

## Acts 8 | "The Fire Spreads"

### I. THE THIRD PERSECUTION. (v. 1-4)

#### A. (v. 1)

##### 1. "And Saul was consenting unto his death..."

- a. Saul was a "young man" at this point (7:58) who will become one of the major instruments in God's program to get the gospel out to the world.
  - 1) **NOTE:** This Greek word for "young man" was used of anyone up to the age of forty, with some Greek writings speaks of a man between the ages of 24-40 years old.<sup>1</sup>
    - a) I guess my kids are right. Since I'm over 40 years old, I guess I'm not a *young man* anymore! I'm an old man now.
- b. "consenting unto his death"
  - 1) "consenting" - Gr. *syneudokōn* - "taking pleasure; enthusiastically agreeing; giving hearty approval"
    - a) Saul felt pleasure in his role, which he would later confess to being ashamed (22:20; 1 Cor. 15:9; Gal. 1:13; Phil. 3:6; 1 Tim. 1:13).
    - b) **NOTE:** Unless you were saved as a small child, you probably have some memories that you regret and may even feel ashamed of.
    - c) **KEY:** The lesson from Paul's life is that you can still be a useful instrument in the hands of God in spite of your shameful memories! You have been washed in the blood of Jesus Christ!
      - i. Cf. 2 Corinthians 5:17 - "Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; old things have passed away; behold, all things have become new." (NKJV)

<sup>1</sup> <https://biblehub.com/greek/3494.htm>

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- 2) **NOTE:** Some scholars suggest that this verse implies that Saul may have been a member of the Sanhedrin, but his "consenting" here refers to his feelings, not to an action of voting. However, another verse in Acts does imply that Saul may have been in the Sanhedrin because of his voting authority ([Acts 26:10](#)).
  - c. **NOTE:** Saul may have been one of those who lost the argument with Stephen, when Stephen preached in a synagogue comprised of his countrymen ([6:9-15](#)),<sup>2</sup> so he totally agreed with the execution and martyrdom of Stephen. However, Stephen's sermon and testimony ([7:60](#)) was pricking at Saul's heart ([9:5](#)) until his conversion.
    - 1) **KEY:** On the surface, we could think, How tragic! Stephen's life was cut short!" However, the fruit that came from his testimony was tremendous!
      - a) **Illust.** - Jim Elliot, Nate Saint, and others men, died as martyrs trying to reach the native tribes of Ecuador, yet it was their deaths that opened the door to the gospel and radically transformed those people!
2. **"...And at that time there was a great persecution against the church which was at Jerusalem;..."**
- a. "great" - Gr. *megas* - "mega"
  - b. This is the 3rd Persecution of the Church.
    - 1) Up until this point, the persecution has been directed at the Leadership of the Church:
      - a) Peter & John ([4:1-22](#))
      - b) The 12 Apostles ([5:17-40](#))
      - c) Stephen the Deacon ([6:9-7:60](#))
    - 2) Now, the persecution is against the entire Jerusalem Church!

<sup>2</sup> Arnold G. Fruchtenbaum. "Commentary Series: The Book of Acts." Apple Books. p. 317

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- a) Satan, and the kingdom of darkness, are bringing a full frontal assault to the Church!

### 3. "...and they were all scattered abroad throughout the regions of Judaea and Samaria, except the apostles."

- a. "scattered abroad" - Gr. *diesparēsan* - "sown; dispersed seed"
  - 1) The word Diaspora ("*Dispersion*") is related to this Greek word, and in Jewish literature, the term applies to Jews in general who live outside the Land. Here, it is used specifically of Jewish believers!
    - a) **NOTE:** The destruction of the Temple and the city of Jerusalem was coming in A.D. 70, and this scattering of Messianic Jews was one of God's ways of removing Jewish believers from the city before it's destruction!
  - 2) This term was used for the "*scattering of seed to be planted*", thus the believers in Jerusalem were *scattered* like grain and *planted* in other places.
    - a) Cf. **Acts 1:8** - Jesus told them that they would be witnesses all over the world, but they hadn't left Jerusalem yet.
      - i. It had been so exciting in Jerusalem with so many people coming to faith and just enjoying together such a loving community. They didn't want to leave!
    - b) **NOTE:** These believers were scattered as a result of the persecution, but God scattered the disciples to *plant* them in the places to which they had been scattered, for there they "*preached the word*" (**v. 4**).
      - i. **Q** = Is this true of you? Are you *planted* where God put you?...
        - a. Wherever you find yourself—whether *scattered* by work or family or education or some other means—have

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you considered yourself planted in that place?

