

=LIFE OF PETER=

Lesson 2

Peter Witnesses the Power of God

AIM: to teach my pupils that Peter saw evidence that led him to believe that Jesus was the Son of God.

POINT OF CONTACT: Say to the pupils: Are you strong enough to lift this chair, or this sack (in which you have placed some heavy books or a sack of flour)? Choose one or two pupils, saying, "If you are strong enough, if you have enough power to lift this object, come up here and demonstrate your power for us." Let the pupils come to show their strength.

INTRODUCTION: Jesus demonstrated His power for His disciples and for many, many other people while He was on earth. Through demonstrating His power to heal diseases, to cast out devils, to raise the dead to life, to control the forces of nature, He showed His ability to forgive sins. Peter was an eyewitness to these demonstrations. Peter displayed a reaction to what he witnessed. Listen to what he saw and see how it affected him in our lesson for today. There is a second reason why he believed what he did concerning Jesus, but that second reason will be discussed in next Sunday's lesson.

I. PETER'S EXPECTATIONS.

1. He was looking for the Messiah to come.

- 1) The prophets said that the Messiah would be a just Governor Who would serve judgment wherever it was needed. The government of Peter's day made any child of God long for the day of the coming of the perfect King. Isaiah prophesied the coming of this perfect Governor. Isaiah 9:6, 7. There was much economic corruption. The land of Judah was included in the Roman Empire. The foreign holdings of the Roman Empire were divided into provinces; the provinces were ruled by governors. The governor of each province was a wicked, corrupt man who had aspired to the position of governor for one reason: to get rich quickly! As a general rule the governors held their positions for only one year. In that year's time the governor had to work fast to amass his fortune. In addition to collecting large taxes for his own personal gain, he permitted his tax collectors to keep all amounts over the taxes which they collected. Because the governors were wicked, they did nothing to bring about reform or judgment upon others who were dishonest toward the citizens. When the governors' terms were ended, they went home to Rome.
- 2) The Messiah would bring safety and supremacy to Israel. The inhabitants of a province were afraid for their lives because of the practice that the Romans had of organizing gladiator games. Criminals and condemned men were matched against each other for the purpose of killing each other in sword play. Because of the popularity of such events, minor charges against a man were often enough to condemn him to such a match. Micah 5:2 is a Scripture that would bring hope to the oppressed Jews.
- 3) The Messiah would bring true religious worship with Him into His kingdom. The Roman Empire was so degenerate as to deify some of its emperors. People were required to go through acts of worship to them and to other false gods. The prophets knew that the coming Messiah would be called: THE LORD OUR RIGHTEOUSNESS. Jeremiah 23:5, 6; Micah 5:12-15. Vengeance would be executed from the Lord upon the heathen. Tiberius, who was the reigning emperor in Rome at the time, was one of the deified Cæsars.

2. Peter watched Jesus and saw that He did not look and act like a king. Jesus was a minister to the people.

## II. PETER WITNESSED JESUS' POWER.

1. Peter witnessed Jesus' power to heal many diseases. Matthew 4:18-25. It was the talk of the day. Jesus was able to heal any kind of disease, and Peter was a personal witness to this fact.
  - 1) Jesus' healing power reached into Peter's home. Peter's mother-in-law was very sick with a fever. Jesus came in and, with a touch of His hand, caused the fever to leave her and strength to enter her. She was immediately strong enough to serve them. Matthew 8:14, 15; Mark 1:29-31; Luke 4:38, 39.
  - 2) Jesus healed many at the door of Peter's house. Mark 1:31-34.
2. Peter witnessed Jesus' power over demons. Jesus cast demons out of the bodies of people, thus restoring the people to their right minds. Matthew 9:32-34.
3. Peter witnessed Jesus' power over nature. Matthew 8:23-37; Mark 4:36-41; Luke 8:22-25. When one of the sudden, severe storms hit the Sea of Galilee, Jesus and His disciples were out in a boat. The winds and the waves ceased, and the lake became quiet in response to a command from Jesus. Peter saw Jesus walking on the water and asked Him to let him do that, too. This storm was also stilled. Matthew 14:22-36.
4. Peter witnessed Jesus' power to raise the dead to life. Only three disciples and the father and mother of the girl were permitted to go with Jesus into the room where the twelve-year-old girl had died. Peter saw Jesus resurrect the young girl from the dead. Mark 5:21-43.
5. Peter could testify from first-hand experience about the creative power of Jesus. He saw Him multiply the loaves and fishes, which were a little boy's lunch, into a feast which was so plentiful that there were leftovers after five thousand men besides women and children had eaten. Luke 9:12-17; John 6:1-14. Peter saw Jesus recreate the eyes of a blind man. John 9:1-7.
6. Peter observed Jesus' power to forgive sins. Mark 2:1-12.
7. Peter saw Jesus' power exercised in the supplying of monetary needs. Tribute money was required of the Jewish people for the temple. The collector of this money asked Peter whether Jesus had paid this tribute money. It was not fitting that Jesus should have to pay the money, for the children of kings did not pay tribute money to the king of the day. Jesus, as the Son of God, should not have to pay tribute money for His Father's house. Nevertheless, to keep peace, Jesus told Peter to go fishing. With a hook and a line Peter caught a fish. He looked in the mouth of this fish and found a coin that was the right amount to pay the price of the tribute, not only for Jesus but also for Peter. Matthew 17:24-27.

## III. PETER SAW THAT JESUS' POWER WAS EXERCISED IN RESPONSE TO FAITH IN JESUS.

1. It was in response to a father's faith that a twelve-year-old girl was raised to life from the dead. Mark 5:23, 36, 41, 42. The ruler was confident that just the laying of Jesus' hand upon the body of his daughter was sufficient to raise her from the dead.
2. The very fact that people brought to Jesus their loved ones who were sick in body and demon-possessed of mind demonstrated their faith in His ability. Matthew 4:24.
3. Those of Peter's household asked Jesus to come see Peter's mother-in-law that she might be made well. They trusted His ability to heal her. Luke 4:38.
4. It was the lack of faith that caused Peter to sink into the waves when Jesus called him to walk on the water. Matthew 14:31.
5. A little boy believed that his lunch in the hands of Jesus would be enough to feed five thousand men besides the women and the children who were with them. John 6:9.
6. The palsied man was healed in response to his faith. Mark 2:5, 12.

## IV. PETER SAW THAT JESUS' POWER WAS EXERCISED IN ORDER TO BRING ABOUT FAITH IN HIM.

1. Jesus said that the blind man had been born sightless in order that the works of God might be manifested in him. John 9:1-7.
2. The man who had been blind confessed his faith in Jesus as the Son of God. John 9:35-38.

- V. PETER REALIZED THAT JESUS WAS THE SON OF GOD. Matthew 14:25-33.
1. This was in response to Jesus' display of power over nature. Through Jesus' power Peter was able to walk on the water. Only when he ceased to trust Jesus to keep him there did Peter begin to sink below the surface.
  2. After climbing aboard the ship, Peter joined the other disciples that were in the ship in confessing the true identity of Jesus. They said that He was the Son of God. They realized that only God could perform the acts which they saw performed.

CONCLUSION: Peter saw that Jesus could usher in the kingdom of God—Jesus was capable, and Peter knew that, when he saw the display of His power over everything in the world except man's will. Man had to be willing to accept what Jesus had to offer him with the conditions that God laid down for receipt of the offer.