

A CHURCH ON THE MOVE

Acts 8

A Zealous Persecutor—Saul (8:1–3)

The book of Acts and the Epistles give sufficient data for a sketch of Saul's early life. He was born in _____ (Acts 22:3), a "Hebrew of the Hebrews" (see 2 Cor. 11:22; Phil. 3:5), the "son of a _____" (Acts 23:6), and a _____ (16:37; 22:25–28). He was educated in Jerusalem by _____ (22:3) and became a devoted Pharisee (26:4–5; Phil. 3:5). Measured by the law, his life was blameless (Phil. 3:6). He was one of the most promising young Pharisees in Jerusalem, well on his way to becoming a great leader for the Jewish faith (Gal. 1:14). **But God had other plans!!!**

Paul's zeal for the Law was evident in his treatment of Stephen (8:1) and later other believers that he had arrested and killed (22:4). So, a great wave of persecution went over the church (1). Paul's in depth knowledge of the OT would serve him well after his conversion. No one could debate with him! This persecution was used to _____ the Gospel out of Jerusalem into Judea, Samaria, etc. (1:8). Later, Roman persecution would move the Gospel out into _____ (*diaspeira*).

A Faithful Preacher—Philip (8:4–8)

Philip was part of that dispersion and one of the chosen leaders in the early church (6:4). His ministry was in Samaria. The Samaritans had their own temple & priesthood & openly opposed fraternization with the Jews (John 4:9). We see him in this chapter and he is mentioned again in Acts 21:8.

Philip's preaching was accompanied by the ability to do miraculous things. God used these signs to _____ the early apostles' ministry. It would appear some of these were less needed after the completion of the NT (I Cor. 13:9). The emphasis here is on the _____: The people gave heed to the Word because they saw the miracles, and by believing the Word, they were saved. Nobody was ever saved simply because of miracles (John 2:23–25; 12:37–41)!

A Clever Deceiver—Simon the Sorcerer (8:9–25)

The unsaved do not have the spiritual perception to know the Work of God vs. the deception of Satan (I Corinthians 2:14). As a result, they were being misled by Simon. Here, is a classic example of I John 4:4. There will be other conflicts between Christianity and money, big business (5:1ff, 16:16ff, 19:23ff).

It says that Simon believed and was baptized. Do you think he was actually converted?

Why did the believers in Samaria have to wait for Peter to arrive to receive the Holy Spirit?? (Matthew 16:13-20)

In a real sense the first 10 chapters of Acts is a transition of the Gospel from the Jews to the Samaritans and Gentiles and Peter use of all three keys!!! It also shows fulfillment of Jesus teachings of the Kingdom in Matthew 13—not all who profess _____ possess Christ!

A Concerned Seeker—an Ethiopian (8:26–40)

What a contrast between Simon and this Seeker! Also, this event shows the heart of Philip who at the Lord's direction left a big revival in Samaria (the 90 and 9) to go to the 1 (vs. 26)! We do not know why but can speculate that God would reach the Ethiopians thru this man. Several principles are being seen.

- > _____ are behind the scenes directing the believers and the unbelievers!
- > You can be close to salvation and not have it (wheat and tares).
- > The _____ is as important as the many.
- > Just being _____ is not enough.
- > The importance of _____ which is not part of Salvation but an evidence of.
- > Salvation is based on _____ not miraculous "signs"
- > The importance of the Gospel witness (Romans 10:17)

Note: He was probably not from our Modern Ethiopia (2000 miles away) but an area south of Egypt probably 300 miles away. Either way it was a long distance to travel in that day.

What a powerful passage to be reading—Isaiah 53! The Ethiopian Eunuch gets saved and immediately wants to be baptized and goes away _____!

What happened to vs. 37? I personally think it was an error not to include it!

The Lord snatched [harpadzō] *Philip away*-- this is the same word used in I Thessalonians 4:18ff text of the rapture. BTW did you know that the Bible records _____ Rapture events?

- >Genesis 5:24 _____
- >2 Kings 11 _____
- >Acts 1 **JESUS**
- >Acts 8 _____
- >2 Corinthians 12:2 _____
- >Revelation 4:1 _____
- >I Thessalonians 4:16 **DEAD IN CHRIST**
- >I Thessalonians 4:17 **ALIVE AND REMAIN**
- >Revelation 11:11 _____

>Some include Moses in this list since his death appears unique and later we find Satan and Michael disputing over the body (Jude 19). He may also have been "caught up" while on Mt. Sinai receiving the Ten Commandments? Moses and Elijah later appear at the Mount of Transfiguration (Matthew 16 representing the Law and the Prophets) and some feel these are the 2 witnesses of Revelation 11. Others feel Enoch and Elijah since they did not die and it is appointed unto men once to die (Hebrews 9:27).

