



Secondary Sunday School

July 2, 2017. V67, Q3, W1

LET'S STUDY ACTS!

Jesus' Last Words and Ascension into Heaven

Scripture References: Matthew 28:16-20; Luke 24:45-53; Acts 1:5-11

It was Sunday morning. I was sitting in Sunday school while the teacher explained we would start studying the book of Acts, a sequel (or book #2) to The Gospel of Luke. I shifted in my seat as a latecomer sat down next to me, but eagerly continued to listen. Acts, she said, begins with Jesus and His followers gathered on a hillside on Mount Olives near Jerusalem. I looked out the window, the scene vivid in my mind. I blinked and suddenly, it was as if I was transported back to the very day of which she was speaking. When I opened my eyes, I was not in the Sunday school classroom but sitting on the ground on top of a mountain, surrounded by a group of people.

My attention immediately riveted on the man who was standing at the front of the crowd. I noticed others around me were not distracted, but also had their eyes fastened on Him. Was this Jesus of whom I had heard so much, but had never seen? My heart started beating faster as I realized that, indeed, it was. He was speaking about how His death and resurrection had been prophesied in the Old Testament. I saw others wiping tears from their eyes, no doubt remembering the darkness of that terrible crucifixion day only 42 days prior, and then the utmost joy and amazement when they went to the tomb two days later and it was empty!

Although we did not yet realize what was about to happen, we sensed Jesus was getting ready to share words of great importance. His eyes pierced our very hearts. His next words echoed in the hills around us. "All power in heaven and earth is given to me. Your calling, my beloved friends, is to go to every part of the world. Teach every man, woman, and child about me. I have such an intense longing that they, too, will become my disciples." He paused, and I didn't dare take a breath. He continued, "Preach the message of repentance to all. Baptize them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost." He then looked directly at with me with such love, I let out the breath I had been holding. He said, "I promised I would not leave you alone, but would send the Holy Spirit to comfort you and give you power. Go to Jerusalem and wait until I send you this power."

HEAVENLY HIPPIE HIKER

I grew up in a home that did not go to church or teach things about the Bible. So it is not out of the ordinary for my story to begin at a bar. My brother and I were up there playing pool and pinball games while our parents were at home. My father called the bar and spoke to me on the phone saying, "I want you and Tony to go outside and listen to this man who is walking up there from the house." The house was only about 400 yards away so we went outside right after hanging up.

Standing there we saw a skinny, hippie looking man walking toward us. I don't recall his name, but I do remember several things about that day, despite the fact that I was only 7 years old. He had a long stick in his hand and used it to draw a cross in the dirt. He then asked us, "Do you know what that is?" My brother and I had been sent to church a couple of times so we knew enough to say it was a cross. He then asked, "Do you know who died on it?" Again we knew enough to say Jesus, but that was the extent of our knowledge.

Over the next five minutes he explained the importance of Jesus dying on that cross and what it meant to us at that moment. I would like to say that I understood, felt convicted, and gave my life to God but that wasn't the case. I was just simply following my dad's instructions and really only wanting to go back inside and play more games. So when he finished we said thanks and went back inside, despite his pleading with us not to.

Things got more serious once we were inside. The guy followed us in and stood in the doorway, begging us to leave. While we didn't obey his request, I have never forgotten those piercing eyes that wept slightly as they urged me not to stay in such a wicked place. After a minute, several of the adults inside began yelling at him to leave and to leave us kids alone. The last memory I have is him being attacked by another man, nicknamed Rooster. He was spun about by his shoulders and kicked in the rear out the door. I never saw or heard from that man again.

Eleven years passed before I finally realized my need for Jesus and became His follower. About 18 more years passed before I learned some more about that man. One day I was sharing my testimony with brethren from Baldy Mesa. Because that man was such an integral part of my testimony they heard about his visit, which prompted them to recall an old newspaper article telling the story of a man who was leaving Baldy Mesa, CA to spread the gospel.

The more they shared what they recalled about the article the more it sounded just like the man I had met so long ago. This news also inspired a greater reverence for God and His children. From that conversation I learned that this man hiked over 400 miles across the deserts of California and Arizona in the middle of summer just so a little seven-year-old kid could hear the gospel, without a guarantee of my salvation! I have driven that same stretch of desert many times, only now it is much more meaningful to me.

SPREADING THE GOSPEL OF JESUS

This image shows a single sheet of white paper with horizontal ruling lines. The lines are evenly spaced and run across the width of the page. There are no margins, text, or other markings on the paper.

KEY THOUGHT

Jesus' desire is still the same today;
He wants us to share the message of
salvation.

MEMORY VERSE

Go ye into all the world, and preach
the gospel to every creature.
Mark 16:15

LESSON DISCUSSION

1. How many days was Jesus on the earth after his resurrection?
2. What specific message did Jesus want preached throughout ALL the world?
3. Discuss WHO you can share the gospel with and some ways in which to do so.
4. How will Jesus come back again?

JESUS' LAST WORDS CONTINUED

I looked around me for a split second and saw the intensity in the eyes of those gathered around me—their eyes never leaving Jesus' face. He then spoke a reassuring and loving promise that rings in my ears still today. "Lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world." His feet then left the ground and He started ascending up. If it were possible, my heart beat yet harder as I tried to grasp the meaning of what was happening. We all got to our feet, never taking our eyes off Jesus. He continued rising and finally disappeared above the clouds.

I closed my eyes, my breath coming fast. When I opened them, I was once again back in Sunday school class, hearing not the voice of Jesus, but the voice of my teacher speaking these words: "As the disciples looked steadfastly toward heaven, two men in white apparel stood by them saying, Ye men of Galilee, why are you gazing into heaven? This same Jesus, which is taken from you, will come back again for you, just as he went up." The other students were shuffling around me, but I remained utterly still. Did Jesus want ME to spread the gospel? Was He really coming back again? I had an awful lot to think about.

Sister Julie Elwell

HEAVENLY HIPPIE HIKER CONTINUED

Rather than being bored with that monotonous drive, I am inspired to see the sacrifice made just so I might have a chance at knowing God. I am reminded of God's love each mile of the way.

Don Elwell

The Beautiful Way (primary) and *The Compass* (junior) Sunday school literature can be downloaded at sundayschoolliterature.com and churchofgodeveninglight.com/beautiful-way. Please email any questions to gellenbeck.lindsey@gmail.com.

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Secondary Sunday School

July 9, 2017. V67, Q3, W2

LET'S STUDY ACTS!

The Promise of a Flashlight—Day of Pentecost

Have you ever walked outside on a dark night and wished you had a flashlight? It's not a good feeling to think there may be something or someone out there that you don't know about. It's an equally bad feeling to realize that the forces of evil and deception in the world can overtake any of us if we are left unaware.

Oh, but what a good feeling to click that flashlight on when you're outside in the dark, and suddenly, things are illuminated! And what a good feeling to realize that God has given us a 'flashlight' in this dark world—salvation. But what good is a flashlight if it doesn't turn on when you need to use it? What use is it if the batteries are dead? Thankfully, God has given us batteries to power our flashlight, too—the infilling of the Holy Spirit.

The infilling of the Holy Ghost in our lives is called sanctification. It is the second work of grace (the first being salvation) and it is just as important. Without it, our salvation would be empty and powerless. We may have asked Jesus into our hearts and have a strong desire to serve Him, but in our humanity, we do not have the ability to follow through on that desire.

On the day of Pentecost, the Apostles were given the 'batteries' for their flashlights. The second chapter of Acts says, "And suddenly there came a sound from heaven as of a rushing mighty wind, and it filled all the house where they were sitting. And there appeared unto them cloven tongues like as of fire, and it sat upon each of them. And they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance." What amazing power they were given by the Holy Ghost!

Not only is the Holy Ghost our source of power, but it is also our teacher. It gives us the ability to understand what we read and learn about in God's word. The Bible is a powerful book, and it was inspired directly by God. But it was written a very long time ago, and sometimes it is hard to understand what it is saying—this is where the Holy Spirit (or Ghost) can help us. When we are confused by a certain passage, or are unsure what the meaning or purpose of a specific story is, we have the privilege of praying and asking God to give us understanding through the Holy Spirit.

FIRST MONARK AND SALVATION

“What? They don’t have a TV? What am I going to do all summer?”

My parents had no answers, but they were sure I was headed to Monark Camp Springs with my Aunt Caroline. I would spend the rest of the summer in Oregon with my dad’s side of the family. They were the church folks who didn’t own a TV, which I watched several hours a day.

I specifically remember sitting in the far back benches at Monark one morning. I was a ten-year-old kid with a smart mouth, charming smile, and an angry streak almost as long as my wild boy, shoulder-length-hair.

During prayer requests, some old farmer in overalls stood up. In the midst of his extra-long request, he made mention about how wrong it was for a boy to have long hair. He looked back at me several times during his speech. Although only ten, I seriously wanted to say something back to him but chose rather to just quietly and leave service to hang out in my cousins’ tent.

Over that summer I learned some important things about myself. I could survive without a TV. I didn’t have to talk back to people who did or said hurtful things to me. I could sit through an entire church service. I really enjoyed being around other people and doing things with them. The most important thing I learned though was that there was a God who loved me and He brought some new people into my life to demonstrate that love.

As an adult, particularly as a minister, I often reflect on my first church experiences. It would be easy to remain hurt and run far away. I have since

learned some valuable lessons that have helped me to be more like Jesus because I can empathize with those who are hurting or marginalized by society, or worse, by church goers. I continue to realize that life experiences, even while “unsaved,” prove to be a benefit if we allow God to teach us.

After that summer, I was hooked. While Monark wasn’t my highlight, Oregon and my family up there made a huge impact on me. The following year, I came up with two cousins from Arizona. Secretly, I think our parents were trying to get a break while hoping we might get “saved” and change our behavior. Humor aside, I was excited to be in Oregon again, even going to church. I was especially impacted by how genuine these church folks were.

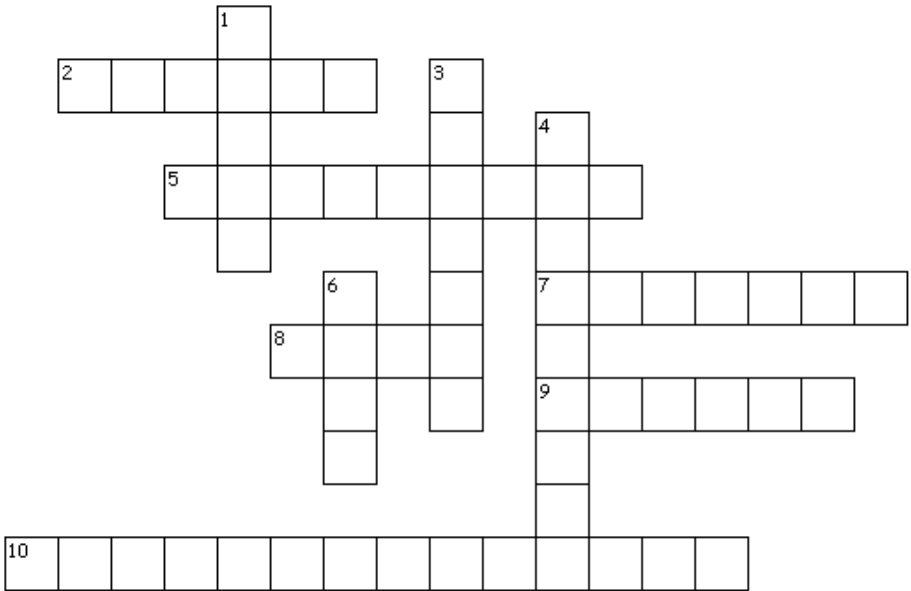
It was this genuineness that brought me back to Oregon several times. It was that genuineness that made me marvel about God and living a different type of life. The uncle, with whom I stayed most of the summer, had such an aura about him. He was funny, caring, strong, respected, but mostly compassionate. He was faithful to lead the family in evening prayer, sometimes accompanied with a lesson or thought about God.

