Acts
OF THE APOSTLES

[5]

PETER AND JOHN ON TRIAL



Has someone else ever gotten credit for something that you did? Or, have you ever gotten credit for something that someone else did? We all like to receive compliments, and we enjoy it when people acknowledge our work. The book of Acts is filled with *the work that God did* through His believing followers.

In last week's lesson, Peter and John met a crippled man who begged them for money. Instead of money, the man received healing! Peter did not take credit for the healing but gave credit where it was due—to God, who is the only one able to heal. He also used the opportunity to tell the crowd about God's work of salvation through Christ.

God does physical miracles, like healing the crippled man, but He works spiritual miracles too, every time a person receives the salvation He offers. God was at work just as much in Peter's sermon as in the healing, and we see the result of His work in what happened when Peter was done speaking. Five thousand men came to believe in the saving work of Jesus.

THE APOSTLE JOHN

Peter's companion at the temple was a man called John, who also had been a disciple of Jesus.

1. Who was John? In Mark 1:19–20 we read that, like Peter, John was a _____ before he began to follow Jesus.

Peter, James, and John were three disciples who were very close to Jesus. At the Last Supper, John refers to himself as the "disciple whom Jesus loved." While on the cross, Jesus gave John the responsibility of looking after Mary, his mother, and said that she was to consider John as her own son. On resurrection morning, John and Peter were the first disciples to reach the empty tomb and saw that the body of Jesus was gone.

John wrote five books in the New Testament: the Gospel of John, I John, II John, III John, and Revelation.

2. When we read the Gospel of John, it is clear that it was important to John that we trust and believe the words he wrote. Read the verses below. What did John say about his testimony in each verse?

   John 19:35 _____

   _____

   John 21:24 _____

   _____



Into THE WORD

Acts 4:5–31

1. In verse 7, what did the Jewish leaders want to know from Peter and John? _____

   _____

2. From what source did Peter get his answer? v.8

   _____

3. Look up Matthew 10:17–20. What had Jesus told His disciples?

   vv.17–18 _____

   v.19 _____

   v.20 _____

4. When the Jewish leaders asked Peter and John by what power or in what name they had healed a man, what was Peter's answer? Acts 4:10 _____

   _____

5. What two things did Peter say about the Jews in verses 10–11? _____

   _____

6. What did Peter say about Jesus in verses 11–12?

   _____

   _____

   _____

7. Why were the Jews surprised by Peter's confident and eloquent words? v.13 _____

   _____

8. The rulers were stumped. They didn't know what to do with these men. In verse 18, what order did they give them?

   _____

   _____

9. God had told the disciples to be witnesses, but the council told them to stop speaking. In verses 19–20, they boldly answered that they *had* to make known what they had _____ and _____. *Could* the disciples stop speaking then? Explain why or why not.

_____

_____

10. Peter and John went back to their friends when they were released. When the people heard what had happened, they lifted their voices together confessing God the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit (vv.24–28). What did they request of God? vv.29–30 _____

_____

_____

11. What answer did God immediately provide? v.31

_____

_____

_____



NEW IDEAS:

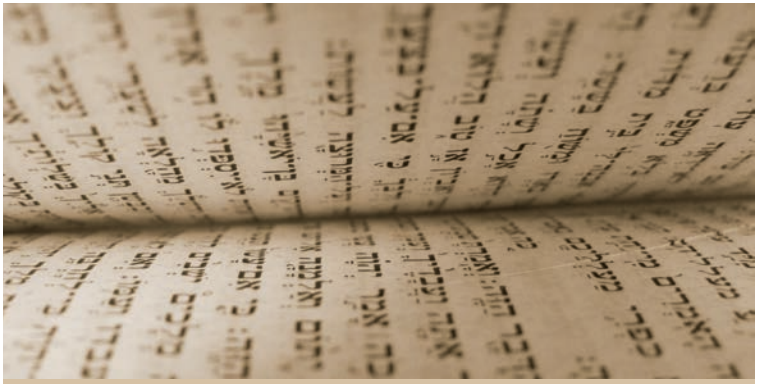
The Jewish Leaders

The Jewish leaders were powerful men, and several different groups are mentioned in the Bible.

