

## Acts 8

- I. 8:1-3 Persecution Connected with Saul
- II. 8:4-25 Philip's Ministry in Samaria
- III. 8:26-40 Philip and the Ethiopian Eunuch

- Read **7:57 – 8:3** for full context.
- Acts 1:8 Outline for the Book: Jerusalem, *all Judea and Samaria*

- I. 8:1-3 Persecution Connected with Saul
  - A. Paul was a young man (7:58), but his role in the persecution indicates he was still important. See also 9:1-2 which are followed by his conversion.
- II. 8:4-25 Philip's Ministry in Samaria
  - A. 8:4 Persecution led not to extinction but expansion. Those who were scattered were not the apostles (See 8:1) and they went to Judea and Samaria
  - B. 8:5 Philip was one of the seven deacons of Acts 6:5. He was faithful in small things and God gave him a bigger ministry.
    - i. Also recall John 4 for Jesus' earlier ministry here – the woman at the well.
  - C. 8:8 *great joy* Jesus brings joy. Don't let the devil rip you off.

*1 Peter 1:6-9 (NKJV) In this **you greatly rejoice**, though now for a little while, if need be, you have been grieved by various trials, that the genuineness of your faith, being much more precious than gold that perishes, though it is tested by fire, may be found to praise, honor, and glory at the revelation of Jesus Christ, whom having not seen you love. Though now you do not see Him, yet believing, **you rejoice with joy inexpressible and full of glory**, receiving the end of your faith—the salvation of your souls.*

- D. 8:14 *they sent Peter and John* John's last recorded ministry trip into this region went like this:

*Luke 9:51-56 (NKJV) Now it came to pass, when the time had come for Him to be received up, that He steadfastly set His face to go to Jerusalem, and sent messengers before His face. And as they went, they entered a village of the Samaritans, to prepare for Him. But they did not receive Him, because His face was set for the journey to Jerusalem. **And when His disciples James and John saw this, they said, “Lord, do You want us to command fire to come down from heaven and consume them, just as Elijah did?”***

*But He turned and rebuked them, and said, “You do not know what manner of spirit you are of. For the Son of Man did not come to destroy men’s lives but to save them.” And they went to another village.*

The involvement of Peter and John, and Peter again in Acts 10, brought unity to the church – not Jewish, Samaritan and Gentile churches.

- E. 8:15-17 Notice the preposition *upon*. The Holy Spirit's relationship with us is described by three prepositions: *with*, *in* and *upon*.
- i. The Holy Spirit may have been in them, meaning they may have been born again with the Holy Spirit indwelling them. They simply hadn't received any kind of "upon" experience before that time.
  - ii. How did they know the Holy Spirit had come "upon" them? The simple answer is that there was probably some kind of outward manifestation – tongues, prophecy, etc. It's important, however, that no such manifestation is recorded. We can't pigeonhole God into always working a certain way.
- F. 8:20-23 Simon's conversion was not sincere. It reminds of Christ's opinion of some of those who believed.

*John 2:23-25 (NKJV) Now when He was in Jerusalem at the Passover, during the feast, many believed in His name when they saw the signs which He did. But Jesus did not commit Himself to them, because He knew all men, and had no need that anyone should testify of man, for He knew what was in man.*

- G. Notice that back in 8:13 Simon was even baptized. The gift Peter is exercising here is called "discerning of spirits" in 1 Corinthians 12:10.
- H. Thanks to this man, the name *Simony* was given to the practice of buying or selling spiritual offices for money. The broader application goes much farther than that – to any time we think we can purchase God's gifts. Sadly the church has often fallen into this trap. Popes in the middle ages, some televangelists today.

### III. 8:26-40 Philip and the Ethiopian Eunuch

- A. 8:26 Philip is told to leave the place where so much is happening to go down to a lonely desert road. The logic of this is not clear until later. Good thing Philip was obedient.
- Obedience is not always logical at first, but God has our best in mind.
- B. 8:27 *a man of Ethiopia* Israel has had a long relationship with those parts of Africa beyond Egypt, dating back to the visit of the Queen of Sheba in the days of Solomon.

*Candace* *Kandákē* In Ethiopia they considered the king a holy figure who never got mixed up in day to day ruling of the country. His mother ruled the country and took the name *Candace* or *Kandákē* as a title, like Pharaoh king of Egypt.

*Eunuch* This term was originally applied to emasculated men who were in charge of the harem. By this time, the word was also used in the case of many high officials, whether or not they were physically eunuchs.

He came *to Jerusalem to worship* either a Jew or a proselyte

- C. 8:28 *reading Isaiah* The man was reading the Scriptures. A good place to start.
  - D. 8:31 *How can I unless someone guides me?* The importance of someone to properly explain the Scriptures to those who the Spirit has prepared.
  - E. 8:32-33 This is Isaiah 53:7-8, a messianic prophecy.
  - F. 8:35 They started in Isaiah, but ended with Jesus. Evangelism points to Jesus.
  - G. 8:36 No doubt Philip mentioned something about baptism, but remember they were in a desert area. Now the eunuch sees water and wants to be baptized. It's the way people in the NT publicly declared their faith and publicly identified with Jesus.
  - H. 8:38-39 *They went down into the water and they came up out of the water.* That's why we baptize people the way we do, it's what we see in Scripture.
- IV. 8:39 *the Spirit ... caught Philip away* The word used is the same that Paul uses when he speaks of being "caught up" to the third heaven (2 Corinthians 12:2) or believers being raptured; (1 Thessalonians 4:17).

#### Ingredients for Effective Evangelism

**An Obedient Servant** Philip arose and went to the desert (v.27), he ran to the man's chariot (v.30), he preached Jesus to him (v.35), he baptized him (v.38).

**A Prepared Heart** What was the difference between the eunuch and Simon in Samaria? It was a heart issue. They both heard the same gospel from the same evangelist. Think of the soils.

**The Spirit of God** The Holy Spirit has His fingerprints all over this transaction. He inspired the Scriptures, led the eunuch to Jerusalem to worship, pointed him to Isaiah, and connected Philip with him on the desert road. The Holy Spirit empowers us to be witnesses (Acts 1:8).

**The Word of God** God intends the Scriptures to be preached and taught by the church. When we communicate what the Bible says, the Holy Spirit, who inspired the Scriptures can also speak.

*John 5:24 (NKJV) "Most assuredly, I say to you, he who hears My word and believes in Him who sent Me has everlasting life, and shall not come into judgment, but has passed from death into life."*

*2 Thessalonians 3:1 (NKJV) Finally, brethren, pray for us, that the word of the Lord may run swiftly and be glorified, just as it is with you,*

*2 Timothy 4:1-2 (NKJV) I charge you therefore before God and the Lord Jesus Christ, who will judge the living and the dead at His appearing and His kingdom: 2Preach the word! Be ready in season and out of season. Convince, rebuke, exhort, with all longsuffering and teaching.*

So what happened to Philip after this?

*Acts 21:7-8 (NKJV) 7And when we had finished our voyage from Tyre, we came to Ptolemais, greeted the brethren, and stayed with them one day. 8On the next day we who were Paul's companions departed and came to Caesarea, and entered the house of Philip the evangelist, who was one of the seven, and stayed with him.*