

Acts of the Apostles – 8

I. The Inspired History

- A. Great persecution at Jerusalem (1-4).
 - 1. The Jews resort to persecution (1-3).
 - 2. All but the apostles flee the city (4).
- B. Philip evangelizes Samaria (5-25).
 - 1. Great initial success (5-8).
 - 2. Simon the Sorcerer (9-13).
 - 3. Apostles bring the Holy Ghost (14-17).
 - 4. Simon the Sorcerer's sin (18-24).
 - 5. Samaria is evangelized (25).
- C. Philip evangelizes the Eunuch (26-40).
 - 1. Philip meets the eunuch (26-34).
 - 2. Philip converts the eunuch (35-38).
 - 3. Philip is a gifted evangelist (39-40).

II. The Sense and Meaning

- A. The Jews now resort to persecution to rid themselves of this menace of the Nazarenes (1-3).
 - 1. Presuming it would die with the burial of Jesus, they are surprised by the great growth.
 - 2. Saul, a young man, is agreeable to the death of Stephen as indicating his blind heart.
 - 3. Following the death of Stephen, a great persecution of Christians is made at Jerusalem.
- B. All the believers other than the apostles are scattered throughout Judea and Samaria (4).
 - 1. The apostles did not fear the persecution, and they waited further orders of Jesus (1:8).
 - 2. Those scattered were mainly teachers like the seventy or seven and proselytes (Luk 10:1).
 - 3. They did not flee in natural fear but rather in obedience to Christ's command (Mat 10:23).
 - 4. Jerusalem always had a church; women didn't preach; teachers are identified as Philip.
- C. Philip goes to the city of Samaria and is blessed with great success preaching Christ (5-8).
 - 1. Philip was one of the seven deacons chosen full of the Holy Ghost and wisdom (6:5).
 - 2. But he was also gifted as an evangelist, as we may plainly read later in Acts (21:8); so don't get excited about finding a deacon who baptized. We still leave it to bishops.
 - 3. He preached Christ to them – Jesus is the Messiah; Jesus is the Saviour; Jesus is Lord.
 - 4. By the Holy Ghost he was able to capture their attention with his miracles and signs.
 - 5. The deliverance physical and spiritual that he brought created great joy in the city.
- D. He encounters a man we call Simon the Sorcerer for his use of magic and witchcraft (9-13).
 - 1. **Sorcery.** The use of magic or enchantment; the practice of magic arts; witchcraft.
 - 2. **Bewitch.** To affect (generally injuriously) by witchcraft or magic.
 - 3. Remember the enchantments of Pharaoh's magicians (Exodus 7:11,22; 8:7,18-19).
 - 4. For many years he had controlled the people of Samaria with his bewitching sorceries.
 - a. These people under Satan's delusion thought Simon the great power of God.
 - b. But believing Philip preaching Jesus Christ and His kingdom, they were saved.
 - c. It gloriously fulfilled Christ's prophecies (Mat 16:18; Lu 11:20; Ac 26:17-18).
 - 5. Then Simon himself believed and was baptized in some sort of a false conversion.
 - a. There have been many "believers" who truly did not believe with commitment.
 - b. Faith without works is dead (Jas 2:20) and many do not continue (I John 2:19).
 - c. Simon attached himself to Philip to watch his extraordinary power of miracles.

- E. Peter and John bring apostolic authority from Jerusalem to dispense the Holy Ghost (14-17).
 - 1. During this transitional phase of the early church, the apostles were kept preeminent.
 - 2. They were able to dispense the Holy Ghost to these believers by their hands.
- F. Simon the Sorcerer sins yet further by trying to buy apostolic gifts for money (18-24).
 - 1. Simon shows his profanity by soliciting the apostles for the gift of the Holy Ghost.
 - 2. No wonder “simony” was created for the Popes of Rome in selling spiritual things.
 - 3. He showed none of the great fear we read earlier about the apostolic office (5:13).
 - 4. Peter, with discernment of spirits, condemns his soul as perishing and bound in sin.
 - 5. Natural men without faith can tremble before preaching of judgment (24:25; Mk 6:20).
 - 6. Rather than repenting, Simon merely asks Peter and John to pray against judgment.
 - 7. Church history records this man as the great enemy of the apostles and churches, so that we might conclude his inclusion here as a helpful encouragement to Theophilus.
- G. Peter and John completely evangelize the Samaritans before returning to Jerusalem (25).
- H. Philip meets a great eunuch of Ethiopia prepared by the Holy Ghost for conversion (26-34).
 - 1. The Lord directs Philip to the desert, which direction we need for godly conversions.
 - 2. This man was an important government official, but he was a black, castrated Gentile.
 - 3. The eunuch had been worshipping in Jerusalem as a proselyte of the Jews’ religion.
 - 4. While in Jerusalem, he secured a copy of part of the Old Testament and read Isaiah.
 - 5. With Divine prompting, Philip joins himself to this man’s chariot prepared by God.
 - 6. The Lord had taken care of details, he was reading Isaiah 53 without understanding.
 - 7. With the heart of a righteous man, the eunuch desires Philip to teach him the Scripture.
 - 8. The Lord set Philip up perfectly. The eunuch wanted to know the Subject of Isaiah 53.
- I. Philip preaches Christ Jesus to the noble eunuch and baptizes him in the desert (35-38).
 - 1. What a passage to preach Christ Jesus! The Lord had prepared the eunuch perfectly.
 - 2. After hearing about baptism, the eunuch spies some water and seeks his own baptism.
 - 3. When God is in the matter, you will not need to use natural means to push conversion.
 - 4. The eunuch asks a perfect question about baptism – what is the necessary condition?
 - a. Baby-sprinkling heretics wish there was no answer to this important question.
 - b. So they deleted Acts 8:37 from most every version of the Bible but the KJV.
 - c. Baptists hold to “believers’ baptism” because of this and other similar verses.
 - d. Baptism is the answer of a good conscience (I Pet 3:21), which rejects babies.
 - 5. The eunuch also chose water deep enough to baptize Scripturally – by immersion.
 - a. As John baptized in Aenon for the much water there (John 3:23), so Philip.
 - b. Both Philip and the eunuch had to go down into the water for a godly baptism.
 - c. Both Philip and the eunuch had to come up out of the water after the baptism.
 - 6. In this important passage, we condemn infant baptism and any mode but immersion.
- J. Philip is taken by the Holy Spirit after baptizing the eunuch to the city of Azotus (39-40).
 - 1. With great assistance from the Holy Spirit, Philip is transported to another service.
 - 2. The eunuch, having obeyed Jesus Christ, goes on his way to Ethiopia rejoicing.

III. The Application

IV. The Difficulties