It was during this time that I first asked God to forgive me for who I was and all the things I had done. I never prayed out loud and I never told anyone else (until writing this). I didn’t fully know what happened but I can tell you I felt something deep within. I immediately felt a pleasant and light feeling from deep inside. I had found something and I didn’t want to let it go. At the same time, my pride forced me to keep it to myself.

As the summer ended, I prepared to go back to Arizona and I wondered if the

THE DAY OF PENTECOST!

ACCORD, CLOVEN, FIRE, JERUSALEM, PENTECOST, POWER,
SANCTIFICATION, TEACHER, TONGUES, WIND



ACROSS

2. Harmonious, united in faith
5. West of the Dead Sea.
7. Another name for language
8. Brings light and life
9. The shape of the fiery tongues
10. Second work of grace

DOWN

1. The Holy Spirit brings _
3. The Holy Spirit is our _
4. The day the Holy Spirit's descent
6. What sound came from Heaven?

KEY THOUGHT

The Holy Spirit filled the Apostles with power on the day of Pentecost, and He wants to do the same for you!

MEMORY VERSE

But the Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my name, he shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you. John 14:26

LESSON DISCUSSION

1. What did the Apostles see on each other's heads?
2. Why is the Holy Spirit like a flashlight? What abilities does it give us?
3. Why were Peter and the Apostles able to do everything they did?
4. What gives you the ability to follow God and please Him?

PROMISE OF A FLASHLIGHT CONTINUED

The Apostles also had this ability when they received the Holy Spirit. The words they had heard from Jesus, but not before understood, suddenly became clear! Peter said in his message on that day, "Thou hast made known to me the ways of life...." (Acts 2:28) It was by this knowledge and power that Peter and the rest of the Apostles were able to leave Jerusalem, travel far and wide to spread the Gospel, and eventually die for the cause of their beloved Jesus.

"It is impossible for me to have that kind of power," you may be thinking! But that simply isn't true. You and I may not be called upon to travel like Peter, and we may not have to die a martyr's death. Then again, there is a chance we will be called to those things. Thankfully God's power, through the Holy Ghost, is the same today as it was on the day of Pentecost. Peter said, "For the promise is unto you, and to your children, and to all that are afar off, even as many as the Lord our God shall call." (Acts 2:39) No matter what the Lord asks you to do in your life, the Holy Spirit will be there to guide you with wisdom and power—it is the promise of God.

Lindsey Gellenbeck

FIRST MONARK CONTINUED

feeling would last. Would I be able to live like this down there? Would the same God follow me to such a place? Should I tell my parents? I didn't know the answers and I never really found out. Within a short period of time, back in Arizona, I was up to my old sinful ways of living, just like all the people that surrounded me. That feeling within was gone and only heaviness remained. I had no idea what to do and I had no one to ask.

Don Elwell

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Secondary Sunday School

July 2, 2017. V67, Q3, W3

LET'S STUDY ACTS!

Peter Preaches on the Day of Pentecost

Scripture References: Acts 2:1-39

It was the 50th Day after our Jewish Passover and I was excited! It was the Day of Pentecost. I didn't have school and my father did not have to work! Our family had traveled to Jerusalem to observe the Feast of Weeks, an agricultural holiday in which we offered the first fruits of our wheat harvest as a freewill offering to the Lord. Before we left home, we went to the fields and carefully cut the best of our wheat, putting it in a basket. I heard my parents discussing over breakfast that this important day was also reported to be the day on which God gave Moses the Ten Commandments on Mount Sinai 1445 years ago.

Devout Jews from every country crowded into Jerusalem, our family among them. I was jostled and bumped by many people as we headed toward the temple. The rise and fall of voices surrounded me and many spoke in languages I did not understand. My father turned around, and in a language I did understand, urged me to keep up with him!

As we neared the temple, a great commotion seemed to be agitating the people. The disciples of Jesus Christ were the center of attention and they were preaching with a power I had never heard in all the years I had attended the synagogue. Someone next to me wonderingly exclaimed, "We can all hear the message in our own language; how can this be?" Another voice mockingly cried, "These men are drunk and full of new wine." Confused and amazed people surrounded me on every side. I tried to get my father's attention, but his eyes were riveted on a disciple called Peter, and so my eyes turned toward him, as well.

As Peter began to preach, he raised his voice loud enough for all to hear. He proclaimed, "These men are not drunken, as you think, seeing it is only 9 o'clock in the morning." As the mockers continued to mock, he began to powerfully preach a message about all the scriptures of the law I had just been studying in school. He caught my attention when he quoted a scripture I had just memorized the week before. I mouthed the words as he spoke them. "And it shall come to pass in the last days, saith God, I will pour out my Spirit upon all flesh....and it shall come to pass, that

SALVATION BY ASSOCIATION

God has a way of drawing people who seemingly don't care about Him or His ways. Two years after my parent's divorce, I moved to Oregon with my dad. Leaving my mom behind was heartbreaking, but at the same time, I was excited to be back around those genuine church folk I was related to. For the next 4.5 years, I hung around them as often as I could. I frequently attended church services on Wednesdays and Sundays.

By the time I was a senior in high school, I had convinced myself I was in good standing with God. I had what I called, "salvation by association." I allowed myself to believe I was saved because I went to church, enjoyed the songs, and tried to do things right. God, in His mercy, allowed me to experience the fear of dying. Many nights I would not be able to sleep without the distraction of a radio, TV, or something to read.

Reading the Bible only made my fears grow worse because I saw that I wasn't where I should be. I had a filthy mouth and it had a stronghold on me. I grew up around folks who talked like that, so I thought it was normal. Being around godly people, in church, and reading the Bible showed me how bad it was. I wanted to get saved but couldn't stop my habit of filthy talk.

This dilemma forced me to become desperate. I was fearful of dying, knew the solution, but was controlled by the power of sin. In an effort to break away I decided to force myself to stop talking that way. Over a four month period I tried fruitlessly to quit my habit. The

best I could manage was about a 7-day reprieve before succumbing to the power that controlled my life. I was miserable and scared.

In desperation I prayed to God while in my car. It was in the afternoon, in my mustard-yellow 1977 Toyota Celica, while waiting to get on I-205 at Division, headed south towards Gladstone where I lived. I said out loud, "God. If you will help me quit cussing I will think about getting saved." Then I sped onto the freeway and went home.

By the next day I realized something had changed. God hadn't only helped me--He wiped out the urge and the thought! I no longer would think of words then struggle to tell myself not to say them. By God's grace those words didn't even pop into my mind. He had delivered me! It has lasted to this day!

As happy as I was about what God did for me, I knew I still remained unsaved. God broke the power of Satan but He left the fear of death to be a real force in my life. For many months I ignored this fear but continued to think about getting saved, yet never made that choice to live for God.

Just as I did as a kid, I left Oregon for Arizona. This time I was headed to college at the University of Arizona to prepare for my future. Leaving the godly influences around me in Oregon and attending one of the most ungodly universities in the country was not an ideal situation for someone trying to get right with God.

Don Elwell

KEY THOUGHT

The message today is the same as it was in Acts: Ask Jesus to forgive your sins so you can be saved.

MEMORY VERSE

Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins. Acts 2:38

LESSON DISCUSSION

1. What feast were the Jews in Jerusalem celebrating? What was the day called?
2. What happened to amaze and confuse the people?
3. What was the main focus of Peter's message to the people?
4. Do you believe Jesus still hears you today when you asked Him to forgive your sins?

PETER PREACHES CONTINUED

whosoever shall call on the name of the Lord shall be saved."

The noise of the crowd faded around me until Peter's words were all I heard. Although he had the appearance of a simple fisherman, his words were powerful, interesting, and intelligent. One by one he preached about the many prophecies pointing toward Jesus. And then even Peter seemed to fade from my vision and all I saw was Jesus. He was a man crucified to death by cruel and evil men for my sins. Those evil men put Him in a tomb, but even the tomb was not strong enough to hold Him. He arose from the grave and then ascended to heaven!

I remembered the lies I had told and the angry words I had spoken to my mother earlier that week. In the middle of the great crowd, I was sorry for those sins and wondered if there was a way to be free from the guilt I carried? Others in the crowd must have been convicted of their sins, as well, and their voices slowly penetrated my hearing. They asked the disciples, "What should we do now?" Tears ran down many of their faces. Peter said, "Repent and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ." Along with many others, I dropped to my knees and poured out my heart to Jesus in heaven, asking His forgiveness for my sins.

Sister Julie Elwell

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Secondary Sunday School

July 23, 2017. V67, Q3, W4

LET'S STUDY ACTS!

The Lame Man at the Gate Called Beautiful

Scripture References: Acts 2:43; Acts 3:1-19; Acts 5:11-16

It was three o'clock in the afternoon. I was tired and discouraged. I had been carried to the gate called 'Beautiful' that morning, the gate to which I was carried every day. You see, I was lame. I looked longingly at the throngs of people who so easily walked into the temple. I saw children running. I wished yet one more time that I had been born able to walk. I knew that could never happen, though. Sighing, I held out my hands again, hoping someone would look down and take notice of me lying on the ground—hoping for a few more coins from some compassionate soul with which to buy bread for the evening meal.

People brushed by me, most not even glancing down. I knew they were going into the temple to pray, because it was the hour of prayer. I wondered, "Did God even notice me?" I didn't realize it in that moment, as the sun beat down on me, but my life was getting ready to radically change. I would afterward fully understand that, indeed, God was looking down on my disadvantaged condition.

All of a sudden my expectations lifted from their depressed state, for there in front of me stood two men. The first man, his companion called him Peter, fastened his eyes on me. Even though I couldn't walk, I truly couldn't move—there was something about that man. I looked earnestly back at him, joyful in the thought that finally someone had seen me and would offer me the coins I so desired. Alas, my high spirits came crashing back down quickly as he said, "Silver and gold have I none." Well, so much for that, I thought. But wait. He was still talking. I tuned back in just as he said, "I will give you what I do have. In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth rise up and walk." Walk?! I hadn't walked a day in my life. Nevertheless, Peter and his companion, John, reached down, grabbed my hands and pulled me to my feet.

Astounded, my brain whirled as I tried to figure out what was happening in my body! Strength coursed through my feet and ankle bones—strength such as I had never before experienced! Forgotten was my momentary disappointment and thoughts about insignificant things such as money. I leapt up! Excitedly, and for the

ASU

God is not limited by anything but unbelief. I know this to be true by His word and by my own life experiences. As an 18-year-old young man working on his future at an ungodly university, I still felt God's love drawing me. I wasn't going to church anywhere, but my relatives who did saw to it that I got tapes of the services to listen to. I often listened on my 36-mile, one-way commute to and from school.

I had a routine of taking a nap in a library on campus, between morning classes. One particular day, I ran into a man while leaving the library. The conversation started simply enough. "How are you?" to which I replied, "I can't complain. Besides, no one would listen if I did." It was a typical cliché meant to tell the other person that you really aren't interested in talking. He persisted, "There's Someone who will listen. His name is" I then interrupted, explaining I knew who he was talking about.

This guy was not put off by my willingness to brush him away. He walked with me to my next class all the while discussing God, His word, and His son Jesus. He began to open many scriptures as we talked for over two hours. I watched my classmates go to class and eventually leave when it was over, yet this man and I continued our discussion.

