

=THE APOSTLES=

Lesson 1

The Apostle Peter

AIM: to teach my pupils the facts about Peter, one of the twelve apostles.

INTRODUCTION: We are now beginning a study of the twelve apostles. These 12 men shook their world with the Gospel. Certainly they deserve our study. In these lessons, we will find out what kind of men they were. Today we look at Peter. Because we have just completed a series of lessons on the life of Peter, this will serve as a review of his life as well as an introduction to the new series. (Teacher, begin a chart of some kind so you can add to it as you teach about each additional apostle.)

POINT OF CONTACT: Bring a good-sized rock and a little lump of dirt to class. Ask the class what that has to do with the Apostle Peter. In Matthew 16:18, Jesus said, "...thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church..." What Jesus was saying was, "Thou art a little pebble or lump of dirt, but upon this Rock (Jesus) I will build My church." Jesus is the Rock. Peter is the little clump of dirt or pebble. This settles Peter's position in the church and who is its real foundation. In St. Peter's, Rome, he is pictured as a bearded dignitary cast in bronze, dressed like a pope, wearing a jeweled crown, and having a toe worthy of being kissed. This is certainly nothing like the real Peter!

I. HIS PAST. Read John 1:40-42.

1. His name was Simon, which means "hearing."
2. He was born in Bethsaida.
3. He followed his father into the fishing business and became a partner.
4. He was married and owned a large house in Capernaum.
5. He was very tempestuous. At the Last Supper, it was he who loudly boasted his loyalty. He spoke out of place at the Transfiguration and also at the time when Jesus started to wash his feet. Peter also got mad and cut off the ear of the soldier at Gethsemane.
6. He had no formal training.
7. He was brought to Christ at the age of 35 by his brother, Andrew. Peter's brother, Andrew, came home excited and said he had found the Messiah.

II. HIS POSSIBILITIES. He was just a pebble and an uncouth fisherman, yet Jesus saw what he could become. Every man has possibilities and potential for God's service. Little did Andrew know whom he was winning. (Teacher, you don't know whom you are teaching. There may be a Peter or a Paul or a Spurgeon or a Moody in your class if you do your best. If you do not do your best, some child who might have been a great Christian may pass through your fingers.)

III. HIS POSITION.

1. He was the first among the Apostles. He was always listed first.
2. He was the first of the apostles to enter the sepulchre. See Luke 24:12.
3. He was in the "inner circle" of three, along with James and John.
4. He helped in the first miracle. See John 2:2-11.
5. In spite of the above, he was not the pope!
  - 1) He had a mother-in-law. See Mark 1:30. This would have disqualified him.
  - 2) He did not think of himself as being so exalted as a pope. Notice Acts 10:24-26.
  - 3) Paul did not treat him like a pope. Read Galatians 2:11-14.
  - 4) Jesus said to him, "...Get thee behind me, Satan..." A pope deserves more respect than this! Read Matthew 16:23.
  - 5) Peter went into awful sin after Jesus spoke to him in Matthew 16. Notice the steps in this sin. (Teacher, show the downward progression.)
    - a) He was sleeping when he should have been praying. This was while Jesus was in the garden.
    - b) He followed afar off.
    - c) He warmed by Satan's fire.

- d) He denied he was with Jesus and Jesus' crowd.
- e) He cursed.

IV. HIS LAST DAYS. He and his wife traveled, and he preached. He started churches and finally was martyred by crucifixion. It is said that at his crucifixion he requested to be crucified upside down because he did not feel worthy to die like Jesus did. Hence, he gave his life for Christ, probably on a distant field.