

STUDY THREE

Liars Who Know They are Lying Don't Become Martyrs



1. The disciples of Jesus began to talk about him and his resurrection in Jerusalem right after it happened. Because of that, they began to be threatened by the spiritual leaders of the city. Read portions of the events in Acts 3-4.
 - A. After healing a lame man, Peter spoke Acts 3:11-16. What did he claim about Jesus?
 - B. Peter was arrested, so before the religious leaders he said Acts 4:1-10. What did he claim about Jesus?
 - C. Peter was threatened and told to stop talking about Jesus. To this he responded in Acts 4:18-20. How did Peter respond to the threats? Why?
2. Read Acts 7:51-60.
 - A. Stephen was the first martyr and had the role of “deacon.” Read the brief description of “stoning” from *The Linchpin*, from the bottom paragraph of page 15 through the end of that paragraph on page 16. What is your reaction to hearing this description?
 - B. Why would someone go through this if they could avoid it?
3. Read Acts 12:1-2. How did James die? Why?

4. In the paragraphs on the bottom of page 16 and top of page 17 in *The Linchpin*, what is noted about the difference between modern day martyrs and the first Christian martyrs?

5. From chapter two in *The Linchpin*, list the disciples that were martyred that are mentioned and how they died.

6. Read Jesus' words to Peter in John 21:18-19.
 - A. How did Jesus describe the way in which Peter was to die?

 - B. How does that compare with the list above?

 - C. Peter wrote his letters right before Emperor Nero burned Rome, blamed the Christians, and began a brutal assault on them. Read 1 Peter 1:3-6. Where does Peter find hope even when they were undergoing horrible persecution?

Discussion:

- What reasons can you think of that would cause eye-witness martyrs to willingly go through the suffering they did?
- Jesus drew a distinction between eye-witness believers and believers who were not eye-witnesses. Read John 20:29. What do you see as differences and similarities between eye-witness martyrs (like the disciples) and those who are martyred for their faith in Jesus today?

Prayer Suggestions:

- For strength, comfort, and relief for those being persecuted today for their faith in Jesus.
- That God would provide you strength to be bold for Christ even in the face of persecution.