The most intriguing aspect of this man was that he seemed to know exactly what my struggles and fears were. I distinctly recall his last two questions to

me. "Do you really believe all things are possible with God?" and "I could even be like Jesus?"

As the guys on their way to Damascus, my heart burned within me. The next few days I revisited that conversation in my mind and even tried to find that guy again on campus. I wanted to live for God, but I also wanted my own ways of living. I wanted to live without fear of death, but was unwilling to receive the life God was offering.

It finally all came crashing down on the night of October 6th 1994 at 11:45pm. I went to school, then work. During my drive I listened to one of those tapes that was sent to me. I can't recall the sermon, but what I do remember is the song that was playing when I pulled up to my house. It was, "Lord, I'm Coming Home." The words sung were exactly what I was feeling at the moment. I was sick of sin, tired of feeling the way I did and wanted something better.

The conviction was so great. It was then I remembered that feeling I had experienced the first time I asked God to forgive me. At that moment I turned my truck off, went into the house, knelt at the foot of my bed, and humbly begged God to make me the type of Christian that would never turn back. By His grace I have been able to be exactly what I prayed He would make me.

Don Elwell

CROSSWORD PUZZLE

WALKING AND LEAPING!

ALMS
BEAUTIFUL
GOLD
HEALING
JESUS

JOHN
LAME
LEAPING
NAZARETH
PETER

POWER
PRAISING
SILVER
TEMPLE
WALK

L P R I L C I H K P T B K I K H Z M L S A
C E V E E H T P R A I S I N G E I J U U B
K L A W T E E F H A R F R O D A Z G F S C
W E A P R E Y D E U Q E L K N L N L I E X
J F Z A I X P S N I W D J K I I G T T J Y
Y D Z C Y N X R K O J X A D C N S A U N W
O A D O Y G G R P G C B L N H G P G A G F
N Q V O G T L D A B Y W M Z Y J M S E H C
O A Z F Q V R A D G E O S F C I X P B T M
V F C C Z T C U M E S D B H Q S P D B W C
C A P J E J J L N E A D J O H N I R N E Q
K L F M O C J R O Y E J L R J A C D X C E
J B P A J A R P K Q Q O F O N N X V M C U
S L R E V L I S S H W V P D B G P Q M J C
E U D D T D P S T H B B S T W B L H Y V K

KEY THOUGHT

Jesus is STILL the answer to every physical, spiritual and emotional need and disadvantage we have.

MEMORY VERSE

Now unto him that is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that worketh in us, unto him be glory in the church by Christ Jesus throughout all ages, world without end. Ephesians 3:20-21

LESSON DISCUSSION

1. How was the lame man at a disadvantage? What did he have to do every day?
2. Discuss what happened on the best day of his life.
3. Do we have disadvantages or disappointments? Sometimes they are big; sometimes small. Who should we fasten our eyes on?
4. Do you believe Jesus still answers prayer? What does He want MOST from us?

THE LAME MAN CONTINUED

first time, I joined the throngs of people entering into the temple. I couldn't keep silent! As unbelieving and joyful tears streamed down my face, I kept leaping and walking and praising God!

Peter and John stood by, once again touched by the inspiration of the Holy Spirit to reach out a hand of healing. Soon, the amazed and wondering people turned their eyes away from the healed man and looked at them with earnest eyes. Peter asked them, "Why are you looking on us as though we had made this man to walk by our own power or holiness?" He then began to preach a message about the man who mattered most—the man called JESUS CHRIST. Although many of these very same people had crucified Jesus, Peter urged them, "Repent and be converted."

Jesus had gone back to heaven, but He wanted the message of salvation to be brought to ALL people. The book of Acts tells us that "many signs and wonders were done by the apostles." This was one way Jesus caused the gospel to spread. People brought their sick friends and loved ones into the streets, laying them on beds and couches, hoping that just the shadow of Peter passing by would bring healing. And healed they were. Multitudes of men and women were added to the church in those early days.

Sister Julie Elwell

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Secondary Sunday School

July 30, 2017. V67, Q3, W5

LET'S STUDY ACTS!

Through the Eyes of Caiaphas, The High Priest

The Boldness of Peter and John

Scripture References: Acts 4:1-22; John 11:47-53

The Great Sanhedrin was a council of 71 men in Jerusalem who judged the nation of Israel based on the law God had given to Moses. The “president” of this group was the High Priest. The Sanhedrin was made up of two groups of men, the Pharisees and the Sadducees. The main difference between them was the Pharisees believed in the resurrection and the Sadducees did not. One thing they both had in common was there were many in this group who hated and felt threatened by Jesus, although there were a few quiet followers such as Nicodemus. The Sanhedrin gave Jesus an unfair trial and then crucified Him. They were hoping to finally be done with Him!

Through the Eyes of Caiaphas [key-uh-fuhs], the High Priest and Leader of the Sanhedrin: A most extraordinary thing had just happened. The 40-year-old lame man who sat at our temple gates for years had just been healed by two men who were quickly becoming men we did not like.

I uncomfortably remembered words I had spoken just a few months before to our council. Jesus had done many miracles and we were afraid the hearts of the people would be turned to Him instead of us. We talked among ourselves and asked, “What should we do with this man?” I advised the council of men it would be best just to have Jesus killed rather than risking too many people becoming his followers and weakening our nation.

I didn't like to remember the day we had Jesus crucified, for many strange things had happened. I slept very poorly that night, tormented by terrible dreams. On the Sabbath following His crucifixion, word reached us that Jesus' body was not in the tomb and it was reported that He was, incredibly, alive. How could this be?! We wanted to be rid of this man. While I had not seen Jesus with my own eyes since we crucified Him, I had a gnawing in the pit of my stomach that we had not seen the last of Him. In the last few days 5,000 people confessed their belief in this man through the preaching of Peter and the other apostles. We simply had to do something to stop this.

*“I’m just a little flower
here, I’m blooming by this
rock...”*

Through this line in the song “God is in the Shadows” by the Collingsworth Family, God showed me how much He cares for me and that He is in control of every tiny detail happening in my life. Some people say that nothing comes our way without His permission and I believe it’s true.

Recently, I’ve experienced how God helped me many times when I didn’t even recognize it. Sometimes He would let me come into a difficult situation for a short time to make me realize that I need Him. I found that I come the closest to Him in those challenging times because I recognize that I’m just human and can’t go through all circumstances in life without God. I need somebody who gives me more power than I have to battle the enemy, more love to all the people around me and more peace to stay calm no matter in what tumult the world around may be. I know that this can only be given to us by our Heavenly Father who is willing to do so. He’s the rock on whom we can stand when waters come up, and the shelter behind whom we can hide when storms or attacks come.

In the following I’m just going to mention a few things in which God really showed His faithfulness to me, according to His word. The first was 2 ½ years ago. I was about to write my finals in high school and didn’t know how to

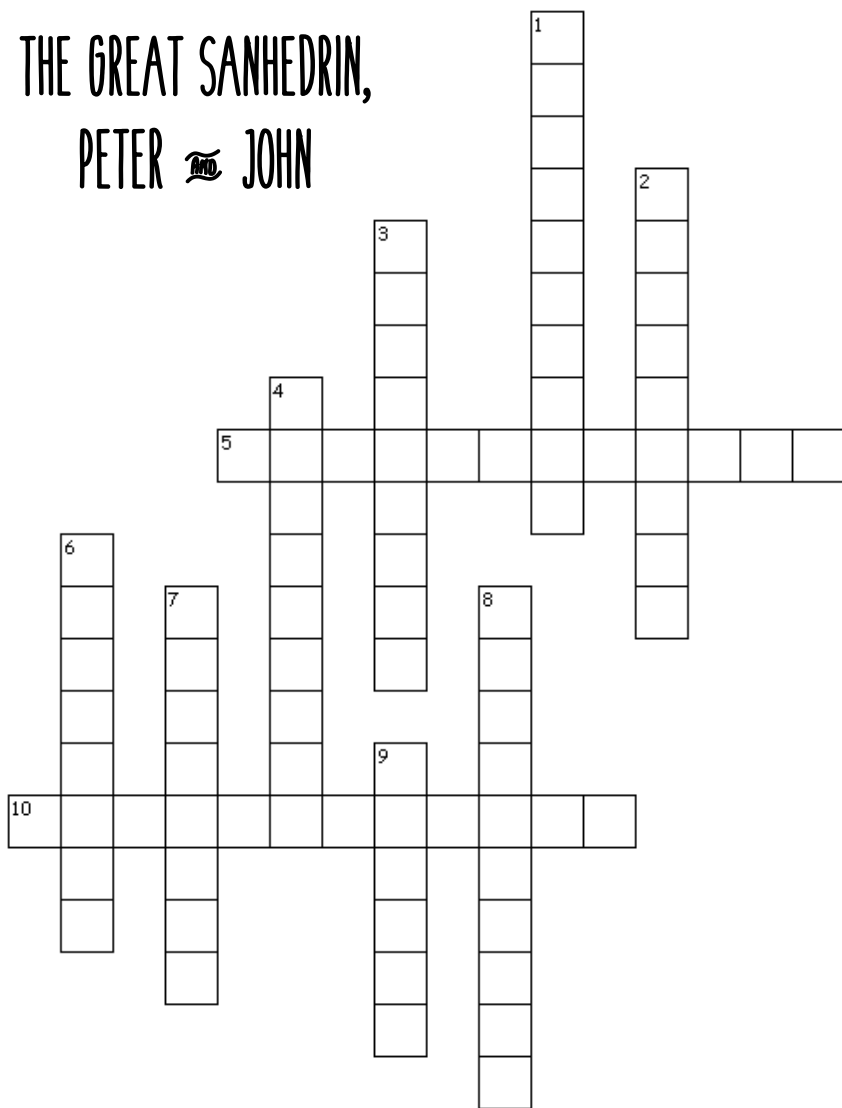
study to get all the information into my head in a short time. After giving my best, I started praying to God to help my studying so that I would pass my finals. At this point God gave me the scripture in Proverbs 3:5-6. “Trust in the Lord with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding; in all your ways submit to him, and he will make your paths straight.” This gave me so much courage and I could fully trust Him in it. I also remember writing the exam in German. I saw all the others writing but I had trouble concentrating or remembering anything. I could only call upon God and He really gave me the right thoughts to write down. To sum it up, I was very surprised to see I got the best result especially in this exam and I thank God I passed all of them.

Another thing I really had troubles with for weeks was sleeping at night. I still don’t know what was the purpose, but every night I lay in bed very tired but couldn’t calm down. My thoughts would just go on and on. One night I prayed to God very hard to help me with it, so that I could get enough rest. Now I don’t have problems with it anymore and I thank God for it.

Also I got great stomach pain one day. I knew that many people were healed from various illnesses before and that God is still the same, so I took His promise and believed it as best as I could and immediately the pains were gone. Thank God!

Often while driving home from work, I see some animals like birds, rabbits or deer in the fields, the magnificence of nature, and the beautiful sunrises and sunsets. It makes me think of God’s

THE GREAT SANHEDRIN, PETER JOHN



Across

5. The number of people converted on the day of Pentecost (one word).
10. Peter and John prayed with this when the council let them go.

Down

1. Peter spoke without this when the council tried him.
2. The council was made up of sadducees and ____.

3. The Great ____, council of 71 men.
4. One of the quiet followers of Jesus in the council.
6. The leader of the council--the High Priest.
7. Peter and John continued to preach with this characteristic.
8. The council felt this when Peter spoke to them.
9. Caiphas advised that the council have Jesus ____.

KEY THOUGHT

The strongest person can never win a fight against God.

