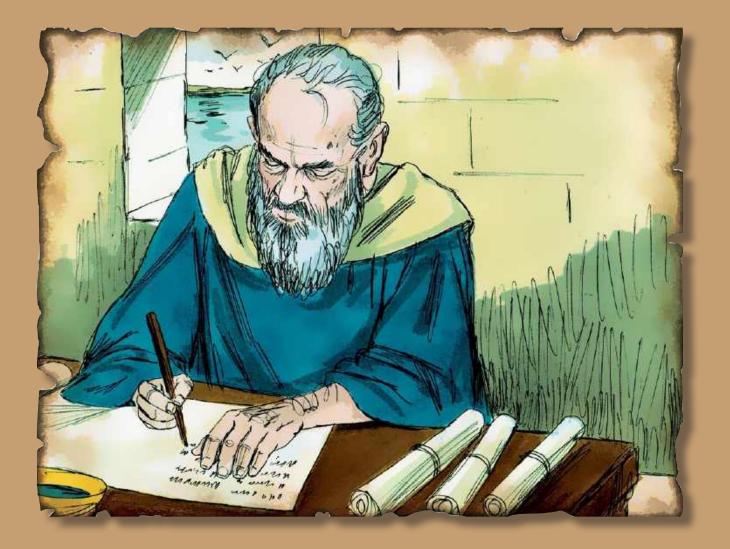
ORD FIND...BEFORE JESUS ROSE INTO THE CLOUDS HE TOLD HIS DISCIPLES TO GO DO

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section two

Two Letter Writers





Peter Writes to Jewish Believers

James, the brother of John, was one of the early martyrs in the Christian faith. This left two of those closest to Jesus to carry on the work they had been given with the rest of the apostles and believers. Peter and John wrote letters to encourage those who believed that Jesus was Gods Son.

It's always fun to get a letter, isn't it? These men, Peter and John, who walked the paths with Jesus each had something on their hearts they wanted to share with other believers.

They had no idea that these letters would be preserved for thousands of years and would become part of the sacred writings known as the Bible. They were simply sharing their hearts.

Peter was probably the most picturesque of the apostles. He often acted impetuously, spoke or acted before he thought. But he grew in faith and became one of the undisputed leaders of the early church. As the early church grew it became apparent that Peter was called to minister to the Jewish believers.

As a leader to them he wrote two letters, mainly sent to Jewish people who believed in Jesus as their Savior. He wanted to be sure that the young



By Paolo Emilio Besenzi [Public domain], via Wikimedia Commons

churches would not fall away from the truth. Therefore he wrote to encourage them and remind them of many important truths.

He told them that Jesus was real, that He had died for their sins, and that He had really come back to life and then went to heaven. Peter also reminded them that Jesus had promised to come back and take everyone who believed in Him to live forever with Him in heaven. Peter wanted them to know the reality of the Christian faith.

He knew his time on earth was coming to an end. Therefore it was important for these believers to understand the reality of eternity, one way or the other. There is an eternity, after death, whether with or without Christ Jesus.

Peter also focuses on preparing the next generation of church leaders. All the men who walked with Jesus while He was on earth were dying off. Most of them were being killed for their faith. New leaders needed to have these teachings to hang onto and pass along so that these truths would not get lost.

With this in mind, Peter and John, and later Paul and a few others were very careful what they said and what they wrote.



Write a letter to a friend who you want to know Jesus as much as you do! Make it fun and joyful, tell them how great knowing Jesus is for you! Draw pictures or put stickers on the letter and envelope to show them how great it is to be someone who knows Jesus as their savior! Here is an example of what you might say in your letter...

Dear friend,

Since I have known Jesus in my life I have wanted to tell you. Only because knowing Jesus has made a huge difference in me. I want to now be a better person, more like He is. Jesus helps me everyday with life, I am never lonely because He is with me. Also I want to tell others about how great it is to know Jesus and to know where I will go when I die. I will go to heaven and be with Him and all of my family and friends who also know and love Jesus. Heaven is forever, I really want you to be there too. Just ask Him!



John - Love is Central

ohn wrote three short letters, one gospel (The story of Jesus' life) and the book of Revelation. In lesson twelve we will briefly look at the Revelation John saw and wrote down.

John had a gentle heart which focused primarily on love. He did not write about superficial love, the kind of love that comes and goes. He wrote about real, honest, pure love that only God can show.

