

7/8/07

Acts 8

The first witness of the apostles according to Jesus was to be Jerusalem, the second place of their witness was to be all of Judea and Samaria. Acts 1:8

1. The fulfillment of the first natural division was Jerusalem. Acts 1-7
2. The fulfillment of the second natural division was to be Judea and Samaria. Acts 8-12

This second division was fulfilled by the persecution that came to the church at Jerusalem and all were scattered throughout the regions of Judea and Samaria.

1. The church has never been hurt by persecution, it has only purified it.
2. The comfort and luxury that the church embraced is what has hurt the church throughout the centuries!

8:1-25 The witness of the gospel to Samaria.

8:1-3 *The persecution of the Church by Saul.*

8:1 The leading authority against the church.

- 1) Saul was consenting to Stephen's death. vs. 1a
 - a) This verse really finishes up chapter seven and would be a better division.
 - b) Saul "saulos" means ask or desired, a Pharisee of Pharisees, the number one enemy of the church, who later would become Paul the apostle. who now took the lead in persecution, rather than the Sadducees.
 - c) He was consenting "suneudokon", a continuous action expressing his pleasure in the death. Acts 7:58; 22:20
 - d) The word for death "anaisesis", is not the usual word "thanatos". but a destroying, slaying, murder, found only one time in the New Testament.
- 2) The stoning of Stephen by the approval of Saul marked the beginning of persecution against the church in Jerusalem. vs. 1b
 - a) The phrase "at that time", marks the definite time frame when persecution began against the Church.
 - b) This is the first time the word persecution appears in Acts.
 - c) This is the second time the word Church "eklessia" appears in Acts. Acts 5:11, 22
- 3) The consequences was that the church was scattered to the regions of Judea and Samaria. vs. 1c

- a) Some say it was primarily against the Hellenist but the text does not say that!
- b) The only exception was the apostles, without doubt to maintain a headquarter or center for the church.

8:2 The burial of Stephen.

- 1) The phrase devout man “eulabeis”, means to reverence God.
 - * The phrase is used of Jews. Acts 2:5;
22:12; Lk. 2:25
- 2) They made great Lamentation over him.
 - a) The word for lamentation “kopetos”, means beating of the head or breast, as a sign of mourning.
 - b) This men seem to be God fearing Jews that did not agree with the stoning of Stephen.

8:3 The fervent persecution against the church.

- 1) Saul wanted to destroy the church. vs. 3a-b
 - a) The word havoc “elumaineto”, means to cause ruin, dishonor and treat shamefully.
 - b) The word is used of a wild bear tearing up a vineyard in the LXX Ps. 80:13
- 2) The methods are describes. vs. 3c-e

- a) Entering house to house.
- b) Dragging off men and women.
- c) Committing them to prison.
 - * Acts 9:21-22; 22:4-5; 26:10-11;
1Cor. 15:9; Gal. 1:13, 23; Phil. 3:6

8:4-8 *The preaching at Samaria.*

- 1) The believers were a witnesses to Jesus and of Jesus. vs. 4
 - * The word preaching “euangelizo” means glad tidings. vs. 4
- 2) The man Philip is the focus of the work in Samaria. vs. 5
 - a) He also went down to Samaria, north of Judea and south of Galilee. Acts 8:5, 6, 12, 13
 - b) The city that was snubbed at by the Jews, being not full blooded Jews, as a result of the Assyrian conquering the Northern Kingdom in 722 B. C.
 - c) The people were cross-populated causing mixed marriages.
 - d) Nehemiah refused to let them participate in the building of the Temple.
 - e) Herod rebuilt the city called it “Sebaste”, the Latin equivalent “Augustus”.
- 3) Philip preached Christ to them.

- a) Literally was proclaiming Christ, the Messiah to them, the imperfect, a continuous action.
* They believed the Pentateuch. Duet. 18:18
- b) The word preached “karusso”, was an official herald hired by the state to proclaim an announcement, to whom the message and authority was given.
- c) Philip is the only one called an evangelist later, but certainly not the only one evangelizing. Acts 21:8
- 4) The response of the Samaritans to the gospel.
 - a) The multitudes with one accord heeded the things spoken by Philip, the gospel. vs. 6a
 - 1)) They were looking for the Messiah. Jn. 4:25
 - 2)) They acknowledge Jesus as the Savior of the world. Jn. 4:42
 - b) They were hearing and seeing the miracle he did. vs. 6b
 - 1)) Many say that only the apostles performed signs and miracles but Philip wasn't one of the apostle's.
 - 2)) God is the only still working through men today by the miraculous.
 - c) The various works are mentions. vs. 7

- d) The result was great joy in the city. vs. 8
- 8:9-13** *The gospel and Simon the sorcerer.*
- 8:9-11** Simon's past reputation.
 - 1) He practiced sorcery or magic. vs. 9a-b
 - 2) He astonished the people of Samaria. vs. 9b
* Astonished “existemi” means to throw out of position or mind by terror.
 - 3) He claimed to be someone great. vs. 9c
 - 4) He was declared to be by all, from least to great, that he had great power with God. vs. 10
 - 5) He was heeded by all, for he had astonished them with his sorcerers for a long time. vs. 11
- 8:12-13** The particulars the Samaritans believed in view of the preaching
 - 1) The kingdom of God. vs. 12a
 - 2) The name of Jesus Christ. vs. 12a
 - 3) The men and women were water baptized. vs. 12b
 - 4) Simon believed and is the same word as verse twelve. vs. 13a
 - 5) Simon was baptized and continued with Philip. vs. 13b
 - 6) Simon was amazed at the miracles and sign. vs. 13c

- a) Origin said his believers were called the Simoniasa, who believed he was the great power of God.
- b) Tertullian said he taught he was the supreme Father.
- c) Jerome said he taught he was the word of God, the Parclate, the Almighty, the fullness of God.
 - * Antichrist will come with lying wonders. 2Thess. 2:19

8:14-25 *Simon's sin revealed his heart.*

8:14 The response of the church at Jerusalem. Acts 3

- 1) The Church at Jerusalem sent Peter and John.
- 2) This is the last time John is mentioned in Acts.

