**Study Series: More Than a Carpenter**

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**Lesson Title: “What Good is a Dead Messiah?” (pp. 58-67)**

April 4, 2021 Session 05

The main point of this lesson is: A corrected understanding of the Messiah transformed the attitudes of early Jewish believers.

Focus on this goal: To help adults give evidence in their lives of a personal encounter with the resurrected Messiah/Christ.

Key Bible Passage: Acts 9:1-19

To the Leader: This study devotes three weeks (Sessions 4-6) to a rational, logical, apologetic look at the resurrection. You will notice both Sessions 4 and 5 stress the difference encountering the resurrected Jesus made in His followers’ lives, but this session looks at it more from how those encounters corrected a misunderstanding of the Messiah.

During the Session

**Step 1. Create Interest / Jumpstart Discussion**

**Encourage the group** to identify a list of life’s disappointments.

**Review** ways people might deal with these disappointments.

**Assert** we all experience disappointments, some devastating and some minor, throughout our lifetimes.

**Ask:** As a whole, how well do you think we as a people deal with disappointment? Why is that?

**Declare** there is no way we can fully identify with the devastation and disappointment the first believers experienced when Jesus died on the cross, not just because their Friend died, but because their hopes for a Messiah died with Him. A corrected understanding of the Messiah transformed the attitudes and lives of early Jewish believers. They gained that corrected understanding when they had a personal encounter with the resurrected Jesus.

**Step 2. Day One – An Old Attitude**

**Discuss** Day One, activity 1 (pp. 58-59).

**State** these disciples were disappointed because Jesus had not met their expectations of the Messiah.

**Guide** **the group** to draw from Day One (pp. 58-60) what the Jews expected from the Messiah.

**Request two volunteers read** Luke 24:25-27 and 44-48.

**Analyze** how Jesus responded to the disciples’ disappointed expectations.

**Declare:** There may be times we are disappointed because Jesus doesn’t meet our expectations. But an encounter with the risen Jesus can transform us as it did the first believers if we will allow Him to open our minds to understand the Scriptures and really know who He is.

**Step 3. Day Two – A New Attitude**

**Invite a volunteer to read** Mark 10:32-39.

**Ask learners** to state their opinions of James and John.

**Ask:** What kind of Messiah were they expecting Jesus to be?

**Request** learners recallfrom Session 4 the fate of James (Acts 12:1-2) and John (Rev. 1:9).

**Ask:** Why would they suffer for a Messiah who didn’t meet any of their expectations?

**Read** 1 Corinthians 15:5.

**Discuss** Day Two, activity 1 (p. 61).

**Ask a volunteer to read** the Day Two paragraph (p. 61) beginning with “These men learned the truth ….”

**Invite responses** to Day Two, activity 2 (p. 61).

**Step 4. Day Three – Saul the Persecutor**

**Declare** perhaps no one was more opposed to the notion of Jesus as the Messiah than Saul of Tarsus.

**Invite responses** to Day Three, activity 1 (p. 62).

**Invite a volunteer to read** more about what Paul said about himself from Acts 22:3-5,20.

**Discuss** Day Three, activity 2 (p. 63).

**Use the remarks** in Day Three (pp. 62-63) to further **elaborate** on why Paul was so vehemently anti-Christian.

**Step 5. Day Four – Paul the Apostle, Part 1**

**Discuss** Day Four, activity 1 (p. 63).

**Request** adults consult Acts 26:12-18 and identify additional details Paul added to Luke’s account in Acts 9.

**Explain** the phrase “hard for you to kick against the goads” (26:14) “probably meant that Paul should not resist the divine force that was moving him in a new direction.”[[1]](#footnote-1)

**Read** the first Day Four paragraph and the margin/pull quote (pp. 63-64).

**Explore** how Paul’s character and relationships with followers of Jesus was transformed by his encounter with the resurrected Jesus.

To examine how Paul’s message was transformed, **ask a volunteer to read** Acts 9:20-22.

**Use** the final Day Four paragraph (p. 65), along with learners’ knowledge of Paul’s teachings, **to explore** what Paul now understood and taught about Jesus the Messiah.

**Step 6. Day Five – Paul the Apostle, Part 2**

**Encourage adults** to describe how encountering Jesus transformed Paul’s mission (first Day Five paragraph, pp. 65-66).

**Discuss** Day Five, activity 1 (p. 66).

**Declare** Paul, a once well-respected Jewish scholar, risked his life and his reputation as an intelligent, reasonable person for this transformed message and mission.

**Invite a volunteer to read** Acts 26:24-29.

**Explain** Paul was modeling the perfect defense, or apologetic, showing Christianity is not unreasonable, illogical, or anti-intellectual. We do not have to jettison our minds to trust in Christ as the promised Messiah and Lord.

**Relate** the author’s encounter with a college student (p. 66).

**Request** learners follow along in their Bibles as **you read aloud** 1 Corinthians 15:1-10.

**Declare** everyone Paul mentioned was radically transformed.

**Ask:** What is the most logical explanation for their radical transformation?

**Request** learners privately consider Day Five, activity 2 (p. 67).

**Step 7. Practical Application - Live Out the Lesson**

**Lead a discussion** with:

1. Do you think part of the disappointments we deal with are related to our misunderstanding of what Jesus came to do and what it looks like to follow Him? Explain.
2. What would it take to transform our disappointments into complete dedication to Jesus as Lord?
3. How is it possible for us today to have a personal encounter with the resurrected Jesus?

**Read aloud** 1 Corinthians 15:10.

**Close in prayer.**

1. CSB Study Bible, p. 1767 [↑](#footnote-ref-1)