- b. Have you put down roots and born fruit for Jesus Christ?
  - i. That is what these early Christians did. It is because of this activity that even the bad things that had happened to them served to advance the cause of Christ.<sup>3</sup>

3) **NOTE:** It's as if the *fire* of the Holy Spirit ([Luke 3:16](#); [Acts 2:3](#)) was burning brightly there in Jerusalem, but now the Lord is scattering all these *little flames of fire* around the world to consume the harvest for Himself!

b. "except the Apostles"

1) **Q** = Why would the Apostles stay in Jerusalem?...

- a) Some scholars suggest that maybe they were wrong to stay.
  - i. The word "*apostle*" means "*sent one*", thus they were not fulfilling the meaning of the word by staying put.
    - a. "When apostles stay at a geographical centre, they may do more harm than good." (G. Campbell Morgan)
  - ii. Also, Jesus told these very disciples to start in Jerusalem, but to go out to the whole world ([Luke 24:47](#); [Acts 1:8](#)).
- b) However, they would eventually leave Jerusalem in fulfillment of what Jesus told them, it just wasn't time yet.
  - i. Peter and John would go to Samaria (8:14).

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<sup>3</sup> <https://www.preceptaustin.org/acts-8-commentary#8:1>

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- ii. Peter would go to Antioch (Gal.
- c) I believe that they had good reasons to stay at this time:
  - i. To pastor the flock that was still there.
    - a. The Apostles may have stayed to shepherd the drastically reduced flock.
    - b. The Apostles had no fear of persecution (4:8; 5:30) and had favor in the community with the common people (2:47; 4:16, 21; 5:12-16, 26).
  - ii. To continue preaching in Jerusalem.
    - a. They may have realized that the gospel would now go out beyond Jerusalem, but they needed to stay to preach in Jerusalem at this time (Luke 24:47; Acts 1:8).
  - iii. To bring stability to the believers that were *scattered abroad*.
    - a. Since there was no longer a central, unified body of believers in Jerusalem, they probably stayed so that the Jerusalem church could still be the main headquarters and home base for the Church (Acts 15), especially in their work among the Jews.
  - iv. This created the need for the Writings of the New Testament.
    - a. **KEY:** Since there was no longer a central, unified body of believers under the direct leadership of the Apostles, this *scattering* of the Jewish believers away from the Apostles created the need of the Apostles' doctrine to be written down so the disciples could "*continue steadfastly in the Apostles' teaching*" (2:42), thus

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THIS CAUSED THE FIRST WRITINGS OF THE NEW TESTAMENT.

- i. **Matthew** wrote his Gospel to show that Jesus of Nazareth all fulfilled the Messianic prophecies that predicted the coming of the Messiah.
- ii. Also, some of the Epistles were written to those Jewish believers outside the Land, which we call "Messianic Jewish Epistles" (**James, 1 & 2 Peter, Jude**).

### B. (v. 2)

#### 1. "And devout men carried Stephen to his burial, and made great lamentation over him."

a. "devout" - Gr. "God-fearing; pious"

- 1) This Greek word is only used 4x in the N.T., and only by Luke.
  - a) **Luke 2:25** - Simeon
  - b) **Acts 2:5** - Jews in Jerusalem
  - c) **Acts 8:2** - those here who buried Stephen
  - d) **Acts 22:12** - Ananias, a believer
- 2) The grammar indicates that these *men* are DISTINCT from the church (v. 1b) and Saul who agreed the Sanhedrin (v. 1a, 3).
- 3) Thus, they are probably just "God-fearing" Jews that were not Christians that did not agree with the Sanhedrin's verdict.