MEMORY VERSE

For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth. Romans 1:16

LESSON DISCUSSION

1. Who was the Sanhedrin and who was their leader? Did they like Jesus?
2. Were they able to get rid of Jesus like they wanted to?
3. Why were Peter and John brought before these rulers? Were they afraid?
4. Discuss why we should never be afraid of standing up for what is right and living for Jesus.

CAIAPHAS CONTINUED

We quickly brought Peter and John into our council room. We asked them, "By whose name have you healed this lame man?" I wished later we had not asked this question because Peter looked us all straight in the eye and spoke words I cannot get out of my head. He said, "By the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, whom you crucified, whom God raised from the dead, it is by Him that this lame man is healed. There is salvation in no other man, than this man Christ Jesus." My stomach was in knots as my heart was convicted by my own sin. Peter was just a fisherman, yet he spoke with such boldness and with such ease that I and the members of the council were amazed.

We threatened them and told them they were not allowed to teach in Jesus name any longer. Peter again looked us straight in the eye and without hesitation said, "We have to preach the things we have seen and heard." We could not think of anything to say in that moment, but were left angry, convicted, and wondering what in the world we were going to do. Jesus was a name that was seemingly not going away anytime soon.

Peter and John: After Caiaphas and the other rulers let us go, we returned to the other disciples and told them what had happened. We lifted up our voices together in prayer and thanksgiving, glorifying God. We asked Him to give us continued boldness to speak His word.

A LITTLE FLOWER CONTINUED

inscrutable might because nobody else could ever create such beauty. He knows exactly what we need today and offers it for us. A scripture tells us: "Look at the birds of the air; they do not sow or reap or store away in barns, and yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not much more valuable than they?" (Matthew 6:26) I'm so glad I don't have to go through life on my own, for He is my strength, and my fortress. I completely depend on Him and it's good!

Alwine Voll

Sister Julie Elwell

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Secondary Sunday School

August 6, 2017. V67, Q3, W6

LET'S STUDY ACTS!

Ananias and Sapphira

The Consequences of Sin

Scripture References: Acts 5:1-11

It was a good and exciting time to be alive in the history of the church. Men and women who before had been burdened down with the weight of their own sins now knew freedom from terrible guilt. Hope replaced despair. The message of salvation through Jesus' death and resurrection was fresh. The Holy Spirit poured out on the new converts and great power was given them. Miracles were performed. Hundreds, even thousands were added to the church daily.

The spirits of the people were so knit together that the book of Acts tells us that the believers of Jesus were "of one heart and one soul." In fact, many sold their possessions and gave the money to the apostles who then distributed it those in need.

However, one day God struck a very sober note of loud warning in the middle of all the joy. It was as if He forcefully proclaimed: "I will not tolerate dishonesty in my church. Further, I know if you are pretending to be something you are not. Just as I have done many miracles because of my great love, I will also bring severe punishment for sin." This is what happened:

Ananias, a man who must have had some desire to serve the Lord, sold a piece of his land. Instead of bringing all the money and giving it to the apostles, he put some of the money in his pocket secretly and then acted like he gave the whole amount to them. He must have figured, "They will never know the difference." What he didn't count on was that God told Peter what Ananias had done. To Ananias' terrible dismay, when he handed his money to Peter, Peter looked him in the eye, seeing all the way through to his dishonest heart and said, "The land was yours. The money was yours to do with what you wanted. Why did you lie about it? You have not lied to us, but to God." When Ananias heard those words he fell to the ground and died. The people standing around were very afraid.

About three hours later, Ananias' wife unsuspectingly came in. She didn't yet know what had happened to her husband. Peter asked her, "Did you sell your land for so

SO GREAT A CLOUD OF WITNESSES

FAITH STEWART

CHAPTER TWO

Putting Out a Fleece

God laid on Gideon the responsibility of saving the Israelites from the hand of their enemies, the Midianites, and the task seemed so great that Gideon shrank from it. But at last he cried out to God for definite guidance, and he put a fleece out on the floor and prayed that if God was really sending him to do this great work, he would make it clear by letting dew fall heavily upon the fleece and let the earth all around it be dry. If this happened, he would then know the Divine will. God answered in a clear way. And a few times in my life I have put the “fleece” out to be able to clearly determine the Lord’s will.

My call to Cuba was sudden and very unexpected and I felt the step was too great to be taken without definite leadings. It was at the Anderson, Indiana Camp meeting in June, 1930, I closed myself in alone with God one night until 2 p.m. the following day. About 8 a.m. a burden came on me to put the “fleece” out, and I did so. I was practically without money and had been looking to the Lord to supply and I expected Him to do so. Being on the campground, it would have been a very natural thing for some who knew I was going to Cuba as a missionary to give me something; so when I felt burdened to put a financial test out before the Lord as the “fleece” of direction, in this critical moment, I felt it must be done in such a clear way that there would be no confusion in the

matter. So I prayed—asking God to send me some money from some source clear away from the campground, and for it not to be less than \$10.00. Anything received on the campgrounds would not be an answer to this prayer. Much was at stake so I had prayed with all the fervor of my soul, and God sent a definite answer about 6:30 p.m. I was sitting in the Young People’s service when a boy entered with a Special Delivery letter—for me. My hand trembled as I reached for it, because I felt sure it was the “dew falling on the fleece.” I was in the presence of God and He was answering. It read something like this, “My dear Faith, I was burdened for you during the night, and since early morning the weight has hourly grown heavier, and it is on the financial line that I feel burdened. I have scarcely been able to work this morning for thinking of you. I do hope there is nothing wrong. I am rushing this note off to you and hope the enclosed check will be of use to you at this time.” Enclosed was \$20.00. I had a full answer. The dew had fallen just where I had asked that it might. The gift was more than ten dollars, and came from entirely outside the camp, and from one who did not know I was praying about Cuba. Thank God, He has power to remove mountains of difficulties and show Himself strong in behalf of those whose hearts are perfect toward Him.

God sent this clear answer to prayer as an assurance that I was not mistaken in the Divine call He had placed on my heart. And although nearly twenty-one years have passed, bringing many problems and afflictions and persecutions, yet not once have I doubted my call. And this has brought strength to my soul many times,

VERSE MATCH!

AVOID ANANIAS AND SAPPHIRA'S FATE!

Use your Bible to match the references to the verses about keeping your word and honesty.

Numbers 30:2	Deuteronomy 23:23	Ecclesiastes 5:4-5	Psalms 89:34
Proverbs 15:2	Matthew 4:10	John 13:2	Acts 5:3

THE DEVIL HAVING NOW PUT INTO THE
HEART OF JUDAS ISCARIOT TO BETRAY
HIM.

IF A MAN VOW A VOW...HE SHALL DO AC-
CORDING TO ALL THAT PROCEEDETH OUT
OF HIS MOUTH.

MY COVENANT WILL I NOT BREAK, NOR
ALTER THE THING THAT IS GONE OUT OF
MY LIPS.

THOU SHALT WORSHIP THE LORD THY
GOD, AND HIM ONLY SHALT THOU SERVE.

PAY THAT WHICH THOU HAST VOWED.
BETTER IS IT THAT THOU SHOULDEST NOT
VOW, THAN THAT THOU SHOULDEST VOW
AND NOT PAY.

THE TONGUE OF THE WISE USETH
KNOWLEDGE ARIGHT: BUT THE MOUTH OF
FOOLS POURETH OUT FOOLISHNESS.

WHY HATH SATAN FILLED THINE HEART TO
LIE TO THE HOLY GHOST?

THAT WHICH IS GONE OUT OF THY LIPS
THOU SHALT KEEP AND PERFORM.

KEY THOUGHT

Honesty in our words and life is not only the right way to live, but will cause people to trust us.

MEMORY VERSE

“...providing for honest things, not only in the sight of the Lord, but also in the sight of men.”

2 Corinthians 8:21

LESSON DISCUSSION

1. Was it wrong for Ananias and Sapphira to keep back part of the money? Discuss why or why not.
2. Why did God bring such a severe punishment on them?
3. Why is it sometimes hard to tell the truth?
4. What is a motivating reason to never lie?

ANANIAS AND SAPPHIRA CONTINUED

much money?” Sapphira also knew of the plot to keep part of the money back and she answered, “Yes, that is how much we sold it for.” Peter asked her the same question he had asked her husband. “Why have you plotted together to do this sin? The same men who just buried your husband will now bury you.” Sapphira, like her husband, fell dead at his feet. Great fear fell on the church when this story was told.

God will most likely not strike us dead today if we tell a lie. But He does know if we are telling the truth and honesty is very important to Him. He has never one time been untruthful with us and because of that, we trust Him to be who He says He is. On the other hand, the devil is a constant liar. Nothing he says is true and he is never to be trusted.

FAITH STEWART CONTINUED

for knowing as I have that I am here in the center of the Lord’s will, I have laid on Him the responsibility of safely bringing me through whatever arises in our work. Praise God forevermore.

People lie for different reasons. Sometimes it is just to look cool in other people’s eyes. Sometimes it is because they don’t want to be caught doing wrong. Some people lie just for the fun of it. Ananias and Sapphira paid a high price for their lies. We might not get caught immediately for lying, but more often than not we will eventually be found out. God tells us that all liars will burn in a lake of fire. We want to avoid that at all costs! Let us ask God to help us speak honest words and live honest lives.

Sister Julie Elwell

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Secondary Sunday School

August 13, 2017. V67, Q3, W7

LET'S STUDY ACTS!

Angels of Deliverance

Scripture References: Acts 5:15-39

As word of the Apostles Holy Spirit power spread, multitudes of people brought their sick relatives and friends into the streets, laying them on beds or couches and hoping that just the shadow of Peter might cross them. People from surrounding towns came to Jerusalem for healing and deliverance from spirits, and not a single person left without being healed.

The people were amazed and overjoyed to receive healing and salvation, but the high priest and the Sadducees were indignant of the position, fame and power of the apostles. They took the apostles into custody and threw them into the common prison.

This might have seemed like a desperate circumstance to Peter and the apostles, but the very Jesus who sent them power to heal and preach the gospel sent His angel to deliver them out of the prison that night! The angel opened the prison door and brought them outside, saying, "Go and stand in the temple. Speak to all the people about Jesus' gospel!"

Early the next morning, they entered into the temple and taught the people as the angel instructed them to do. Meanwhile, the high priest gathered his council and the senate, then sent men to the prison to bring Peter for his trial. Imagine when the officers got to the prison only to find Peter and the apostles missing! Upon returning to the high priest, they said, "We found the prison shut just as it should be, the door was locked, and the guards were standing outside. But when we opened the doors, we found no man inside!"

The high priest, captain of the temple, and chief priests were in great doubt. They did not know if the apostles saved themselves by sorcery or if they truly were delivered by a miracle. They must have felt very embarrassed when they could think of nothing to say in answer to the report. Soon, however, they heard that the very men they had incarcerated the night before were in the temple preaching!

Once again, a man was sent to bring Peter before the council. When they reached the temple, they found the people gladly receiving the teaching that Peter was delivering, and they were very afraid to treat him with violence lest the crowd grow angry and

SO GREAT A CLOUD OF WITNESSES

FAITH STEWART

CHAPTER THREE

A Cow Healed That Money be Supplied for the Mission Work

In the early part of 1950, we were confronted with some unexpected expenses in the work of the Lord. We were praying earnestly for God to move in a special way, supplying the money needed to meet these bills. We prayed several times, but did not feel the assurance we wanted. At last the burden grew on our hearts, for the small offerings we were receiving daily would not meet this above the other expenses. When we got right down in earnest we prayed through, and felt the assurance that God had heard, and that according to His promise the answer must come. Had He not said in I John 5:15, "And if we know that He hears us, whatsoever we ask, we know that we have the petitions that we have desired of him." Bless the Lord, oh, my soul and all that is within me, bless His Holy Name—He is both able and willing to give us what we need and ask Him for in Faith.