These three letters John wrote emphasize God's love for all people, man's love that should be returned to God, and man's love that should be shown to other people. He tells the reader that God loved everyone so much that He sent His Son, His only Son. Jesus Christ, to become the Savior of all who would believe in Him.



Gods love for man. When we use the term "man" it means everyone, every person, young, old, or in-between. God invites everyone to believe in His Son, Jesus Christ as their Savior. John reminds the reader and listener that Jesus gave His life for theirs. Gods love is pure and holy.

John explains how we can return our love to God. The first step is faith. The next step is returning our love for Him by the life we live. And finally our love for God is shown by our love and care for other people.

John tells the reader that "God is love." He is the beginning and the end of love. In the Gospel of John he tells us how Jesus showed and still shows His love for every person. Jesus also shows His love for God His Father by being totally obedient \mathbf{P}_{18} to Him.

John's Three Letters emphasize...

- 1. God's love for all people,
- 2. Man's love that should be returned to God.
- 3. Man's love that should be shown to other people.

How can we return GOD'S Love?

Read and obey God's words in the Bible.

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Showing the love of Jesus to others by helping those in need.

Praise, worship and prayer.

What other ways can you return God's love?

Writing About Jesus

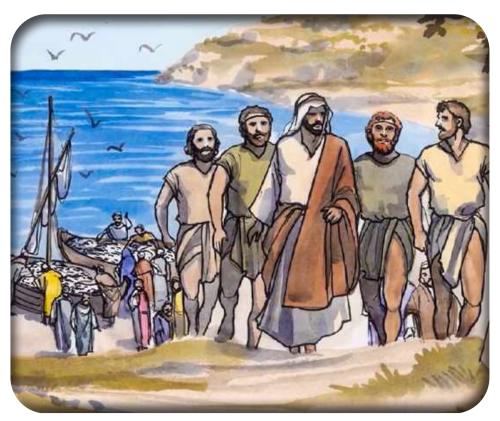
Four men wrote gospels, the good news. They wrote about the birth, life death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ the Son of God. John was one of these men. Some of these thoughts are very hard to understand. They have to be taken by faith.

John wrote about some things that are hard to understand. One example is in the very beginning of this book of John. He begins with the true beginning of Jesus Christ the Son of God. He existed before the world began. Jesus and God worked together in the process of creation. When they were creating man God said, "Let us make man in OUR image."

The verse almost everyone learns is John 3:16. "For God loved the world so much that He gave His only Son so that anyone who believes in Him shall not perish but have eternal life." (TLB) Do you know that many people don't understand what that means?

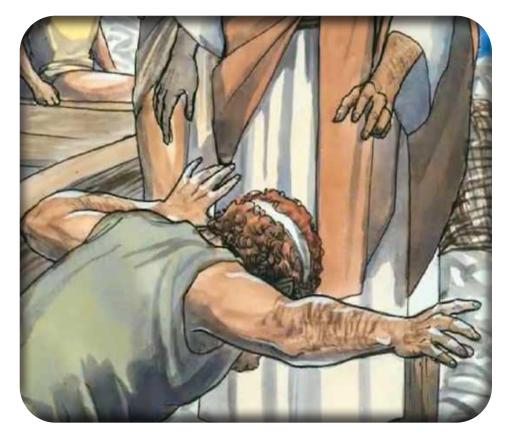
It is so easy to know what it means. God loved all of us so very much that He let Jesus, His only Son, become our Savior. All we have to do is believe and ask Him into our hearts.

John tells many things that Jesus did while He was on earth – things that no one else could do to prove that He was equal with God and could take away our sins. John talks a lot about love. God's love, the promise of peace, and the promise of the gift of the Holy Spirit Who would be sent to everyone who believes in Jesus as their Savior. John, along with the other eleven apostles, walked the paths with Jesus. They listened to Him and grew 20



in their relationship to Him from Friend, to Teacher, Master, and finally to Lord while He was on earth. After Jesus died and rose from the dead they began to understand that Jesus was their Savior also.

The promise to return for all believers is the climax of the Book of John and is repeated in "The Revelation of Jesus Christ" now called Revelation.

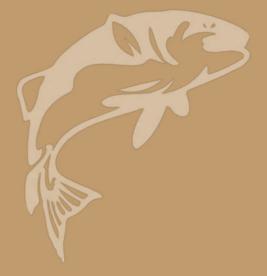


Circle template is in back of this book. Print out pins and lamenate or put clear packing tape over to make a firm button/pin. Glue a pin clasp to back of pin pin clasps available at craft stores, scripture side. Have your students memorize this scripture verse to say when someone asks them "what do you believe."