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- b. "burial" - Gr. "whole funeral arrangements"<sup>4</sup>
- 1) Cf. **John 16:2** - Jesus said, "They shall put you out of the synagogues: yea, the time cometh, that whosoever killeth you will think that he doeth God service."
  - 2) Cf. **Luke 21:12-19** - He also told His disciples, ""But before all these, they shall lay their hands on you, and persecute you, delivering you up to the synagogues, and into prisons, being brought before kings and rulers for my name's sake. And it shall turn to you for a testimony. Settle it therefore in your hearts, not to meditate before what ye shall answer: For I will give you a mouth and wisdom, which all your adversaries shall not be able to gainsay nor resist. And ye shall be betrayed both by parents, and brethren, and kinsfolks, and friends; and some of you shall they cause to be put to death. And ye shall be hated of all men for my name's sake. But there shall not an hair of your head perish. In your patience possess ye your souls."
- c. "they made great lamentation over him"
- 1) "lamentation" - Gr. lit. "to beat the breast"
  - 2) According to Jewish law of that day, a person who died a criminal's death was to be buried without a public lamentation<sup>5</sup>, yet Stephen received a funeral tribute contrary to this law, which shows that these devout men disagreed with Stephen's martyrdom.
- C. (v. 3)**
1. "As for Saul, he made havock of the church, entering into every house, and haling men and women committed them to prison."
    - a. "made havock" - Gr. "ravaging; destroy; devastate"

<sup>4</sup> Robertson, *Word Pictures*, Acts 8:2

<sup>5</sup> *m. Sanhedrin* 6:5-6.

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- 1) This word was used for wild beasts, or hostile armies, bringing devastation and destruction.<sup>6</sup>
  - 2) Saul was well known for his persecution of the church ([Acts 9:13-14, 20-21, 26](#)).
    - a) There are those Orthodox Jews today that are doing the same thing.
      - i. **Illust.** - We've had persecution happen to some of those in our Calvary Chapel in Tel Aviv, Israel.
  - 3) Paul often referenced his actions here when he told his testimony.
    - a) Cf. [Acts 22:4; 26:10-11](#)
    - b) Cf. [1 Corinthians 15:9](#) - "*For I am the least of the apostles, that am not meet to be called an apostle, because I persecuted the church of God.*"
    - c) Cf. [Galatians 1:13](#) - "*For ye have heard of my former life in the Jews' religion, how that beyond measure I persecuted the church of God, and wasted it:*"
    - d) Cf. [Philippians 3:6](#) - To the Philippians, he said of his past life as a Jew, "*Concerning zeal, persecuting the church...*"
- b. "entering into every house"
- 1) This phrase refers to "house churches" since there were no church buildings at that time, so Paul entered into houses that were having local church meetings.
- c. "haling men and women"
- 1) "haling" - Gr. "dragging off"

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<sup>6</sup> Henry Alford. *The New Testament for English Readers, The Acts*, p. 700 <http://archive.org/stream/newtestamentfor02alfogooq#page/n310/mode/1up>



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- 2) **NOTE:** At this point, there is a new element in that the *women* were also being persecuted!

### D. (v. 4)

1. **"Therefore they that were scattered abroad went every where preaching the word."**

- a. "went everywhere" - Gr. *diēlthon* - "spread abroad; travelled through; walked about"
- 1) This Greek word is used many times for the missionary journeys (8:40; 9:32; 11:19; 13:6).
- b. "preaching" - Gr. *euaggelizomenoi* - "gospelizing; announcing the good news"
- c. "the Word"
- 1) **KEY:** The persecution dispersed the believers, but it did not silence them! They used the forced dispersion to spread the gospel further!
- a) Cf. Acts 11:19 - More details about their work will be found later in Acts.
- b) **KEY:** The result of the death of Stephen was not the silencing of the gospel, but the spreading of the gospel even further!
- 2) Cf. 2 Timothy 4:1-2 - "I charge thee therefore before God, and the Lord Jesus Christ, who shall judge the quick and the dead at his appearing and his kingdom; **Preach the word**; be instant in season, out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort with all longsuffering and doctrine."