GOD ARRESTS SAUL Acts 9:1–31

He Met Jesus Christ (9:1–9) There are big events in Acts. The coming of the Spirit at Pentecost, the Conversion of Saul, and the Conversion of Cornelius. Why was Saul so determined to wipe out the followers of Christ? His reasoning may have been---“Jesus of Nazareth is dead. Do you expect me to believe that a crucified nobody is the promised Messiah? According to our law, anybody who is hung on a tree is _____ [Deut. 21:23]. Would God take a cursed false prophet and make him the Messiah? No! His followers are preaching that Jesus is both alive and doing miracles through them. But their power comes from _____, not God. This is a dangerous sect, and I intend to eliminate it before it destroys our historic Jewish faith!
Why was Damascus a target?

Indeed, to him and the Jewish faith, the Cross was a “stumbling block” (I Corinthians 1:23).

There are _____ accounts of his conversion given in Acts---- Chapters 9, 22, 26.

Saul, like so many self-righteous people today, do not see their need of a Savior and are insulted to be called sinners.

Saul’s spiritual blindness caused his physical blindness, but his spiritual eye are now open! He now knows Jesus _____! His supposed righteous actions are now seen as persecuting Christ. The ravaging beast (vs. 1) is now a docile lamb.

I wonder if any of the men with him were ever converted?

Saul asks the two most important questions any person needs to answer!
Who is the Lord? What does He want me to do? (22:8, 10)

He Met Ananias (9:10–19)

Paul now has the correct answer to the first question and he is waiting to find out the answer to the second question. God sends a believer Ananias to begin to help him get the answer to question #2. It should not be surprising that Ananias is a bit reluctant!!! What seems to be a marked activity of the newly-converted Paul that help ease Ananias’ apprehension? (vs. 11) _____

Lessons that all believers ought to learn

- God can use even the most _____. i.e. Who lead Billy Graham to the Lord?
- We should never be afraid to _____.
- God’s works are always _____. The calmer events are just a miraculous.
- We must never underestimate the value of _____ brought to Christ.

He Met the Opposition (9:20–25)

Paul began witnessing right where he was at. His strong educational background will now be used to present the Gospel in such a way that the unsaved Jewish leaders could not _____. So, like they did to Jesus, if you can't win the argument Kill them!

I think it is such irony, humor, that the fire breathing dragon is now in a _____!

He Met the Jerusalem Believers (9:26–31)

There were two stages in Saul's experience with the church in Jerusalem.

Saul _____ (26) and Saul _____ (27–31).

The fact that Saul's conversion led to the church at peace for now shows he was the main instigator.

Peter Performs 2 Great Miracles of Healing (9:32-42)

The narrative now returns to _____ ministry which will continue through chapter 12. Chapters 1-12 focus on Peter and from 13 to 28 the focus is on Paul's ministry. Mary, the mother of Jesus is mention in chapter 1 so we now have Peter, Paul, and Mary! LOL

Great Miracle--The healing of the cripple Aenaes who Dr. Luke gives us a little more detail.

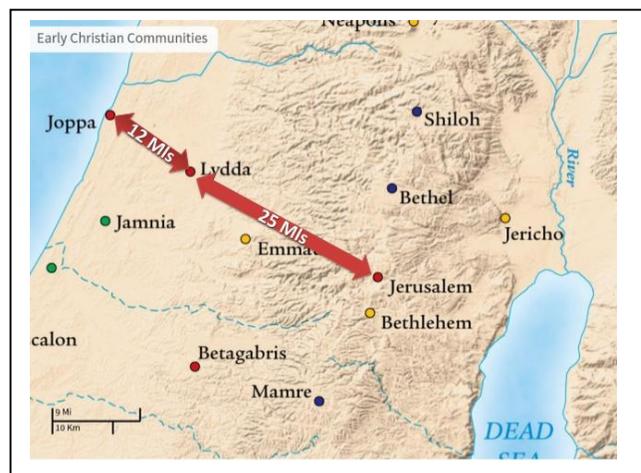
This miracle occurs in Lydda while the next one is in Joppa.

Greater Miracle—Bringing back Dorcas from the dead in Joppa. But the.....

_____ is yet to come in Acts 10!

It is significant that Peter stayed in the home of a tanner, because tanners were considered "_____" by the Jewish rabbis (see Lev. 11:35–40). God was moving Peter a step at a time from Jewish legalism into the freedom of His wonderful grace.

Chapter 10 would be a next big step!



Answers:

Tarsus in Cilicia, Pharisee, Roman citizen, Gamaliel, Disperse, All the world, Samaria, Validate, Word of God, Christ, Angels, One, Religiously sincere, Believer's baptism, God's Word, Joyful, Many, Enoch, Elijah, Philip, Paul, John, 2 Witnesses, Cursed, Satan, 3, Is alive, Praying, Obscure Saint, Obey God's will, Balanced, One Person, Refute, Basket, Rejected, Accepted, Peter's, Greatest Miracle, Unclean