John 3:16. "For God loved the world so much that He gave His only Son so that anyone who believes in Him shall not perish but have eternal life." John 3:16.





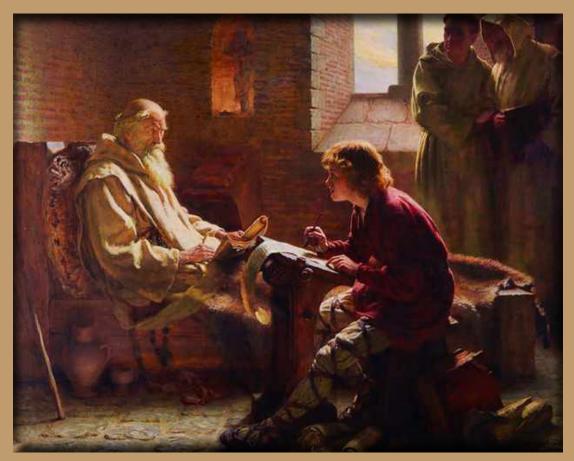
section three

The Later Years









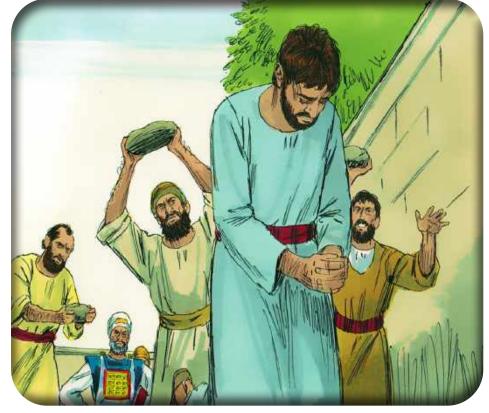
The Last Chapter by J. Doyle Penrose - public domain

The Right Hand of Fellowship

Paul, formerly called Saul, began as a young man persecuting the early believers in

Jesus Christ. A true disciple named Stephen was captured by a gang, tried on the spot, and sentenced to death by stoning. That was a very common way to kill offenders way back then.

Saul stood by, happily watching as other men stoned Stephen. They laid their coats at Saul's feet to keep from getting them dirty. Another Christian was out of the way! Saul then went on his way to find other believers, men and women alike, to arrest them and put them in jail.

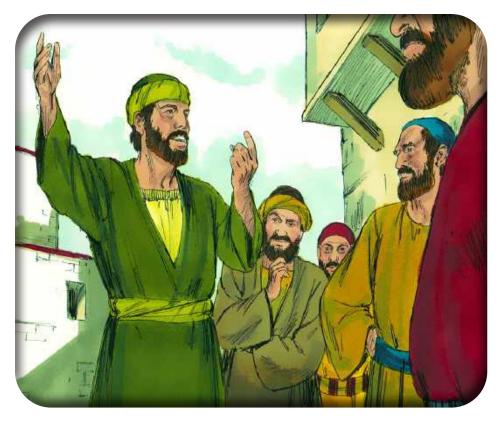


One day as he traveled down the road, Jesus appeared to Saul. His life was completely changed and he spent the rest of his life serving the Savior he had once hated. Several



years later, Saul, then known as Paul, went to Jerusalem to become acquainted with the apostles who were the undisputed leaders of the early church. Paul wanted to meet them and tell them what the Lord had been doing through him to reach the gentile world. Gentiles are all people who are not of the Jewish family or faith.

When he got there, Paul met with three men, Peter, James, and John. When they heard everything God was doing through Paul's minis-



try they "gave him the right hand of fellowship." That means Peter, James and John accepted Paul as God's apostle to the gentiles. They accepted Paul as equal to them in every way as a leader in the early church.

They could not have known that the letters Paul wrote to people and churches would become a large part of the New Testament, that's the part of the Bible that shares Jesus' life, ministry, the history of the early church, and many letters telling later followers – like you and me

– how God wanted them to live and what they should believe.

Paul was accepted in every way as an equal to the rest of Jesus' apostles, and his letters are full of teaching, instruction, and encouragement for believers of all generations.