## II. PHILIP IN SAMARIA. (v. 5-25)

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### THE EVANGELIZATION OF SAMARIA (v. 5-8)

#### A. (v. 5)

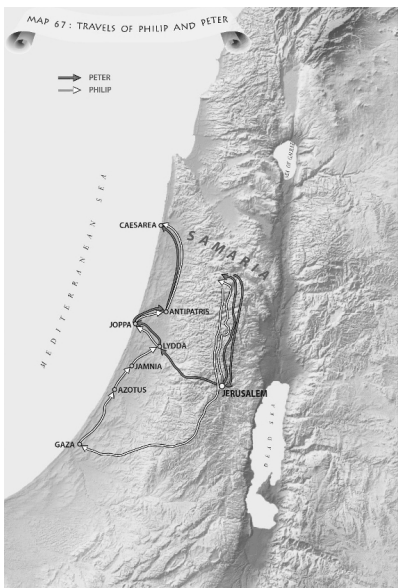
#### 1. "Then Philip went down to the city of Samaria, and preached Christ unto them."

##### a. "Philip"

- 1) This is not the Apostle Philip (Mk 3:18; Acts 1:13; 8:1), but the Deacon (Acts 6:5), and this is where he becomes "Philip the Evangelist" (21:8).
  - a) **NOTE:** Philip, like Stephen, was not an apostle or pastor, but just an ordinary servant in the church. As he was faithful in the little things, and God used him in a very powerful way (v. 6-7)!
  - b) **KEY:** You don't have to be a pastor, or hold some title of leadership in the church, to be used by God! Just be faithful with the gifts God has given you and let Him determine the extent of your ministry.
- 2) **NOTE:** With the dispersion of those in the church at Jerusalem, there was no need for the welfare distribution by the Deacons, thus they were able to leave.

##### b. "the city of Samaria"

- 1) This is the city of Shechem (Gen 12:6-8; 33:18-20; 48:22; 50:25-26), later called Sychar, and John tells us that "Jacob's well was there" (John 4:5-6).
  - a) Though this city had historically been a place of hostility, they were very receptive to Jesus when He went there during His earthly ministry.
  - b) This is the same city where Jesus met the woman at the well, and the people in the city believe Him because they came and heard Him for themselves and they were waiting for the Messiah to come (John 4:25, 29, 42).
- 2) **NOTE:** Philip is now *preaching Christ unto* the same town



From Arnold G. Fruchtenbaum.  
"Commentary Series: The Book of  
Acts." Apple Books. p. 323

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that received Jesus during His earthly ministry!

### B. (v. 8)

#### 1. "And there was great joy in that city."

- a. It is always such a JOY when you see the Lord working!
  - 1) I have been THRILLED and EXCITED as I see what the Lord is doing here at Calvary Chapel Escondido!

### THE STORY OF SIMON THE SORCERER (v. 9-13)

### THE AUTHENTICATION BY THE APOSTLES (v. 14-25)

### C. (v. 14)

#### 1. "Now when the apostles which were at Jerusalem heard that Samaria had received the word of God, they sent unto them Peter and John:"

- a. "the apostles... they sent unto them Peter and John"
  - 1) Peter was sent by the Apostles, thus he did not have authority over the Apostles.
  - 2) Peter and John went down to Samaria so that Samaritan salvation could be authenticated by the apostolic authority.
    - a) Here you see a change of heart on John's part because he and his brother James wanted to destroy the Samaritans (Luke 9:54).
    - b) **NOTE:** This is the last mention of the Apostle John in the Book of Acts, and besides a quick mention by Paul (Gal. 2:9), he is not mentioned in the New Testament until his epistles (1-3 John) and the Book of Revelation.

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### D. (v. 16)

#### 1. "For as yet He was ***fallen upon none of them...***"

- a. "fallen" - Gr. "gripped; pressed around; to seize and take possession of; embrace with affection"
- b. "upon" - Gr. ἐπί *epi*
  - 1) Cf. [John 7:38](#); [14:17](#); [Acts 1:8](#); [10:44](#); [19:1-6](#)
  - 2) **KEY:** There is a subsequent work of the Holy Spirit in the life of the believer apart from regeneration.

### E. (v. 18)

#### 1. "***..he offered them money,***"

- a. This is called "simony", which is trying to buy position and have power within the church (v. 20). This became a curse in Church History.

