



Empowering People to Change the World

Proclamation & Demonstration
Acts 8

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Lord's Prayer

The last two weeks, we looked at a young man on fire with the Holy Spirit. He was a deacon—a kitchen worker serving in Jerusalem.

- He stood before the Jewish council and, with precision, laid out before the leading men of Israel his belief in Israel, the Mosaic Law, and 2,000 years of God's leading—including Israel's ongoing rebellion against Him.
- If you count every single verse, not just passages, he quotes over 25 verses from the Torah perfectly.
- Cleverly, he drew out parallels: Joseph, Moses—both similar to Jesus—even in how the nation treated them, just as it treated Jesus. Stephen is killed for his beautiful sermon, the longest sermon in the New Testament.

Then, we are introduced to another young man—Saul, a Pharisee, whom we will return to Acts 9. In Philippians 3, he is shown as a “Hebrew of Hebrews,” a Super Jew, a radical rabbi. He was extremely zealous for the traditions of Judaism. This is one of the high points in church history—his conversion mentioned three times in the New Testament.

In Acts 1:8, we see the outline of the book: How the gospel starts at the heart of Judaism in Jerusalem and moves to the heart of the world, Rome. But with a Kingdom-of-God Revolution, there is always a blowback. Acts 1:8 leads to Acts 8:1, and the church is scattered.

Acts 8:1-3

- “Havoc,” means like a wild boar ravaging through a garden, tearing everything apart.
- Acts 1:8 is going to happen through persecution. But everyone wants to stay in Jerusalem. God wants them in Judea, Samaria, and the remotest parts of the earth.

- The dissemination of the Gospel always leads to persecution, which leads to the expansion of the Church.
- God is using persecution to expand the church!
- Jesus said the Kingdom of God is like seeds sown in the heart. We are the seed bearers, sowing through our mouths. The Gospel: let it out! Share your faith!
- We are witnessing the characteristics of the second Kingdom-of-God Revolution, the first being Jesus Himself. But this time, it is Jesus working in regular people like us. First the Apostles, then Stephen, and now Philip, another deacon mentioned in Acts 6, who was waiting on tables with the Greek-speaking widows.

Characteristics of a Kingdom-of-God Revolution: Proclamation & Demonstration

Ex. When the Cultural Revolution came to China after 1948 under Mao Tse-tung, the estimate was around 800,000 believers, but a great persecution came and the church went underground. We had no idea what had happened to the Christians in China. But in the 1990s, as the curtain was lifted, we realized that underground church had grown, under tremendous persecution, to estimates between 50 and 130 million!

The Blood of the Saints is the Seed of the Church!

Vs. 4-8

- Luke wants to us home in on another young man, Philip, a Greek speaking Jew. He is showing us the characteristics of this Kingdom-of-God Revolution, focused first on Stephen and now Philip.
- He will be known not as Philip the Deacon, but as “Philip the Evangelist.”

- Jesus went to Samaria (John 4). It says, "Jesus needed to go to Samaria." No real Jew went through Samaria. In the 10th century BC, a split occurred in the monarchy — 10 tribes went north to Samaria. North and South. Israel and Judah. Hatfield and McCoys. A Northeastern power, Assyria, took the 10 tribes captive to Samaria. They would repopulate a conquered area with other captives from other countries — non-Jewish people from other lands. Intermarriage occurred, and they became "the Samaritans," not a pure Jewish line.
- The Judeans saw the Samaritans as half-breeds. Animosity developed. In rebuilding the Temple, Nehemiah did not want the Samaritans' help, so the Samaritans built their own temple on Mt. Gerizim. They said this was where Abraham brought his son to sacrifice. A rivalry developed. But Jesus had to go there: "There's a woman I have to meet."
- Through the Samaritan woman, the first missionary in the Bible, hundreds, if not thousands, had come to Christ! This place is ripe for the Gospel.
 - In the Gospel narrative, her name is never mentioned.
 - Eastern Orthodox tradition honors her by the name **Saint Photini**. Her name means "the enlightened one."
 - According to this tradition, she was baptized at Pentecost, traveled as a missionary, and was martyred by the Roman Emperor Nero.
- Like Jesus, Philip goes there! And he does "Show and Tell."
 - Not just hearing but seeing! Amazing. The church janitor is being mightily used by God.
 - He has been faithful in little and now he is being used for mighty things.
 - Be faithful in the small things and work your way through it. In due time He will raise you up.

- Ex. When Liz and I planted MSC and when we planted The Road Church, we were always looking for people who were willing to “come early and stay late” on the little things—setting up chairs, sweeping the floor, greeting people at the door, setting up sound equipment—whatever was needed.