Believing that our prayers were heard, we arose from our knees and each went our way about the work of the Lord. In four days a letter 50 LIVING FAITH came from a Northern State, from a stranger. As we opened the letter we had the feeling that this was God's answer. Imagine the thrill as we took out of this letter a check for \$200.00. Our hearts overflowed. We called the workers of the Homes in to rejoice together in another answer to prayer. And our joy was complete as we read the letter. It stated that on a certain day—the day

we had prayed through—they had a wonderful experience with the Lord. They were not rich people, but had some cows and depended much on the income from these for the family needs. To their sorrow the best milk cow they had, a good animal, fell very sick, and became paralyzed all over. The veterinary was called but could do nothing for it. So they, in their distress and burden, did the right thing—took it to the Lord in prayer. Went to the Lord for healing for the cow? you ask. Yes, and why not? Has He not said, "If ye abide in me, and my words abide in you, (then on these conditions) ye shall ask what ye will, and it shall be done unto you."?

These dear ones went in earnest prayer, feeling they must have help, and they told the Lord that if He healed this cow, they would send a good offering for missions. When they went this far— then God showed them to send it to Cuba. They prayed, and went to bed. The next morning when the brother went out to attend to the cows, this cow was completely well. Praise God forever! So they obeyed Him, and sent the \$200.00 offering to us here in Cuba. As we learned of what God had done GOD'S WHAT-SO-EVER 51 in order to get the answer to us, we were made to fall down and worship Him who is worthy. The dear ones who sent the offering did not know us or the need, but God did and that was sufficient. Oh, that men would learn to believe what the Word of God says, and put their trust in Him for all things. Then could the work of the Lord prosper and many souls would be brought to a definite knowledge of God's great goodness, and His love, and His power. May this testimony encourage some of God's dear children to take all their burdens to the

PERSONAL APPLICATION

RESPONDING TO OPPOSITION

The Holy Spirit gives us the power, strength and love we need to respond to opposition in a way that pleases and glorifies God.

What areas of life do you need more of the Spirit?

This image shows a single sheet of white paper with horizontal blue ruling lines. The lines are evenly spaced and run across the width of the page. There are no margins, text, or other markings on the paper.

KEY THOUGHT

The very Jesus who died and rose again delivered Peter out of prison and gave him power to preach the gospel and convict even the corrupt religious leaders.

MEMORY VERSE

And that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his name among all nations. Luke 24:47

LESSON DISCUSSION

1. Think about the doubt that the high priests had upon learning that Peter escaped prison. What could they have been thinking at that moment?
2. Why didn't the officers use violence to deliver Peter to the council? What were they afraid of?
3. Why was the council convicted after Peter's speech? How did they react to the guilt they felt?
4. Discuss Gamaliel. Why did he say what he said? Was he sympathetic toward the apostles or only looking out for his own interests?

ANGELS OF DELIVERANCE CONTINUED

stone them. Peter came to the council, and there the high priest asked him, "Did we not directly command you not to preach in this name? And yet, you have filled Jerusalem with your doctrine and make it look as though we have crucified an innocent man!"

Peter and the other apostles answered calmly, "We ought to obey God rather than men. The God of our forefathers raised up Jesus, whom you killed and hung on the cross. God has exalted Him to be our Prince and Saviour, and He has brought forgiveness of sins to Israel. We are witnesses of these things, as is the Holy Ghost whom God has given those who obey Him."

Those words cut the high priest and all those listening to the heart. They felt such great conviction at the truth that Peter spoke, but instead of yielding to the call of the Holy Spirit, they allowed their guilt to drive their carnality. They decided among themselves to kill the apostles.

However, there was one Pharisee named Gamaliel who understood, at least in part, the ramifications of killing the apostles. He said to the council, "Be careful what you do with these men. I advise you to leave them alone, for if what they are doing is a scheme of man, it will come to naught. But if they are of God, as they say, their gospel will not be overthrown. And we do not want to be found fighting against God."

Lindsey Gellenbeck

FAITH STEWART CONTINUED

Lord, knowing that He is interested in everything that touches the lives of His children.

From "Living Faith Makes God Real" by
Faith Stewart

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Secondary Sunday School

August 20, 2017. V67, Q3, W8

LET'S STUDY ACTS!

The First Martyr

Scripture References: Acts 6:8-15; Acts 7

Stephen was an apostle full of faith and power, and he did many wonderful miracles for the people. It is evident that he was a man of great learning and a scholar of Jewish history, and he was filled with the Holy Spirit. However, not everyone liked that Stephen was becoming popular among the population of Jerusalem.

There was a group of Jews who did not live in Judea who came to celebrate the Passover in Jerusalem. When they heard the teachings of Stephen, they grew angry because they were not able to resist the Spirit nor wisdom of his words. In an attempt to eliminate a source of opposition that they could not conquer, they paid some men to bear false witness against Stephen, saying that he had blasphemed the names of Moses and God. This accusation was the most fatal charge that could be brought against a man, and with false stories about Stephen's blasphemy, they captured him and brought him before the council.

More false witnesses spoke about Stephen saying, "This man will not stop speaking blasphemous words against the temple and against the law. We have heard him say that this Jesus of Nazareth will destroy the temple and change all of the customs that Moses set in order."

Despite the untruths being spoken about him, Stephen stood before the council with a face that shone with truth and glory, and the council could not tear their eyes from him. The high priest asked him, "Are these things true?"

Stephen answered, saying, "You are stiff-necked and unclean in your hearts, just as your forefathers who built a golden calf to worship. They resisted the Holy Ghost and so do you. Which of the prophets did your fathers not persecute and kill when they spoke of Jesus' coming? Are you not doing the same? You have not kept the law!"

The men of the council were so convicted by the words of Stephen that they gnashed him with their teeth—they physically bit Stephen because of what he said! No doubt all they could think about was the fact that the Jesus that Stephen preached about was crucified and yet rose again, and that He had done many, many miracles among

SO GREAT A CLOUD OF WITNESSES

CHARLES WESLEY

Charles Wesley has been named one of the greatest hymn-writers of all time. In the eighty years of his life, he wrote over 6000 hymns, among which are “Jesus, Lover of My Soul” and “Hark the Herald Angels Sing.”

He was born on December 28, 1707 in Epworth, England, but was two months early. He neither cried nor opened his eyes at his birth, but his mother kept him wrapped tightly in wool until his due date, when he finally uttered a cry and opened his eyes. He was the 17th of 18 children.

As a young man, he attended Westminster School. While there, a wealthy member of Irish Parliament offered to adopt Charles as his heir. Charles’ parents left that decision up to him, and his choice to decline the Irishman changed history! The man who was instead adopted by the Irishman was the father of the Duke of Wellington, the man who later defeated Napoleon at Waterloo! Charles went on to receive his degree at Oxford University.

While in school, he and his elder brother, John Wesley, practiced all of the forms of religion but had no real relationship with Christ. In 1735, they sailed to Georgia, a new colony in America, to act as missionaries to those in the British debtor’s prisons. Because of their lack of a relationship with God, and the fact that they believed so strongly in the practices of religion, both of the brothers were not successful in their mission. Charles returned to England the following year (1736), discouraged and ill, and John followed

soon after.

Soon, however, both Charles and his brother John found Jesus as their Savior. Charles wrote “I now found myself at peace with God, and rejoiced in hope of loving Christ. I saw that by faith I stood.” Because of this change, Charles was able to gain victory of his temper and his habit of drinking. He wrote, “I was amazed to find my old enemy, intemperance, so suddenly subdued that I almost forgot I was ever in bondage to him.” He then dove headlong into writing hymns, and preached powerfully.

Charles met Sarah Gwynne, the love of his life, and wanted to marry her. His penniless state prevented their marriage until April 8, 1749. His marriage to her was happy, and she gladly followed him on all of his evangelical journeys. They traveled frequently, preaching and spreading the simple Gospel of Jesus. Charles was often known to stop on the road, run into the nearest house, and beg for paper and ink so he could write down the phrases of hymns that were forming in his mind.

Finally, in 1771, Charles, Sarah, and their children moved to London and settled down. There, he ministered to the prisoners in the infamous Newgate prison. He was known to spend the night in the prison, locked in the cell with men who were to be executed the next morning. In those dark hours, he witnessed to many men, bringing them comfort and hope before they stepped into eternity.

By early 1788, he was bedfast. He was not sick, but simply exhausted from his lifetime of travel, preaching, and writing. By March, he was too weak to write and dictated his last hymn to his wife. The hymn read, “In age and feebleness extreme, who shall a sinful worm

CRACK THE CODE

JESUS=OUR DEFENDER



A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I
J	K	L	M	N	O	P	Q	R
S	T	U	V	W	X	Y	Z	

KEY THOUGHT

Stephen was filled with the Holy Spirit, and he died because of his faith in God. Even so, he was confident that Jesus would take his soul to heaven, and did not fear the men who killed his body.

MEMORY VERSE

And fear not them which kill the body, but are not able to kill the soul: but rather fear him which is able to destroy both soul and body in hell. Matthew 10:28

LESSON DISCUSSION

1. What did the group of people try to prove against Stephen?
2. What lie did they make up to get him in trouble?
3. How did Stephen's face look when he was accused?
4. Stephen saw Jesus standing and watching from Heaven. No doubt Jesus was rooting him on to his house not made with hands. (#228 in the ELS.) Do you believe that Jesus watches you and cheers you on when you stand for Him?

THE FIRST MARTYR CONTINUED

the people. They were most likely scared of what this follower of Jesus could do, for he was obviously filled with the same power that Jesus had possessed.

Yet, even as the men of the council did their best to harm Stephen, he was filled with the Holy Ghost. He looked steadfastly up into the heavens, and saw the glory of his God. He saw his beloved Jesus, not sitting, but standing on the right hand of God. He said, "Behold, I see the heavens opened, and the Son of man standing on the right hand of God!"

The men cried out with loud voices and clasped their hands over their ears. As if they were of one mind, they converged on Stephen, cast him out of the city, and threw heavy stones at his body with all of their strength. They did all of this without waiting for Stephen to finish his trial. They were too overtaken by their own guilt. A young man by the name of Saul stood off to the side and held the garments of the men who were stoning Stephen.

The martyr called on God, even as the stones struck him, saying, "Lord Jesus, receive my spirit!" With the last of his strength, he knelt in submission to God's will for his life. Repeating the sentiment of Jesus, he cried with a loud voice, "Lord, lay not this sin to their charge." And when he said this, he fell asleep.

Lindsey Gellenbeck

CHARLES WESLEY CONTINUED

redeem? Jesus, my only hope thou art, strength of my failing flesh and heart; Oh, could I catch a smile from thee, and drop into eternity!" He died on March 29, 1788 and was buried in the graveyard of Saint Marylebone, his local parish (church district).

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Secondary Sunday School

August 27, 2017. V67, Q3, W9

LET'S STUDY ACTS!

Philip and the Ethiopian

Scripture References: Acts 8:1-3, 26-40

Philip was another of the apostles who preached the gospel and performed miracles. Many of the converted believers were scattered, for there were men who were trying and executing the followers of Christ. One of those men was Saul.

In the city of Samaria, Philip preached about Jesus, and all who heard him gave heed. Many were delivered of unclean spirits and possession, and those with palsy (paralysis) and the lame were healed. The city was full of joy for the salvation of which they were learning.