### F. (v. 20)

#### 1. "***But Peter said unto him, Thy money perish with thee, because thou hast thought that the gift of God may be purchased with money.***"

- a. Cf. [Acts 5:1-11](#) - Ananias and Sapphira tried to "buy" prominence before the people, and now Peter is rebuking Simon for trying to buy "the gift of God."
  - 1) He is trying to buy God's favor with money!
    - a) I cringe when I see those telethons and they give a very strong suggestion that, "If you give a donation of a certain amount of money, your relative that you have been praying for so many years will get saved or healed," and the intimation is that you can maybe buy God's gifts. That's blasphemy!!!

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- 2) There are people today that are trying to purchase salvation.
  - a) **Illust.** - In times past, some of the great contributors to the church in NY and NJ were the Mafia.

### G. (v. 24)

1. **"Then answered Simon, and said, Pray ye to the Lord for me, that none of these things which ye have spoken come upon me."**

a. **Q** = Was Simon really saved?...

1) There are those that say NO:

- a) They would say that Simon was not genuinely saved, that he had faith in the miracles and came to believe that Jesus was the great power of God, yet he did not have true saving faith.
- b) Their argument usually has these points:
  - i. The verb "*believe*" does not always refer to saving faith, and it could be that his faith was grounded in miracles rather than in the name of Jesus.
    - a. Cf. **James 2:19** - "*Thou believest that there is one God; thou doest well: the devils also believe, and tremble.*"
    - b. Believe that Jesus is the power of God is not saving faith.
  - ii. Simon was told to repent (**v. 22**) and the word repent is generally used of unbelievers.
  - iii. Peter told Simon that he was in danger of "*perishing*" (**v. 20**), using the same word that is used of unbelievers (**John 3:16**).

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- a. Those who do not believe are in danger of perishing, but those who believe will not perish.
  - iv. Peter gave a description of a man who was still lost (v. 23).
- 2) There are those that say YES:
- a) They would say that Simon truly believed the gospel as it was presented by Philip, but his response shows a failure in the progress of Christian maturity.
  - b) Their argument usually has these points:
    - i. Simon believed and was baptized just like the others (v. 12-13)
      - a. The word "also" (v. 13) shows that he believed just like they did, which was "the things concerning the kingdom of God, and the name of Jesus Christ" (v. 12).
    - ii. The word "repent" means "to change the mind," and is not always referring to salvation.
      - a. In this case, Simon was called to change his mind about seeking the status of an Apostle.
    - iii. Simon followed Philip around and saw the miracles and signs that were done (v. 13b), and he never asked to buy that power from Philip.
    - iv. Thus, they would say that later on, when the Apostles came, that a root of bitterness sprung up in Simon (v. 23) and he was yearning again for the prominence of the old life (v. 9-10).
- 3) Here's what we KNOW:

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- a) Simon believed "also" and was baptized like the others (v. 12-13)
    - i. The word "also" (v. 13) shows that he believed just like they did, which was "the things concerning the kingdom of God, and the name of Jesus Christ" (v. 12).
  - b) Simon was in danger of perishing (v. 20) because of unrepentant wickedness (v. 22) and the bondage of sin (v. 23).
  - c) He needed forgiveness of sin (v. 22).
- 4) **NOTE:** The bottom line is... WE REALLY DON'T KNOW!!
- 5) **KEY:** I believe that the Holy Spirit left the Text in ambiguity!!
- a) There are always those that want to have their neat and tidy system of "once saved, always saved," but it's not always that clear cut.
  - b) There are many warnings in the New Testament about making sure you're saved:
    - i. Jesus gave warnings:
      - a. Cf. **Matthew 7:18-23** - "A good tree cannot bring forth evil fruit, neither can a corrupt tree bring forth good fruit. Every tree that bringeth not forth good fruit is hewn down, and cast into the fire. Wherefore by their fruits ye shall know them. Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven. Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name? and in thy name have cast out devils? and in thy name done many wonderful works? And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity."

