Acts of the Apostles – 8

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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*).

The Sense and Meaning

A. The Jews now resort to persecution to rid themselves of this menace of the Nazarenes (Acts 8:1-3).
   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 (Acts 8:4).
   1. The apostles did not fear the persecution, and they waited further orders of Jesus (Acts 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 (Acts 8:5-8).
   1. Philip was one of the seven deacons chosen full of the Holy Ghost and wisdom (Acts 6:5).
   2. But he was also gifted as an evangelist, as we may plainly read later in Acts (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 (Acts 8:9-13).
    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 (Acts 8:14-17).
    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 (Acts 8:18-24).
    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 (Acts 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 (Acts 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 (Acts 8:25).

H. Philip meets a great eunuch of Ethiopia prepared by the Holy Ghost for conversion (Acts 8:26-34).
    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 (Acts 8:35-38).
    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 (Acts 8:39-40).
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.