The kitchen crew member, the janitor, is proclaiming the Gospel and demonstrating the Kingdom of God. He was faithful in little, and God gave him fruitfulness. He was "coming early and staying late," serving the Greek-speaking widows, and God found him faithful. So He said, "Go to Samaria!"

- Healings are happening
- Deliverance from the demonic
- Ex. This is why we always do ministry up front— to give people the opportunity to hear the Gospel, be healed, and set people free. This is why we have switched up the flow of worship, to move seamlessly from the message to the ministry time. And great joy is sweeping through the city!

Great Joy! A Christian, A Church Should be Marked with Great Joy!

This is a Kingdom of God revolution! Great Joy! Church should be full of joy. The Holy Spirit is not the Killjoy but the King of Joy!

Vs. 9

- “But there was a certain man...” There is always a certain man. In every church, there is someone who wants to mess it up.
 - There are always people who can find fault with something.

- There are people who will always find something to gossip about.

Vs. 9-11

- He is practicing sorcery, reading entrails of animals, reading cards—miracles happen. 2 Corinthians says Satan can disguise himself as an angel of light. Be careful of these men and women on TV and their claims of miracles.
- I have cast demons out of people who were doing signs and miracles through demonic power.
- Ex. Church history records that Justin Martyr, also from Samaria, wrote about Simon Magnus, who was considered a god and even had a statue erected to him in Rome. He was very famous at the time. He developed the doctrine of Gnosticism.

Vs. 12-13

What is True Conversion?

- Don't get your hopes up too much. We do this when we hear of rock stars and athletes who say they "believe." I think this is a fake conversion. He is losing his crowd and following and he wants to jump on the Kingdom Bandwagon. He is not believing in the God of miracles but the miracles of God!

Vs. 14-17

- The Crusade has been done, but now it's the follow-up. Remember, before entering Jerusalem, Jesus first enters Samaria to prepare — and the Samaritans didn't receive them. James and John saw this: "Do you want fire to come down from heaven upon them?" They've gone nuclear. They wanted them scorched.
- But now they want them to be filled with the Holy Spirit! Aren't you glad for second chances! We all need second chances.

Vs. 18-23

- You may have heard of the word "simony," which means you are going to "buy favor." That ancient term comes from Simon Magus of Samaria.
- Ex. This has happened in Church history, with popes buying their way into the Papacy. Benedict IX sold his position as pope to another man for a large sum of money. It was like an auction for the position of pope.

Vs. 20

- In the Phillips translation, it means, "To hell with your money!"
- Jerome: "Always focus on pricking the heart, not stroking the skin."
- Billy Sunday: "They tell me that I rub the fur the wrong way. I don't. Let the cat turn around." Repent!

Vs. 23

The Gift of Discernment

- Peter had the gift of discernment. Just like with Ananias and Sapphira. Not a fun gift to have.
- Ex. I have had people tell me, "Oh, this guy is awesome! This church is amazing." But sometimes you have to say, "No, it's not what you think." Not fun to say. You lose friends sometimes.
- The gift of discernment is like the liver in the body. It filters out the bad to nourish the body with the good. It's not fun. "I'm a liver!"

Vs. 25-27

- The ancient kingdom of Ethiopia, south of the Nile, was considered the outer limits of civilization. Candace was not a name, but a title like pharaoh, king, or queen. She was a queen. He was a eunuch, meaning a "bed keeper" for the harem. Ethiopian kings kept them, and he worked for the queen to keep the rooms of the harem. He was probably a Jewish proselyte, a convert into Judaism. He is leaving Jerusalem. But he is empty. He is searching for more. He is religious but doesn't have a relationship with God.

Vs. 28-30

- Good opening line! You see someone in a coffee shop reading the Bible, ask them.

Vs. 29-33

- The great Messianic prophecy!

Vs.34-37

Believe with Your Whole Heart

- This is a setup by the Holy Spirit. Here is a Jewish convert to Judaism. But he had a copy of the Torah. Very rare. He was obviously very wealthy. He's reading it. His heart is open!
- If you believe with your WHOLE heart! That's conversion.

Vs. 38-40

Baptism is so important! Have you been baptized as one who has "wholeheartedly believed?"

- **Romans 6: a new status in life—the old life buried, and then we are raised up in the resurrection of Christ. Death and resurrection!**

- **If you haven't been baptized, get baptized. Let us know and we will baptize you. A public demonstration. Nike: just do it!**