Why do you think Jesus picked Paul, converted him and change him to become one of the best witnesses of God's salvation?



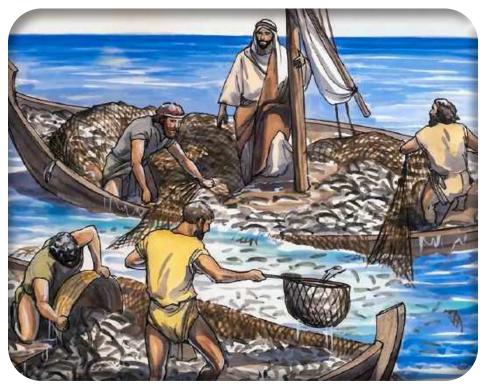
What About James?

f his life had not been cut short James would probably have been one of the leaders of the early church in Judea. He, along with his brother John and their close friend Peter were the three men who had been closest to Jesus while He was on earth.

James was the first of these three men to die. Herod, the Roman leader in Judea, found that it made the synagogue leaders very happy to see the believers in Christ Jesus killed. So he had James, the brother of John, killed.

While he was alive, James was a leader and worked hard to see that people who did not know about Jesus would have the opportunity to hear the message and were given the opportunity to receive Jesus Christ as their Savior.





We know that while Jesus was on earth James was one of the closest disciples/apostles who walked the paths with Jesus, their Teacher, Master, and Lord.

We don't know much about James. He was the brother of John. He was a fisherman until Jesus called him to follow Him. James followed Jesus the rest of his life and he died because he was a Christian.

When someone is killed for

what they believe he or she is called a martyr. Many, many believers in Jesus have died as martyrs. James was a martyr.

James experienced great joy serving Jesus. One day the Lord told James to try catching fish on a certain part of the lake and he caught so many fish he couldn't keep them all in his little boat!

What times did you experience great joy serving the Lord?



Preparation for the Future





We do know that Peter was in and out of prison several times. He was not in prison because he had done anything wrong. He was in prison because he believed in Jesus Christ and taught people everywhere that Jesus was really the Son of God. He taught them that the only way to heaven was through faith in Jesus as their Savior.

We know that at least once while Peter was in prison God sent an angel to break the chains that

were holding him down. Then the angel led him out through the door that was locked, and walked down the street a little way. Then the angel returned to heaven and Peter went to tell a group of believers what had happened.

Here's where the story gets funny. Rhoda was a servant girl at the house where the group of believers was praying. Peter

knocked on the door and told her who he was. She got so excited that she forgot to open the door to let Peter come in. She ran and told everyone that Peter was there. Finally they opened the door and Peter told them all what had happened. Then he went to a safer place.

When the officials discovered that Peter was gone, the guards were





executed on the spot.

At one point Peter was sentenced to death. Church history tells us that when they were ready to crucify him, he insisted that they hang him on the cross upside down. He felt that he was unworthy to die in the same manner his Lord and Savior had died. They gladly did as he asked.

Make shackles and chains out of construction paper and tape here's how:

Supplies-black construction paper, scissers, tape



Cut 18 chains 1' wide Tape "chains" together, then tape them to shackles

Choose a student to play Peter when he was in prison.



Choose a student to play the Angel who sets Peter free. AN ANGEL IS SENT FROM GOD TO SET PETER FREE!

PETER IS SET FREE!

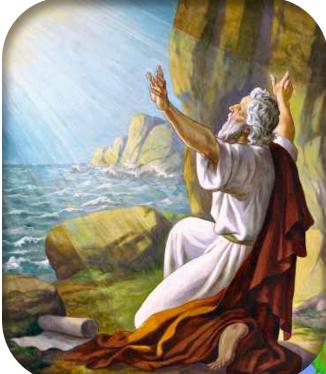


Read this amazing story in Acts 12:1-19

The Last of the Little Group

John was one of the twelve apostles of Jesus Christ. He was one of the three men who were closest to Jesus while He was on earth. John wrote the life story of the One he loved, worshipped, and called Master and Friend. That is recorded in the Bible as the Book of John.

At the end of his life, John was a prisoner on the Island of Papmos. That's an island in the Mediterranean Sea, called the Great Sea in the Bible. While he was on that island, he had a very unusual, breath-taking experience. It was the first day of the week, the one we call Sunday. In those days they called it "The Lord's Day" because it was the day of the week when Jesus came back to life.