An angel then told Philip to arise and go south toward Gaza. The road went right through a desert. Philip obeyed and journeyed as he was directed. On the way, he came across a eunuch from the house of Queen Candace of Ethiopia. He was in charge of all her treasures. The man was sitting in his chariot and reading from the book of Isaiah.

The Spirit of the Lord said unto Philip, "Go over and join him in his chariot."

Immediately, Philip obeyed, and ran over to his chariot. He heard the man reading from Isaiah, and said, "Do you understand what you are reading?"

The man answered, "How can I understand when I have no man to explain it? Will you sit with me and teach me what these words mean?"

Philip joined him, and continued reading where the eunuch left off. He read, "He was led as a sheep to the slaughter; and like a lamb dumb before his shearer, so opened he not his mouth: In his humiliation his judgement was taken away: and who shall declare his generation? For his life is taken from the earth."

Curious, the eunuch asked, "Who is the prophet Isaiah speaking of? Himself or some other man?"

Using the scriptures he just read, Philip began to teach the man about Jesus. He must have spoken with great persuasion and passion, and the Holy Ghost certainly spoke to

SO GREAT A CLOUD OF WITNESSES

FANNY CROSBY

Fanny Crosby was born in New York on March 24, 1820. At six weeks of age, her eyes became inflamed, and because her family's doctor was away, another man was called to treat her. He pressed hot compacts to her eyes, claiming it would draw the infection out. His treatment did not work, for scars appeared on her eyes, and from that point on she was almost completely blind.

Her blindness allowed her to do many wonderful things, including memorize amazing amounts of scripture and compose poetry by the age of eight. Among other books, she memorized all four gospels, the entirety of Proverbs, and most of the Pentateuch. She looked back later on her life of blindness and claimed it was the greatest blessing God had given her, for by it, she had helped many people find Jesus. She looked forward to seeing the God who had so richly blessed her, saying, "When I get to heaven, the first face that shall ever gladden my sight will be that of my Savior."

She studied at the New York Institute for the Blind, and taught English, Greek, Roman, and American History there after she graduated. There, she learned how to play the guitar, piano, organ, and harp.

On March 5, 1858, Fanny married Alexander Van Alstyne, a man who was also blind and attended the New York Institute for the Blind. In 1859, Alexander and Fanny had a daughter

who died in her sleep soon after birth. Fanny was devastated by the loss of her child, and seemed to privately grieve her death for the rest of her life. Many believe that the hymn "Safe in the Arms of Jesus" was inspired by this tragic event in Fanny's life. She never talked much about her child, except mentioning her in a few interviews toward the end of her life, but she comforted many mothers who had also lost children.

Fanny wrote her first Sunday school hymn in 1864 at the request of William B. Bradbury. From there, her work took off and by the time she died, she had written over 8,000 hymns. Her goal in writing was always to bring men and women to Christ, and she was said to have kept a careful record of those saved through her hymns. By her own words, her writing always began with prayer, and her incredible memory allowed her to compose an entire hymn in her mind before dictating them to be written. Those who observed her working believed that she could compose a dozen or more hymns at a time before every committing them to paper.

Although there were people who criticized Fanny's work as "crudely sentimental" and "gushy," still others believed that she was the only writer of her time who appealed so forcefully to the longings of the human heart. It is obvious now that her work was truly blessed by God, for the verses she penned have stood the arduous test of time and still inspire believers today.

In her later life, Fanny worked hard to serve the poor, choosing to live near the slums of Manhattan in order to better minister there. She was involved in many

VERSE RACE

BELIEVE IN JESUS

Matthew 28:19

Mark 16:16

Romans 10:9

Luke 24:27

KEY THOUGHT

The Ethiopian eunuch was open and accepting of the Gospel, and Philip was prepared to share it with him. As children of God, we need to be open to His teachings and willing to share what He gives us.

MEMORY VERSE

For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved.

Romans 10:13

LESSON DISCUSSION

1. What did Philip do for God?
2. Who did Philip meet in the desert?
3. What did the eunuch say when he saw water?
4. Jesus wants us to listen to and obey His voice. Do you pray and let Him know that you're open to His will?

PHILIP AND THE ETHIOPIAN CONTINUED
the eunuch's heart as he listened.

As they continued on their journey, the eunuch said, "Here is water! What hinders me from being baptized right now?"

Surely, Philip must have smiled as he said, "If you believe in Jesus with all your heart, you may be baptized."

"I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God," the eunuch answered.

Commanding the chariot to stop, the eunuch and Philip went down into the water and the eunuch was baptized. And when they came up out of the water, the Spirit of the Lord caught Philip away, and the eunuch did not see him anymore! He went on his way, rejoicing at the salvation he found.

Philip was found at Azotus, where he preached the gospel in every city he passed through, until he came to Caesarea.

Lindsey Gellenbeck

FAITH STEWART CONTINUED

charities and organizations, and seemed to give the little money she had to causes that helped others.

She lived out the last of her life with a dear friend in Brooklyn and died on February 12, 1915 at the age of 94. She was buried with her family in Connecticut with a small tombstone that reads, "Aunt Fanny: She hath done what she could; Fanny J. Crosby." Her life was celebrated by about 3,000 churches throughout the United States in March 1925, and through the hymns she penned, her legacy yet lives today.

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Secondary Sunday School

September, 3 2017. V67, Q3, W10

LET'S STUDY ACTS!

Saul Meets Jesus on the Damascus Road

Scripture References: Acts 8:1-3; 9:1-22; 22:3-21; Acts 26:4-5; I Corinthians 9:1

Before His Encounter with Jesus: Saul was a Jew who grew up in Tarsus, a city whose citizens were granted all the privileges of Roman citizenship. Most likely around the age of 12, he traveled to Jerusalem where he underwent more schooling. His teacher was Gamaliel, a highly respected doctor of the Law. Saul was perfectly taught all the laws God gave to Moses in the Old Testament.

As Saul grew to manhood, he very strongly believed Jesus Christ and His disciples were a threat to the laws he was taught. He got permission from the chief priests and rulers to persecute the Christians. He entered into houses and threw men and women in prison. He beat them and was exceedingly angry toward them. Many had to leave their homes and live in strange cities. Saul created havoc in the church, which means he was like a ferocious animal, such as a bear or wolf, devouring their prey. As Stephen, the first man to die in the name of Jesus, was killed, Saul stood by holding his clothing.

Saul Meets Jesus: Breathing out threatening and murderous words, Saul once again got permission from the High Priest. This time, to go to the city of Damascus. He intended to enter the synagogues and bind anyone who professed the name of Jesus and bring them back to Jerusalem. As he journeyed and drew near to the city, suddenly there was lightning and thunder from heaven. The light was so bright that Saul and those traveling with him fell to the ground. Saul heard a voice saying, "Saul, Saul why do you persecute me?" (Several verses in the Bible tell us that Saul actually saw Jesus, although the men with him did not.) Saul replied, "Sir, who are you?" The voice replied, "I am Jesus whom you persecute." Notice how Jesus considered the injuries which Saul had committed against the Christians as having injured him, too?

Jesus said to Saul, "It is hard for you to kick against the pricks." This is a proverb which refers to a pointed iron stick (or goad) used to urge oxen forward when ploughing. Sometimes stubborn oxen would kick back against the goad, thus, wounding themselves more deeply. Saul was rebelling against the authority of Jesus Christ, thus actually hurting himself.

SO GREAT A CLOUD OF WITNESSES

GEORGE MULLER

Part One—Early Life

George Muller was born September 27, 1805 in Kroppenstaedt, Prussia (present-day Germany). George's father was generous with his money toward his children, and because of that, George fell into a habit of stealing funds from an early age.

At the age of eleven, George was sent to the nearby town of Halberstadt to study and prepare for university. George's father wished him to become a clergyman (preacher). His intentions for his son had more to do with having a comfortable place to live when he got old than anything concerning God. Three years later, when George was fourteen, his mother died. The night of her death, unaware of what was happening, George stayed up all night playing cards with his friends and ended up wandering the streets, half-drunk. He was barely sad over the passing of his mother.

After his mother's death, George's father moved. George went to live with a clergyman to continue his studies, but the change did not stop his poor behavior. At one time, he spent almost a month in jail because he stayed at several different hotels, knowing he could not pay his bills. Neither his time in jail, nor the beating he received from his father, woke George up to his wicked ways.

George's father then chose to send him to a school with very strict discipline. Not wanting to attend this school,

George applied at a different school without telling his father. On the day he was to leave for school, he could no longer lie to his father. Although not happy, his father was forced to allow George to attend the school he had applied for. For two and a half years, George studied and was a good student. He did not study the Biblical languages or mathematics, but his school-master lifted him up as an ideal student. In secret, George still partook in sinful behavior, and as a result, was confined to his room for thirteen weeks because of sickness. Even with this extended period of time to think, George did not feel bad for his behavior.

Out of the three hundred books that he owned, George did not own a Bible. Still, he knew what was right and promised God many times that he would change his ways, often during the Lord's Supper of which he habitually partook twice a year. Still, he had no power to convert.

It wasn't until after he had graduated from school that a real change began to take place. He attended a worship service with one of his school friends. There a brother said with Christian love, "Come as often as you please; house and heart are open to you." Another brother made a lifelong impression on George as he knelt and asked God to bless the gathering of saints in the small house. The man's humility in kneeling was something that he never forgot, for George himself had never in his life knelt in prayer. He had not known, until that time, that any person was different in character than he had been, except in degree.

The light that George encountered at that first meeting so inspired him that he

PERSONAL APPLICATION

CHANGED BY GOD

Maybe you haven't persecuted Christians like Saul, but the Bible says we are only saved through God's grace. Think about times you behaved sinfully, your conscience was pricked, and you changed for the better with God's help.

This image shows a blank sheet of white paper with horizontal ruling lines. The lines are evenly spaced and run across the width of the page. There are no margins, text, or other markings on the paper.

KEY THOUGHT

Salvation through Jesus Christ will completely change your life.

MEMORY VERSE

Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new. 2 Corinthians 5:17

LESSON DISCUSSION

1. Discuss who Saul was and why he hated and persecuted the Christians so much.
2. Who met Saul on the road to Damascus? Discuss what He said to him.
3. Does Jesus still desire to meet us on the road of our wrong-doing?
4. How was Paul different after he met Jesus? How are we different?

SAUL MEETS JESUS CONTINUED

Saul was astonished at these words. He said, "Lord, what do you want me to do?" Jesus told him to go into Damascus and there he would be told what to do. The great light made Saul blind, so the men in his company led him into town. He was so affected by what happened he did not eat or drink anything for three days, but spent time in prayer.

At the same time, God spoke to a devout man named Ananias in a vision. He said, "Arise and go to the street called Straight. There you will find a man called Saul of Tarsus." Ananias was afraid at first because he had heard of Saul and how he persecuted the Christians, but God reassured him. So Ananias went and entered into the house. He put his hands on Saul and said, "Brother Saul, the same Jesus who appeared to you has sent me that you might receive your sight and be filled with the Holy Ghost." Immediately, the scales fell from Saul's eyes and he was baptized.

Saul's name was eventually changed to Paul. Paul became just as zealous for Jesus Christ in the years ahead as he was zealous against Him in the beginning. He immediately began preaching and making it clear that Jesus was the Christ. Although there were many who desired his death, Paul preached in the name of the Lord without fear from that time on. An encounter with Jesus Christ made all the difference.

Sister Julie Elwell

GEORGE MULLER CONTINUED

could not wait until the next week's meeting to read more of the scripture. He returned to the brother's house two days later to learn more, and attended meetings regularly from that point forward. Though called to give up many of his sinful pleasures and laughed at by his peers for doing so, George took great pleasure in standing by the Lord's side. His heart and mind would never again desire the pleasures of the world. Instead, he would aspire to a faith that would change the lives of more people than can be counted.

