

=BOOKS OF THE BIBLE=

Lesson 60

I Peter

Objects to have:

The sign for this new Bible book: I PETER

Don't be Afraid

The mailman with a letter addressed: To the Jews

A model sailing ship or a picture of one

A pair of Bible-type men's sandals (could be made from cardboard and shoestring)

A big fish

Your Bible.

Introducing the lesson:

(Pick up your Bible, and fan the pages of it.) What a wonderful book the Bible is! There is so much in it! First, in this one book there are 66 books. We have been talking about a different book of the Bible each Sunday now, for many Sundays! We talked about all the books of the Old Testament, and we have talked about many of the books of the New Testament. What we have heard each Sunday about each book of the Bible is not nearly all that is in each book; we have heard only a very little bit about each book of the Bible. We can read and hear about the Bible the rest of our lives, and we will never get tired of it, and we will always learn something new from it. God's Book is a wonderful Book!

(Put down your Bible and pick up the letter from Peter.) For many Sundays we've pretended that a letter has been delivered to our Sunday school room because there are many letters in the New Testament of the Bible. The man named Paul wrote many of the letters. The letter for today was written by Peter, however. That is, Peter wrote down the words that God the Holy Spirit told him to write down because God wanted this letter to be from God. This is the first letter that Peter wrote, so it is called First Peter. What is it called? Yes, First Peter.

Telling the story:

Peter was a strong man. He was a fisherman. (Hold up your sailing ship.) It was hard work to be a fisherman. A fisherman had to leave his house each night while it was dark outside, go to his ship, meet the other fishermen there, and get on board the ship. Together they pulled on ropes to raise the sails. The ship sailed out into the deep water of the sea. The fishermen threw the fishing nets out into the deep water. Fish swam into the nets, and as the nets got full of fish, the fishermen pulled them back into the ship, emptied out the fish, and threw the nets back into the sea. After catching all the fish that the fishermen could catch for the day, they sailed back to shore.

But, Peter's work was still not done for the day. (Hold up the fish.) All the fish that he and the other fishermen had caught had to be cleaned and cut up. Then the nets had to be washed with water. Sometimes the fish had made holes in the nets. The nets then had to be sewed by some of the fishermen. Other fishermen took the fish to the store so that people could buy them. The storekeeper paid the fishermen money for the fish. Then the day's work for Peter and the other fishermen was finished. They could go home and eat and take a bath and go to bed.

Some days the fishermen did not go out fishing. Some of the fishermen went to church on the day when they were supposed to do that. Peter was a fisherman who went to church.

Peter learned about something very exciting in church. Peter learned that someday God would send a very special Man into the world. This Man would become King of all the earth. Peter thought about that a lot. He began to watch for the Man Whom God would send.

One day Peter's brother, Andrew, came running to him. "Peter, He has come. The One Whom God promised that He would send has come into the world. He has been here for many years now; we just did not know it. Other people knew it; He came as a baby, and He is grown up, and I know where He is. Come on, Peter, I'll show you where He is." Andrew led Peter to Jesus. How exciting that must have been for Peter, the rough, strong fisherman. That day, Peter believed that Jesus was the One Whom God had said He would send into the world. Peter believed that Jesus is the Son of God. Peter trusted Jesus to be his Saviour.

One day, early in the morning, Peter was sitting beside the Sea of Galilee. His boat was docked. He was mending his nets. Jesus came along. Jesus said, "Hello, Peter. You have been a fisher of fish. Now I want you to be a fisher of men. Come, follow Me, Peter." What an honor it was to be asked by Jesus to go with Him wherever He went! Peter immediately left his nets and his boat and the fishermen who fished with him. Peter went to follow Jesus. Peter stopped being a fisherman of fish. (Put down the sailing ship and the fish.) Peter became one of Jesus' followers or disciples.

(Hold up the sandals.) Let's say these are Peter's shoes. They are like the sandals they wore then. Instead of walking to his boat each day, Peter began to walk wherever Jesus walked. Jesus traveled many, many miles to many, many different places. Wherever Jesus went, Peter listened to Jesus preach. Wherever Jesus went, Peter watched Jesus perform miracles. Of course, there were other disciples, too. Sometimes Jesus would go back to the same places and sometimes He would go to new places. Wherever Jesus went, Peter and the other disciples followed.

Peter was mixed up about something, however. Peter thought that Jesus had come to become the King right away. There had been different kings over Israel. Jesus would be the King of kings. Well, day after day Peter heard Jesus preach about Heaven. Peter saw Jesus make sick people well. Peter saw Jesus make blind people to see. Peter talked with Jesus. Jesus talked with Peter. They ate together. Peter was with Jesus many, many days. Still Jesus had not become King of all the earth. Peter was with Jesus one year. Then he was with Jesus for two years, and then for three years. Jesus still had not been crowned King.