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b. Cf. **John 15:1-6** - Jesus said, "I am the true vine, and my Father is the husbandman. Every branch in me that beareth not fruit he taketh away: and every branch that beareth fruit, he purgeth it, that it may bring forth more fruit. Now ye are clean through the word which I have spoken unto you. Abide in me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, except it abide in the vine; no more can ye, except ye abide in me. I am the vine, ye are the branches: He that abideth in me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit: for without me ye can do nothing. If a man abide not in me, he is cast forth as a branch, and is withered; and men gather them, and cast them into the fire, and they are burned."

ii. The Apostle Paul gave warnings:

a. Cf. **1 Corinthians 6:9-10** - "Know ye not that the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God? Be not deceived: neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor abusers of themselves with mankind, Nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners, shall inherit the kingdom of God."

b. Cf. **Galatians 5:19-21** - "Now the works of the flesh are manifest, which are these; Adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness, Idolatry, witchcraft, hatred, variance, emulations, wrath, strife, seditions, heresies, Envyings, murders, drunkenness, revellings, and such like: of the which I tell you before, as I have also told you in time past, that they which do such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God."



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- c. Cf. **Ephesians 5:3-7** - *"But fornication, and all uncleanness, or covetousness, let it not be once named among you, as becometh saints; Neither filthiness, nor foolish talking, nor jesting, which are not convenient: but rather giving of thanks. For this ye know, that no whoremonger, nor unclean person, nor covetous man, who is an idolater, hath any inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and of God. Let no man deceive you with vain words: for because of these things cometh the wrath of God upon the children of disobedience. Be not ye therefore partakers with them."*
- iii. The Apostle John gave warnings:
  - a. Cf. **1 John 1:6-10; 2:3-6, 9-11, 15-17; 3:6, 14-15, 4:7-8; 5:12-13**
- b. **Q** = Was Simon saved?... I don't know. **But what about YOU?!...**
  - 1) **Q** = Do you believe in Jesus Christ and receive Him into your life?...
  - 2) **Q** = We you baptized in obedience to the command of Christ?...
  - 3) **Q** = Is there unrepentant sin in your life that is a habitual lifestyle of sin?...
    - a) If there is a sin that you are holding onto in your life, don't deceive yourself and think you're fine because you said the sinners prayer!
    - b) Today, you need to repent! Don't wait and chance it.
    - c) By the power of the Holy Spirit, He wants to break that sin and forgive it, washing it in the blood of Jesus Christ!

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d) Cf. [1 John 1:7, 9](#)

### III. PHILIP IN JUDEA. (v. 26-40)

#### THE STORY OF THE ETHIOPIAN EUNUCH (v. 26-39)

##### A. (v. 26)

##### 1. ***"And the angel of the Lord spake unto Philip..."***

- a. It is interesting to note the activity of angels in the early church.
  - 1) Twice angels helped them escape prison. ([5:19](#); [12:7](#))
  - 2) In our text, we find an angel directing Philip. ([8:26](#))
  - 3) An angel appeared to Cornelius and told him to send for Peter. ([10:3](#))
  - 4) An angel of the Lord smote Herod that he died. ([12:23](#))
  - 5) Paul spoke of an angel of God standing by him and assuring him of his safety. ([27:23](#))

##### 2. ***"...saying, Arise, and go toward the south unto the way that goeth down from Jerusalem unto Gaza, which is desert."***

- a. On the surface, it seems that the angel is directing Philip to do something that doesn't make sense.
  - 1) **Q** = Why would God want him to leave this great revival in Samaria to go to a desert area?..
    - a) If Philip tried to reason this out, he would have been at a loss.
    - b) I probably would have been arguing with the angel.
      - i. Maybe that's why one hasn't appeared to me yet! 😂

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### B. (v. 27)

#### 1. "And he arose and went..."

- a. **NOTE:** He was obedient to the FIRST STEP! Then, God was able to direct Him to the SECOND STEP!
  - 1) **NOTE:** Because Philip took STEP ONE, now it was God's turn to show him STEP TWO.
  - 2) **KEY:** So many times, God will not show us STEP TWO until we have taken STEP ONE. It's one step at a time!
    - a) My problem is that I always want to know the whole plan before I'm obedient because I don't know if I want to go through it. But, I've learned that it's better just to obey step one right away because then it's God's turn to show up again.
    - b) It takes a lot of pressure off when it's back in His court!
  - 3) It's always exciting when it's God's move!
- b. **NOTE:** Although he had a successful ministry in Samaria, that did not mean he had to stay there. He was willing to go on to a new ministry if God so led, and God was leading him at this point!
  - 1) **Q** = Are you willing go wherever the Lord calls you to go and do whatever He commands you to do?...