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Secondary Sunday School

September 10, 2017. V67, Q3, W11

LET'S STUDY ACTS!

Dorcas is Restored

Scripture References: Acts 9:36-42

Dorcas, also known as Tabitha, was a woman who lived in Joppa during the time of the Apostles. Her name in Greek meant "gazelle" or "antelope." It was the custom of the time to name beautiful young women after beautiful animals, and her name was befitting of her appearance. But far more important than being beautiful, she was kind, generous, and merciful to everyone she met. She spent her days making garments for the poor and widows of the church. The Bible says she loved God and all of mankind.

Sadly, Dorcas became very ill and died. The widows and saints of the church mourned her deeply, for they had lost a kind and generous friend. They heard that the Apostle Peter was in the nearby town of Lydda, and perhaps hoping that he might perform a miracle, they sent men to bring him to Dorcas' house.

When Peter arrived, Dorcas had been washed and laid out in an upper chamber of the house. The custom of laying out a deceased loved one at that time is similar to the custom of a viewing before a funeral today. Peter found the widows and saints standing around Dorcas' body, weeping and lamenting her passing. They showed Peter the garments Dorcas had so generously made for them. The deep grief of those who knew her was surely proof of Dorcas' spirit of charity toward those around her.

No doubt feeling the need to seek God's direction, Peter asked that everyone leave the chamber where Dorcas lay. There, he spent time seeking God and praying earnestly. Then, looking at Dorcas, he said, "Tabitha, arise." Opening he eyes, she looked at Peter and immediately sat up.

Peter took her by the hand and presented her to the saints and widows. Dorcas was alive!

Word soon spread of the miracle that had been performed in Dorcas' house. Many people were saved and baptized because of the testimony of the woman who had been raised from the dead!

SO GREAT A CLOUD OF WITNESSES

GEORGE MULLER

Part Two—Ministry

The beginning of anxiety is the end of faith, and the beginning of true faith is the end of anxiety. —George Muller

George went on from that place to become a great man of God. Despite his insolence and lack of interest as a young person, God changed him into a man of faith and he shared the story of God's provision in his life for decades.

Shortly after he got saved, he had a desire to become a missionary, but did not find the practices of the organization he joined to be sound. He ended up pastoring a small congregation in Devonshire. For two years, he preached until he felt the call to move to Bristol. He married his wife, Mary Groves, in 1830, the same year he moved. George and Mary decided in the first few weeks of their marriage that they would always depend on the Lord for the funds they needed to survive. They trusted God so implicitly that when asked if they were in need of funds, they would give no definite answer, simply believing that their needs would be met. Their faith in God's provision never wavered.

Their first child, Lydia, was born two years later. Two years after her birth they welcomed a son, but little Elijah died before his first birthday.

Before long, George began feeling the call to open an orphanage. He started the work with only fifty cents in his pocket. In 1836, he welcomed 26 girls

into the new orphanage. By 1870, he had opened a total of five orphan homes in which different age groups and genders resided. There, he fed, educated, and equipped the children to lead productive lives.

He testified later that there were many times that it was almost time to sit the children down for a meal and there was no food to serve them. Still, the children who lived in these homes never went without a meal. George clung to the promise he had made to trust that provision of his needs and those of the children would be taken care of by his mighty God. His wife Mary said that George would take it as a sign that the Lord did not want the work to continue if they were ever without food at a mealtime.

George authored a narrative titled, "The Lord's Dealings with George Muller." The circulation of this book assisted in spreading the word about the orphanage and its financial needs. It was because of this book that many people donated funds to the orphanages.

At the age of 70, George felt the call to travel and preach the gospel. For 17 years, he traveled the world, going to Europe, America, India, Australia, and China. By the time he was 90 years old, he had traveled 200,000 miles and had spoken to an estimated 3 million people about the love of Jesus. In this venture, as well as in his work at the orphanages, George never once asked for money to continue his travels. He simply offered a prayer of faith in times of need and was unfailingly answered.

The last of George's life was lived out in Bristol where he died on March 10, 1898,

SHUFFLE !

CHILD OF GOD

Unscramble the letters to reveal words pertaining to the story of Dorcas' resurrection!

AJPPQ	
HBTATIA	
TEERP	
MTAREGNS	
RDOL	
VILEA	
YDEPAR	
CSADOR	
WODIWS	
RSAIE	

KEY THOUGHT

God is capable of healing any sickness or pain, and He can use terrible events like death can be the means of bringing someone to Christ.

MEMORY VERSE

O Lord my God, I cried unto thee,
and thou hast healed me.

Psalm 30:2

LESSON DISCUSSION

1. What is another name for Dorcas?
2. Who did the Christians send for after Dorcas died?
3. What happened in Joppa after Dorcas came back to life?
4. Think about times in your life when God healed you from sickness or pain.

DORCAS IS RESTORED CONTINUED

Peter stayed in Joppa for a time, preaching to the people who had come to Christ and increasing their faith.

What a wonderful witness they had to the power of God! Surely, if a disciple of Jesus had the power to bring a woman back to life, God had the power to do all things. Dorcas' resurrection is a witness to us today, as well. We know that God can heal any affliction we might face, and we can also take comfort in the fact that an event we might view as tragic or sad could be the means of someone making it to heaven!

Lindsey Gellenbeck

GEORGE MULLER CONTINUED

at the age of 92. During his life, he distributed over 282,000 Bibles, received \$7.5 million for his various causes, and educated 122,000 students. His words and life speak to his great faith. His legacy remind those looking on of what is most important: "Money is really worth no more than as it can be used to accomplish the Lord's work. Life is worth as much as it is spent for the Lord's service."

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Secondary Sunday School

September 17, 2017. V67, Q3, W12

LET'S STUDY ACTS!

What God Hath Cleansed

Scripture References: Acts 10

There was a man named Cornelius who lived in Caesarea. He was a centurion—a military officer. He was a devout man who feared God and taught his household to do the same. He spent much of his money on charitable deeds and prayed often to God.

As he prayed one day, an angel of the Lord appeared unto him and spoke his name. Cornelius was very afraid, but answered, “What is it, Lord?”

The angel said, “Your prayers and alms-giving have risen up before God as a memorial. Now send men to Joppa and call for Simon Peter. He will tell you what you need to do.”

When the angel departed, Cornelius immediately called two servants and a soldier and told them of his vision. Without delay, he sent them to Joppa to find Peter. The servants traveled all night, and the soldier went with them for protection.

Meanwhile, Peter went to the housetop to pray and commune with God. Soon he became very hungry, but before it was time to eat, Peter fell into a trance. He too saw a vision. The heavens opened and a vessel descended to him. It was like a great sheet that was bound together by the four corners, and inside was all manner of four-footed beasts, creeping things, and birds of the air. A voice called unto Peter, “Arise, make a sacrifice and eat.”

Peter had been taught in the law of Moses that it was wrong for a Jew to eat of any unclean animal, so he said, “No, Lord, for I have never eaten any common or unclean thing.”

But the voice responded a second time, saying, “What God hath cleansed, you shall not call common.”

Three times, Peter argued with the voice, and three times, the voice responded that Peter was to kill an animal and eat. Then, the great sheet was received up into heaven.

Peter doubted that he had actually seen this vision. Right then, the servants from Cornelius’ house called from the door and asked for him. The Spirit told Peter, “Behold, three men are here looking for you. Arise and go down to them, for I have sent them. Do not doubt what I have showed you.”

SO GREAT A CLOUD OF WITNESSES

CHARLOTTE ELLIOTT

"All that the Father giveth me shall come to me; and him that cometh to me I will no wise cast out." John 6:37

Charlotte Elliott was born on March 18, 1789. She spent the first thirty-two years of her life in Brighton, England. She was a gifted portrait artist and writer, and from an early age, she was sensitive to her own sins and need to be forgiven. She was frequently told by different pastors that she needed to pray, study, and perform more noble deeds. She felt so guilty and unworthy that she never felt as though she could approach God for forgiveness.

In her early thirties, she was struck with an illness from which she never regained her strength. She became an invalid and suffered greatly from depression and bitterness, feeling justified in her anger toward a God who had taken her good health from her.

Her life changed when a well-known preacher, Cesar Malan, came to visit her family. The date was May 9, 1822. One account says that she lost her temper in an angry outburst over dinner that night. Embarrassed by Charlotte's behavior, her family left the room, leaving Cesar Malan to handle her anger.

Whether Charlotte actually grew angry over dinner is not certainly known, but either way, Malan asked her a question that started her down the path of peace. He said, "You're tired of yourself, aren't you?" He summed up her feelings succinctly, saying, "You are holding to your hate and anger because you have nothing else in the world to cling to.

Consequently, you have become sour, bitter, and resentful."

Charlotte asked him what his cure would be for her sorry state, to which he answered, "The faith you are trying to despise." Through their conversation, Charlotte began softening toward God, but still struggled with her own unworthiness. She asked, "If I wanted to become a Christian and to share the peace and joy you possess, what would I do?"

Malan's next words forever changed history, for they were the words that inspired Charlotte's most well-known hymn, "Just as I Am." He answered, "You would give yourself to God just as you are now, with your fightings and fears, hates and loves, pride and shame."

She was incredulous. "I would come to God just as I am? Is that right?" When Malan answered in the positive, Charlotte finally gave her life to God. Along her journey of life, she found and claimed John 6:37 as her own, staking her faith on the promise of Jesus that no man or woman who comes to Him will be sent away.

Later, Charlotte's brother, Reverend Henry Elliot, was raising funds for a poor clergyman and his children. To contribute to the effort, Charlotte penned the poem "Just As I Am" which was printed and sold for the benefit of the clergyman. The leaflet that was distributed read, "Sold for the Benefit of St. Margaret's Hall, Brighton: Him That Cometh To Me I Will in No Wise Cast Out." It was published in the year 1834. In 1849, the famous hymnist, William Bradbury, composed the music for her lyrics, and the hymn that we so well know became one of the most powerful invitational hymns history has known.