Priests: Priests were called by God and were the most influential among all the leaders of the Jewish people. Entrusted with the responsibility of offering sacrifices at the temple in Jerusalem, they led the people in the worship of God. When they were not serving in the temple, they functioned as teachers of the people. (Exodus 40:13–15, II Chronicles 15:3)

Pharisees: The word "pharisee" comes from a root word that means "to separate." These men, who were not priests, tried to live holy and separate lives by strictly following and enforcing a long list of rules. They believed in the existence of good and evil angels, and in the resurrection of the dead. They were extremely zealous for the law, and often took great pride in their "good works." (Luke 18:11–12, Acts 26:5)

Sanhedrin: Also called "the Council" (Acts 22:30), this was the ruling council of the Jews, the Jewish "final authority" (Luke 22:66; 23:50–51). It was made up of the leaders of the Priests, Pharisees, and Sadducees, who came together to make decisions on behalf of the Jewish people. A "ruler of the Jews" (John 3:1) refers to a member of the Sanhedrin.



MEMORY VERSE

And there is salvation in no one else; for there is no other name under heaven that has been given among men by which we must be saved. *Acts 4:12*

Extra Memory Challenge: I John 1:3

Sadducees: The Sadducees were opponents of the Pharisees. The Sadducees rejected many of the traditions of Jewish law, they did not believe in the resurrection of the dead, and they denied the existence of angels or spirits. Some of the priests were also Sadducees. (Matthew 22:23–34; Acts 23:7–8)

discussion questions

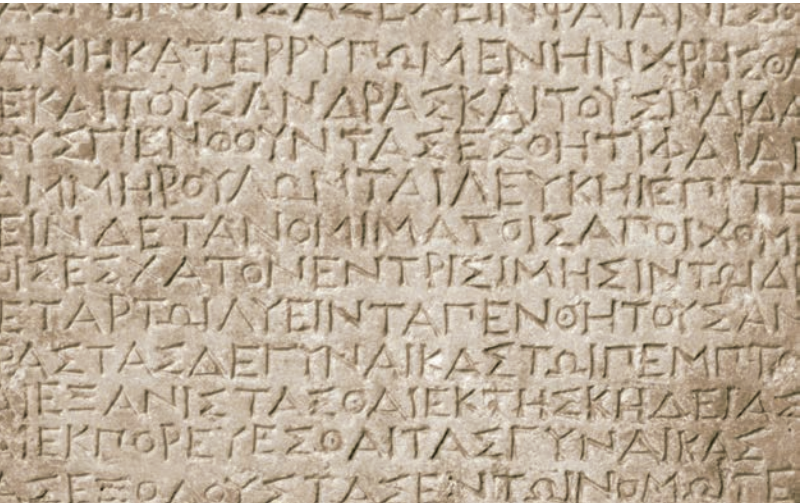
As time allows, discuss one or more of the following:

1. Read Acts 4:15–18. These are the same rulers who opposed Jesus while He was alive on earth. Peter and John weren't breaking any rules when they healed the crippled man, yet they were thrown into jail. Jesus said that Christians would face persecution (John 15:19–20). What hostilities might Christians face today?
2. Notice how the believers pray in Acts 4:24–30. What do they acknowledge about God? Why do they pray for boldness? Why should this be our prayer in times of opposition and persecution?
3. In Acts 4:11 Peter talks about a stone. Read Matthew 21:42 to find out what Jesus said about this stone. I Peter 2:4–8 explains more clearly what this stone is. What is being said about Jesus through all this talk about stones?

DAILY DEVOTIONS

Focus on I John

Sunday	I John 1:1 –10
Monday	I John 2:1–8
Tuesday	I John 2:9–17
Wednesday	I John 2:18–29
Thursday	I John 3:1–10
Friday	I John 3:11–18
Saturday	I John 3:19–24



The Lutheran Church

ITS CONFESSIONS, CREEDS, & CATECHISM

- *Augsburg Confession—Article 2 (Original Sin)*

The Augsburg Confession is divided into two parts. Articles 1–21 present the biblical doctrine of the way of salvation and Articles 22–28 the abuses of the church in that day. In the next few lessons, we will focus on some of these articles. Article 2 contains a strong emphasis on the biblical teaching of original sin. The teaching of original sin reminds us that we are born with a sinful nature that is always opposed to God. Because of this, Article 2 also clearly states that we cannot be justified before God by our own strength, merit, or works.

1. What is “original sin”? Why is it important that we understand original sin?

2. When does a person become sinful? See Psalm 51:5