#### 2. "...and, behold, a man of Ethiopia, an eunuch of great authority under Candace queen of the Ethiopians, who had the charge of all her treasure, and had come to Jerusalem for to worship,"

- a. "Ethiopia" - known today as Nubia
- b. "an eunuch"
  - 1) *Eunuchs* were often employed by rulers in positions of high office. They are also male servants of female

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dignitaries, but only placed in such position after having been castrated.<sup>7</sup>

- 2) According to the Law, a eunuch could not enter the assembly of the Lord (Deut. 23:1), so he was not allowed to be a full proselyte, but was limited to becoming only a "proselyte of the gate" or a God-fearer.
  - a) However, the prophet Isaiah predicted a great blessing for eunuchs in the Millennial Kingdom (Isa. 56:3-5).
- c. The eunuch was a man "of great authority".
  - 1) Politically, he was a highly influential official under *Candace, queen of the Ethiopians*.
    - a) "Candace" - Gr. *Kandakés* - not a proper name, but the title of the queen of Ethiopia.
      - i. The king of Ethiopia was considered to be a child of the sun and too sacred to be involved in secular functions of the royal court, so all duties fell to the queen mother, with the title of "Candace".
      - ii. Thus, she was the real power behind the throne and Ethiopia was really a matriarchy.
  - 2) This man was in charge of her treasure, which means he held one of the highest governmental positions.
- d. "had come to Jerusalem for to worship"
  - 1) This was a personal visit, not a state visit.

### C. (v. 30)

1. "And Philip ran thither to him, and heard him read the prophet Esaias, and said, Understandest thou what thou readest?"

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<sup>7</sup> Arnold G. Fruchtenbaum. "Commentary Series: The Book of Acts." Apple Books. p. 352  
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# ACTS

THE MOVEMENT BEGINS

## Acts 8 | "The Fire Spreads"

- a. "And Philip ran thither to him"
  - 1) It could be that Philip went and was running alongside the chariot during this whole scene (v. 30-38) because we don't see the chariot stop until **verse 38!** 😂

### D. (v. 37)

- 1. "And Philip said, *If thou believest with all thine heart, thou mayest. And he answered and said, I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God.*"
  - a. **NOTE:** Most modern translations leave this verse out and skip it with a footnote saying something like, "Some manuscripts add all or most of verse 37," implying that it was added later since this verse is not found in our oldest surviving MSS (A.D. 325-360). However it was quoted by Irenaeus (A.D. 130-202) & Cyprian (A.D. 200-258), which obviously had earlier manuscripts from which to quote this verse.

## THE EVANGELIZATION OF THE COASTAL PLAIN (v. 40)

### E. (v. 40)

- 1. "But Philip was found at Azotus: and passing through he preached in all the cities, till he came to Caesarea."
  - a. "Azotus" = Greek name for *Ashdod*, a port on the Mediterranean coast, about 14 miles up the coast from Gaza.
    - 1) The Holy Spirit dropped Philip off in *Azotus* after picking him up near Gaza.
  - b. "all the cities"
    - 1) Philip passed through all the cities along the coast, he preached the gospel throughout the Philistine Plain and

## Acts 8 | “The Fire Spreads”

the Sharon Plain, until he finally came to *Caesarea*, where he make his home (21:8-9).

- a) About 72 miles up the coast — Ekron, Lydda, Joppa, etc.
- b) **NOTE:** In the next chapter, we will find that these towns all have disciples and churches were established (9:32, 38).

c. “*Caesarea*”

- 1) When Judea became a Roman province, *Caesarea* replaced Jerusalem as its civilian and military capital and became the official residence of its governors.
  - a) *Caesarea* is where Pontius Pilate would have lived, and was only in Jerusalem for the crucifixion of Jesus because during the Feasts of Israel, the Romans would travel from *Caesarea* to Jerusalem to make sure there were no riots or insurrections.
- 2) **NOTE:** Because of Philip’s movement, *Caesarea* became the new center of Judean Hellenistic evangelism and discipleship until A.D. 66, when the leaders emigrated to the Province of Asia (Asia Minor or modern-day Turkey).<sup>8</sup>