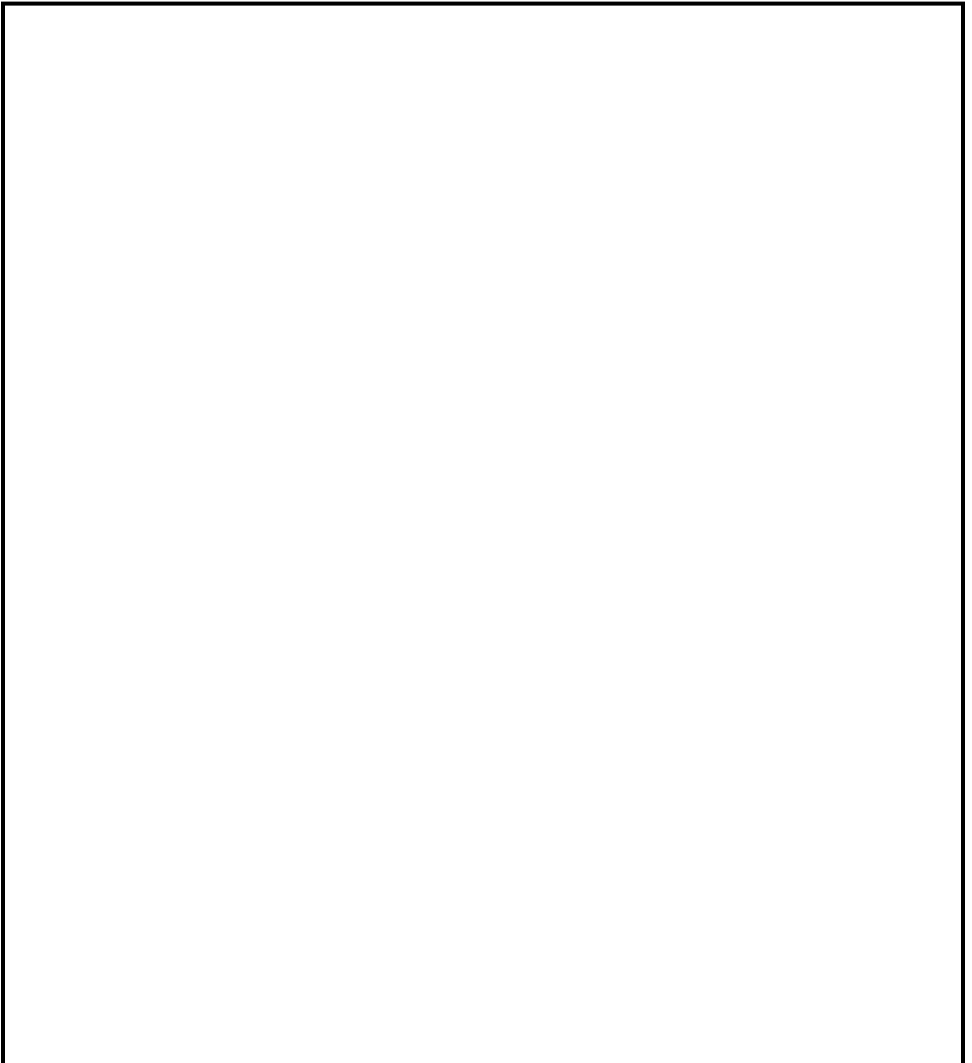
ARE YOU AN ARTIST?

THE UNIVERSAL GOSPEL

Often, Satan tempts us to think that when someone is different than us, those differences make them wrong or even less of a person. We learned today that

God is not pleased with that attitude. Peter realized it didn't matter what country a person was from - God loves and saves every person equally.

Draw a picture of a group of people from different nations and backgrounds coming together in harmony under the Spirit of God.



KEY THOUGHT

Every blood washed one is part of the Church of God. When Jesus died, salvation became available to every nation, and God showed that to Peter through his vision and the salvation of Cornelius.

MEMORY VERSE

There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female: for ye are all one in Christ Jesus. Galatians 3:28

LESSON DISCUSSION

1. What did Cornelius do often?
2. What special message did God send Peter through the vision?
3. What did Peter say when Cornelius and his house received the Holy Ghost?
4. Do we think we are better than other people who are different than we? Does God think we are better?

CHARLOTTE ELLIOTT CONTINUED

Charlotte passed away at the age of 82 on September 22, 1871. She wrote over 150 hymns in her lifetime, though she never regained her health. When sorting through her papers after her death, her family came across over a thousand letters she had kept from different people in which they expressed their thanks for the way her timeless hymn had changed their lives.

WHAT GOD HATH CLEANSED CONTINUED

Immediately, Peter went downstairs and greeted the men, asking what it was they came for. They told him that Cornelius had been told by an angel to send for him. Peter trusted their words and invited them in. The three men returned to Caesarea the next day with Peter.

As Peter approached the house of Cornelius, that very man came and bowed himself before Peter. But Peter lifted him by the hand and said, "Stand up, for I am just a man."

That day, Cornelius and all of his house learned about the gospel of Jesus Christ. Peter taught them the things that he had heard from Jesus' own mouth. As Peter spoke, the Holy Ghost fell upon all that were there. Peter said, "Can any man forbid that these people should not be baptized? They have received the Holy Ghost!" And so, everyone was baptized.

The events of that day were more than just the spreading of the Gospel. The wall that had long separated the Jews and the Gentiles was torn down. Peter's vision was a representation of the fact that God is no respecter of persons—the salvation that Jesus brought to the world is for every man of every nation. God's words to Peter express His love and desire to save all of humankind: "What God hath cleansed, you shall not call common."

No person who has given their life to Jesus and been cleansed by the blood is common. They are royalty. Sons and daughters of God. Heirs of Heaven with Jesus Christ, our Great Savior.

Lindsey Gellenbeck

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Secondary Sunday School

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LET'S STUDY ACTS!

The Church Under Fire

(But God had the final say!)

Scripture References: Acts 12:1-25

There are four different Herods we read of in the New Testament who were rulers over Israel. Unlike previous kings of Israel, they were appointed by Roman emperors. They had a Jewish background, but did not rule kindly.

Herod the Great: Sought to kill Jesus as a baby by slaughtering all the infant boys under two years of age. He tried to get the wise men to tell him where Jesus was. He has been described as a cruel king and a madman.

Herod Antipas: Son of Herod the Great who governed in Galilee, Jesus' hometown. He had John the Baptist beheaded. Jesus was sent to him during his trial and eventual crucifixion.

Herod Agrippa I: Grandson of Herod the Great. Unlike his predecessors he was reportedly a strict observer of the law and sought to please the Jews. He had James killed, and he persecuted the church.

Herod Agrippa II: Herod Agrippa's son. He was instrumental in saving Paul from being tried and imprisoned in Jerusalem and allowed Paul to defend himself (Acts 25-26). He said, "Almost thou persuadest me to be a Christian." He was the last of the Herods. After Herod Agrippa II, the family fell out of favor with Rome and no longer ruled.

In our lesson today, Herod Agrippa I sought to injure the church. He had James, the disciple of Jesus, killed with a sword. When he saw that it pleased the Jews he arrested and imprisoned Peter. The church prayed for Peter without ceasing, and not even the power of King Agrippa was stronger than the power of prayer.

Herod planned on bringing Peter out to the people, perhaps in order to also kill him, but God's angel intervened before he had a chance to do so. As Peter slept in his prison cell, bound in chains between two soldiers, the angel of the Lord shone a light in the prison and smote Peter in the side. The angel said, "Arise up quickly." Peter's chains miraculously fell off his hands. The angel then bid him put on his sandals, put on his coat, and follow him. As Peter followed the angel, he thought he was only

SO GREAT A CLOUD OF WITNESSES

JOHN NEWTON

John Newton, the author of perhaps one of the most well-known hymns, "Amazing Grace," was born in London on July 24, 1725. His early years were spent with his mother, who taught him the scriptures and ways of God. He remembered her tear-filled prayers for his soul all of his life, though she died when he was only seven years old.

His father, a sailor, took him to sea when John was eleven. There, though his father did what he could to intervene, John grew into a wild, reckless, and sinful young man. When drafted to the navy, he deserted his duty. Upon his capture, he was stripped, beaten, and kept in a half-starved state under a slave trader in Africa. He lived that way for fifteen months before a sailor rescued him. On his voyage home, John's ship was almost sunk by a great storm, and in the midst of uncertainty that he would live another day, he called out to the God his mother had so dearly loved.

John married Mary Catlett, the girl he had loved from a young age, on February 12, 1750. He still took to the sea, but was struck with ill health in 1754 and had to give up his captainship.

Although having taken the first step toward redemption, John's ways and conscience were not changed all at once. He became the captain of a slave ship and sold over 500 slaves to the West Indies. His heart, however, desired to do right and he met a captain who enlightened him on the true ways of Christ. John then took a job as a tide-surveyor in Liverpool.

The remainder of John Newton's life was spent in the pursuit of the Lord. He became an ordained minister, preached, and penned hymns. With his dear friend, William Cowper, he published a collection entitled *Olney Hymns*. Among some of his most well-known titles are "Amazing Grace," "How Sweet the Name of Jesus Sounds," and "Glorious Things of Thee Are Spoken." One particular hymn speaks vividly of the wickedness John lived in before his salvation, entitled "In Evil Long I Took Delight."

*In evil long I took delight,
Unawed by shame or fear,
Till a new object struck my sight,
And stopped my wild career.
I saw One hanging on a tree,
In agony and blood,
Who fixed His languid eyes on me,
As near His cross I stood.
Sure, never to my latest breath,
Can I forget that look;
It seemed to charge me with His death,
Though not a word He spoke.
My conscience felt and owned the guilt,
And plunged me in despair,
I saw my sins His blood had spilt,
And helped to nail Him there.
A second look He gave, which said,
"I freely all forgive;
This blood is for thy ransom paid;
I die that thou mayst live."
Thus, while His death my sin displays
In all its blackest hue,
Such is the mystery of grace,
It seals my pardon too.*

In his last years, John stood behind the pulpit, nearly blind and unable to read his sermon. A helper stood behind him, and

PRAYER CHALLENGE

YOUR PRAYERS MATTER TO GOD

Acts 12:5 says the Christians prayed for Peter without ceasing. However, it's easy to say a quick prayer, hop up and do something else. Prayer is a powerful resource that we often neglect. The devil knows prayer changes lives and draws us close to God, so he distracts us.

This week, refuse to give the devil this ground. Are you concerned for a loved one? Nervous about the school year? In need of emotional or physical healing? Make it a point to pray every day specifically for that need. Focus on your words, even pray out loud to help your mind from wandering. Come to the Lord in faith, fully believing He hears and will answer your request. Remember to always praise and thank God in your prayers.

Next Sunday, evaluate your experience. Reflect on your time with the Lord. Did you notice Satan trying to distract you? Were you diligent in prayer? What are the blessings from faithful communion with your Heavenly Father?

Feel free to share your experience with others, as testimony encourages and challenges fellow believers.

(Use the space below to write out your prayer, or list things you want to pray for.)

[illegible]

KEY THOUGHT

Rather than boasting in our own successes, we should attempt to live our lives in such a way that God always receives glory.

MEMORY VERSE

But he that glorieth, let him glory in the Lord. 2 Corinthians 10:17

LESSON DISCUSSION

1. Review all three Herods mentioned in the Bible and the acts they were known for.
2. Who did Herod have killed? Who did he then seek to kill?
3. How did prayer make a difference for Peter. Does it make a difference for us?
4. The angel of the Lord smote Peter and also smote Herod. What was the outcome in each case and why?
5. In what ways can we live so as to give God glory in our lives?

JOHN NEWTON CONTINUED

when John twice read the words, “Jesus Christ is precious,” the helper said, “You have already said that twice.” John replied, “I said that twice and I am going to say it again.” In a loud voice, he cried, “Jesus Christ is precious!” John’s dying words were, “My memory is nearly gone, but I remember two things—that I am I great sinner, and that Christ is a great Saviour.” He met his beloved Jesus on December 21, 1807.

THE CHURCH UNDER FIRE CONTINUED

seeing a vision. However, when they passed through the gates of the prison, Peter knew the Lord had delivered him from Herod. After some thought, Peter went to the home of Mary, the mother of John, where many were gathered together praying. They were overjoyed and incredulous at his appearance!

The next morning there was an uproar in the prison about what happened to Peter. Herod searched for Peter but could not find him. After he examined the prison guards, he had them put to death.

How did Herod Agrippa I die? On a set day, *(history tells us it was a day in which Roman games were taking place to honor the emperor)*, Herod was dressed in royal apparel and made a speech to the people. The people shouted, “It is the voice of a god, and not of a man.” Because Herod did not give God glory, immediately the angel of the Lord struck him. He was eaten with worms and died. *(History again tells us he died after five days of excruciating torment.)*

Let us contrast these two men: The angel of the Lord smote Peter while he was sleeping in prison in order to deliver him; Peter was a man who determined to preach the gospel no matter the cost. However, the angel of the Lord smote Herod with worms which caused his death; Herod was a man who persecuted the church and did not give God glory in his life. Giving God glory in our lives always pays off!

Sister Julie Elwell

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