

8. Discussion: (a) Why do you think the Church was growing so fast from 3000 to 5000 men, not counting women and children? (b) Why do you think the Sadducees and priests were so upset that Peter and John were teaching the people that Jesus had been resurrected and through him all people of faith will be resurrected? (c) What accusations did Peter make against the Jewish Council? (d) How was the prophecy of Psalm 118:22 fulfilled, even as Peter and John were being placed on trial? [See 4:11] (e) Why is the following verse so important to all people? (4:12) "There is salvation in no one else [but Jesus]. God has given no other name under heaven by which we must be saved." (f) How does Peter's wise response fulfill this prophecy from Jesus? "When you are arrested and stand trial, don't worry in advance about what to say. Just say what God tells you at the time, for it is not you who will be speaking, but the Holy Spirit." (Mark 13:11 NLT)

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An Interactive Life Application Bible Study of the Acts of the Apostles for Small Groups

Key: Blue = New Testament Red = Words of Jesus
Green = Old Testament Quotes

Lesson 4

1. Background: Lesson 3 told the true story of a man who had been crippled since birth. He sat begging by the Temple Gate as Peter and John approached. Seeing his need the apostles exercised the gifts of compassion and healing. The man was able to miraculously use his legs and feet for the first time in his life. He began jumping and leaping and praising God. This miracle opened the door for a powerful witness about what the Spirit of Jesus was beginning to do through the Church. People could see that God's love was powerfully meeting the needs of people.

2. Peter Preaches after healing the crippled man.

Acts 3:12 Peter saw his opportunity and addressed the crowd. "People of Israel," he said, "what is so surprising about this? And why stare at us as though we had made this man walk by our own power or godliness? ¹³ For it is the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob—the God of all our ancestors—who has brought glory to his servant Jesus by doing this. This is the same Jesus whom you handed over and rejected before Pilate, despite Pilate's decision to release him. ¹⁴ You rejected this holy, righteous one and instead demanded the release of a murderer. ¹⁵ You killed the author of life, but God raised him from the dead. And we are witnesses of this fact!

¹⁶ "Through faith in the name of Jesus, this man was healed—and you know how crippled he was before. Faith in Jesus' name has healed him before your very eyes.

3. Discussion: (a) How did Peter address the crowd and

what was the first thing he stressed as he spoke? (b) What accusation did Peter make against his fellow Jews? (c) How did Peter explain the healing of the crippled man?

4. Peter continues to Preach at the Temple

Acts 3:17 "Friends, I realize that what you and your leaders did to Jesus was done in ignorance. ¹⁸ But God was fulfilling what all the prophets had foretold about the Messiah—that he must suffer these things. ¹⁹ Now repent of your sins and turn to God, so that your sins may be wiped away. ²⁰ Then times of refreshment will come from the presence of the Lord, and he will again send you Jesus, your appointed Messiah. ²¹ For he must remain in heaven until the time for the final restoration of all things, as God promised long ago through his holy prophets. ²² Moses said, 'The LORD your God will raise up for you a Prophet like me from among your own people. Listen carefully to everything he tells you.' [Deut. 18:15] ²³ Then Moses said, 'Anyone who will not listen to that Prophet will be completely cut off from God's people.' [Deut. 18:19; Lev. 23:29]

²⁴ "Starting with Samuel, every prophet spoke about what is happening today. ²⁵ You are the children of those prophets, and you are included in the covenant God promised to your ancestors. For God said to Abraham, 'Through your descendants all the families on earth will be blessed.' [Gen. 12:3; 22:18] ²⁶ When God raised up his servant, Jesus, he sent him first to you people of Israel, to bless you by turning each of you back from your sinful ways."

5. Discussion: (a) When a person commits a sin without realizing that what one is doing is wrong, does that person ever need to repent of the sin? [See verses 17-19] (b) What blessings did Peter promise for those who repent? (c) How long will Jesus remain in heaven? (d) What did Peter say was the important message Moses and the prophets gave, that was relevant to Peter's listeners? [See verses 22-26]

6. Peter and John are called before the Council.

Acts 4:1 While Peter and John were speaking to the people, they were confronted by the priests, the captain of the Temple guard, and some of the Sadducees. ² These leaders were very disturbed that Peter and John were teaching the people that through Jesus there is a resurrection of the dead. ³ They arrested them and, since it was already evening, put them in jail until morning. ⁴ But many of the people who heard their message believed it, so the number of believers now totaled about 5,000 men, not counting women and children.

⁵ The next day the council of all the rulers and elders and teachers of religious law met in Jerusalem. ⁶ Annas the high priest was there, along with Caiaphas, John, Alexander, and other relatives of the high priest. ⁷ They brought in the two disciples and demanded, "By what power, or in whose name, have you done this?"

⁸ Then Peter, filled with the Holy Spirit, said to them, "Rulers and elders of our people, ⁹ are we being questioned today because we've done a good deed for a crippled man? Do you want to know how he was healed? ¹⁰ Let me clearly state to all of you and to all the people of Israel that he was healed by the powerful name of Jesus Christ the Nazarene, ^[from Nazareth] the man you crucified but whom God raised from the dead. ¹¹ For Jesus is the one referred to in the Scriptures, where it says,

'The stone that you builders rejected has now become the cornerstone.' [Psalm 118:22]

¹² There is salvation in no one else! God has given no other name under heaven by which we must be saved."

7. Background: The Sadducees and priests were Jews who often tended to question the spiritual realities behind the rituals which they faithfully performed.