8:15-17 The perception of the apostles.

- 1) They came to pray for them to receive the Holy Spirit not preach. vs. 15
 - * They wanted to bring down fire on them. Lk. 9:54
- 2) The Holy Spirit had not fallen upon none of them. vs. 16
- 3) They had been baptized in Jesus name.
- 4) They laid their hands on them to receive the Holy Spirit. vs. 17

* For empowerment subsequent to salvation! Acts 2:2; 10:44-46; 19:19

8:18-19 The response of Simon.

- 1) Simon saw some visible evidence not recorded. vs. 18
- 2) Simon offered money for the gift. vs. 18
 - * Simony is the buying and selling of ecclesiastical office and authority.
- 3) Simon's words are recorded. vs. 19

8:20-21 The sin of Simon was two-fold.

- 1) He believed the Holy Spirit could be purchased with money. vs. 20
 - * Your money perish, literally, be with you for destruction.
- 2) His heart was not right in the sight of God. vs. 21

8:22-23 The response of Philip.

- 1) He was to repent of his wickedness. vs. 22a
- 2) He was to pray to God that the thoughts of his heart might be forgiven. vs. 22b
 - * This expression is found only this one time in the New Testament, referring to thinking or contriving.
- 3) He was poisoned by bitterness and bound by iniquity. vs. 23
 - a) His was not right with God!

b) Word of knowledge or discerning of spirits.

8:24 Simon asked for prayer from Philip.

- 1) Simon's sorrow was over the consequences and he asked for prayer.
- 2) Whether he ever repented is not known.

8:25 They preach to the villages in Samaria as they returned to Jerusalem.

8:26-40 The witness of the gospel to the Ethiopian.

8:26-28 *Philip was directed by God to the Ethiopian eunuch.*

- 1) An angel was used by God to speak to Philip. Acts 5:19; 10:19; Heb. 1:14; 4:14.
- 2) Gaza is about 60 miles S.W. of Jerusalem, close to the Egyptian border., Samaria to Gaza was about 95 miles.
- 3) Gaza was one of the five cities of the Philistines in the Old Testament.

8:27 Philip obeyed promptly.

- 1) The eunuch was the superintendent of the bed-chamber or harem .
- 2) Candace is a title like Pharaoh, Ethiopia was the name of a kingdom on the Nile, between modern Aswan and Khartoum and Sudan.

3) He came to worship as a Gentile proselyte. Deut. 23:1; Is. 56:3-8

8:28 The Ethiopian was reading the scriptures.

- 1) He was returning to Ethiopia.
- 2) He was sitting reading aloud from Isaiah.

8:29-35 *Philip was led by the Spirit of God to the Ethiopian.*

- 1) This personal directed service that the Holy Spirit desires to do in and through all of us. vs. 29
- 2) Philip asked him, if he understood what he read? vs. 30
- 3) The Ethiopian confessed his ignorance and need of help for someone to guide him. vs. 31
 - * The word guides "hodegeo" is the same word Jesus used for the Holy Spirit. Jn.16:13

8:32-33 The passage of Scripture.

- 1) He was reading from Isaiah, Is. 53:7-8
 - * From the LXX the Suffering Servant Jesus.
- 2) The Jews identify Jeremiah in fulfillment of this text.
- 3) The Jews identify the Nation of Israel, spiritually, in fulfillment of the text also.

8:34-35 The Ethiopian asked for the interpretation of the text.

- 1) The Ethiopian inquired, if Isaiah spoke of himself or another. vs. 34
- 2) Philip proclaimed it was speaking about Jesus. Lk.24:27

8:36-40 *Philip to offer salvation to the Ethiopian eunuch.*

8:36-38 Philip baptized the Ethiopian.

- 1) They came upon some water by surprise, implied by the word “see” “idou”, the same as in verse 27. vs. 36a-e
- 2) The Ethiopian ask if he could be baptized. vs. 36f
* Rom. 6:1-6; 1 Pet. 3:19-21
- 3) Philip responded, “If you believe with all your heart, you may.” vs. 37a-c
- 4) The Ethiopian declared he believed Jesus was the Christ, the Son of God. vs. 37d-e
* The RSV omit this and other translations but Irenaeus quotes it in his 3rd book against heresies.
- 5) The command was given to stop the chariot and Philip baptized him. vs. 38

8:39-40 Philip continued to be used of God.

- 1) They both came out of the water and Spirit of the Lord caught Philip away. vs. 39a-b

a) The phrase caught up “harpazo” means to snatch away violently and suddenly.

b) It is the same for the Rapture. 2Cor. 12:2; 1Thess.4:17

- 2) The Ethiopian never saw Philip again and left rejoicing. vs. 39c
- 3) Philip was translated to Azotus, the Old Testament Ashdod, one of the three Philistine cites, 20 miles North of Gaza, half way between Gaza Joppa. vs. 40a
* Josh. 11:22; 1Sam. 5:1
- 4) Philip evangelized all the cities form Azotus to Caesarea. vs. 40b-c
* He settled in Caesarea and was visited by Paul on his way back to Jerusalem. Acts 21:8