One day Jesus gathered all His disciples together. Jesus said, "I am going to go to Jerusalem. In Jerusalem I will be captured, just as if I am a criminal. Soldiers will lead me away. I will have to suffer terribly. Then I will die."

As Peter was listening to Jesus, he could not believe what he was hearing. Jesus, Who would be the King of kings someday, should not have to suffer; He should not have to die. How could He become King if He died? "Oh, no, Jesus," exclaimed Peter, "You will not have to die! You should not have to die!"

Jesus turned to look at Peter. "Peter, do not try to stop Me. I must die." Children, you and I know why Jesus had to die; He was going to die to pay for the sins of everybody in the whole world. But Peter did not understand this.

One day Jesus went to Jerusalem. His disciples went with Him. One night they were in a beautiful garden, a place where there were lots of olive trees and many beautiful flowers. Jesus said, "Some of you disciples stay here. Peter, you and James and John may come with Me." Peter, James and John walked with Jesus. Then Jesus stopped walking. Jesus said, "I want to pray alone. Would you stay right here and wait for Me while I pray?" Peter, James and John agreed to stay and wait for Jesus. After Jesus had prayed by Himself, He came back to where those three disciples were; He came back three times and found each time that they were sleeping. Jesus was so disappointed! Jesus said, "Wake up."

Just then a great crowd of people came walking down the paths of the garden. Some of the men were carrying lighted torches with fire on the ends of them. Soldiers were in the crowd, too. Judas, the disciple was in the crowd that was coming into the garden. Judas came and kissed Jesus on the cheek. Immediately the soldiers grabbed Jesus. Peter did not want anybody to hurt his Lord. Peter drew out his sword and swung it at a soldier. Peter missed the soldier's neck; instead of killing the soldier, Peter chopped off his ear. Jesus healed the soldier's ear, and then He turned to Peter and said, "Peter, don't you know that right now I could call thousands and thousands of angels? The angels would come to help Me if I wanted them to help Me, but this has to happen." How hard it was for Peter to understand all that was happening!

The soldiers led Jesus away. They led Him to the palace of the high priest. Peter saw Jesus being treated very badly. He saw Jesus being whipped and spit on and many other bad things. Jesus was taken inside and Peter stayed outside. Three times different people came up to Peter while he was out there, and they asked, "Aren't you a friend of Jesus?" Three times Peter said that he was not a friend of His! How awful! Peter got so frightened for himself that he said he did not even know Jesus. The third time he said that, he used bad language. Then immediately Peter realized what he had done. Peter started to cry. He cried and cried and cried. He went by himself and kept on crying. To think he would say that he did not know Jesus! How mixed up Peter was! But now that we see him crying about his sins, I think that he is beginning to get straightened out, don't you!

Jesus died on the cross. Jesus' body was placed in a tomb. Jesus' body stayed in the tomb three days and three nights. Then the news came to sad Peter: "Jesus is alive." It was hard for Peter to believe that! "Jesus is on His way from Jerusalem to Galilee, Peter." Peter had to see for himself. He ran to the tomb. He saw that it was empty; Jesus' body was not there any longer. Oh, how wonderful! Jesus was alive! Peter hurried to Galilee. Other disciples went there, too.

By the Sea of Galilee they were waiting to see Jesus. Peter was never a good person to wait. He got impatient for Jesus to come. He said, "I know what I'm going to do. I'm going to go fishing." Can you believe that; Peter went back to being a fisherman of fish; Jesus had told him to be a fisher of men! While Peter and some other disciples were in the boat, Jesus came to the shore. When Peter saw Jesus, Peter jumped over the side of the ship, and he swam to the shore. He was probably wondering whether Jesus would be angry with him; whether Jesus would speak to him again.

Jesus said, "Hello, Peter. Do you love Me?"

Peter said, "You know that I love you, Jesus." Three times Jesus asked Peter if he loved Him; three times Peter said that he did.

Jesus said to Peter, "I have a job for you to do. I am going back to Heaven, and after I go back, you be sure to tell people about Me. You tell them that you know Me. Tell them how to be saved. Then preach to them so that they will know how they ought to live as good Christians." Peter promised that he would do that.

Well, things finally got straightened out for Peter. He understood that Jesus would not be the King right then. Peter understood that one day Jesus would come back from Heaven to the earth, and that then He would be the King of kings. So, Peter worked for Jesus after Jesus went back to Heaven. And, Peter wrote this book called First Peter.

LEARN OUR BIBLE VERSE: I Peter 5:7, "Casting all your care upon him; for he careth for you."