John on Isle of Patmos

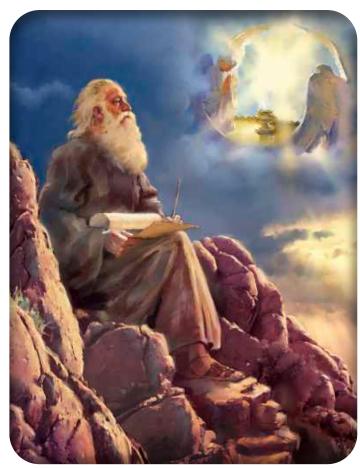
wrong. Most of all God wanted them to know that He really cared for each of them.

Then God showed John many P_{30} things that were going to

John heard a voice calling him and all of a sudden he was in Heaven where God lives.

First God told John to write down messages to the seven early churches. God wanted each of these churches to know that He knew what they were going through. He gave each church a word of encouragement. He also gave them a warning because of what they were doing





John the Revelator

What is the purpose of the book of Revelation?

The book of Revelation was written to...

happen later, even much later. In fact, some of these things have not happened yet. But they will happen some time. We don't know when. John was told to write down these things he heard and saw so that believers who were not yet born could read about them and be encouraged to wait patiently for them to happen. That includes us.

There is no record of how John died, but it was probably not a natural death.

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one of the oldest New Testament papyri, showing 2 Cor 11:33-12:9. This is what John's writing would have looked like. John wrote in Arabic.

of Jesus Christ.

From Fishermen to Fishers of Men



welve men walked the paths of Judea with Jesus. Three of the first four He called to follow Him became the inner circle. That means that sometimes when Jesus wanted to be alone he took these men with Him.

Before Jesus called these three men to follow Him they were working as fishermen. They caught and sold fish. That's how they made a living. When Jesus said, "Follow me" they left their family business and followed Him.

They, along with nine other men walked down paths, roads and through open fields listening to Jesus and helping in tasks like crowd control and meal servers. Whatever Jesus needed done, He knew He could count on all these men to do what He asked them to do.

They learned to worship God, not just pretending to, but really worship God. They learned what love was and how to love those who were not kind, gentle, and loving. I guess you could say that they learned to love as God loved.

What do you think we can learn from Peter, James and John that will make us stronger Christians?



In Matthew 4:19 Jesus said to his disciples, "Follow Me, and I will make you fishers of men." Matthew 4:19 (KJV)

Some of these fish have a number on them to help you solve the word puzzle below. Find the fish with numbers on them and match to the words below. Then write that word in the blanks to solve this puzzle.





SCRIPTURE REFERENCES FOR EACH LESSON

SECTION ONE - During the Life of Jesus Chris



Follow Me! Jesus' Invitation



Daughter is Dying! Jarius' daughter Luke 8:41 – 56



Can You Keep a Secret? The Transfiguration Luke 9:28 – 36

Mark 9:2 – 13 Matthew 17:1 – 13 Second Peter 1:18



In The Garden

Sharing Jesus' prayer time, Matthew 26:36-46, Mark 14:32-42, Luke 22: 39 -46 John 17:1-26



The Master Returns Home Jesus' farewell to His disciples Matthew 28:16-20 Mark 16:9-20 Luke 24:36-54 Acts 1:1-11

Section TWO - Three Letter Writers

Peter – Preparing for the next generation of church leaders?



James – Love is Central



John – Love is central

Section Three - The Later years



The Right hand of fellowship Accepting Paul as an apostle Galatians 2:9 – 10



What About James? James the martyr

11

Preparation for the Future Peter knew he would soon leave earth Second Peter Tradition – crucified upside down



The Last of the Trio Johns' farewell Revelation 1:1-8



From fishermen to fishers of men Final review CUT CIRCLES OUT AND TAPE TOGETHER TO MAKE YOUR PINS

ask me What I Believe!

FRONT OF

ask me what I Believe!

BACK OF PIN

ask me what Believe!

John 3:16. "For God loved the world so much that He gave His only Son so that anyone who believes in Him shall not perish but have eternal life." John 3:16.

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Mary Jane Ponten was a servant of the Lord Jesus Christ. She developed Sunday School curriculum for over 20 years. At 91 years young, her life with cerebral palsy has been used mightily. Her tenacity and unguarded personality won the hearts of many the world over.

MARY JANE PONTEN 1930-2021



Mary Jane with her books in 2015



