

Acts 8-12

The Word spreads to Samaria

Philip and the Ethiopian

Saul becomes Paul

- Saul (Great one) converted to Paul (little one)
- 4 major journeys around the Mediterranean
- started at age 50
- wrote 13/27 books of NT
- conversion
 - stopped and confronted by Light
 - blinded to this world
 - Voice speaks "I am Jesus"
 - sent to a true disciple, Ananias (God's servant)
 - receives sight
 - becomes suffering servant (becoming one with the Suffering Servant of God in knowledge and experience)

Peter and Cornelius

Church includes Gentiles

Ch.13 and on

Church grows around the Mediterranean (Paul's 1st MJ)

Ch.8 What does it truly mean / cost to follow Christ Jesus?

Baptism!

"...those who desire to live godly, will suffer persecution..." 2 Tim.3:12

vss.1-8 The Church Persecuted and Scattered

- ✎ All disciples except apostles were scattered.
- ✎ Godly men buried Stephen.
- ✎ Saul began to destroy the church.
- ✎ Those scattered preached the word wherever they went.
- ✎ Philip proclaimed the Christ in Samaria.
- ✎ Crowds paid close attention to Philip.
- ✎ Many were freed and healed.
- ✎ Samaria greatly rejoiced.
- ✎ Note all the positives that came out of persecution. What men intend for evil, God can use for great good.
- ✎ With all that goes on, we must really have eyes and ears to see and hear, and minds and hearts to understand.

vss.9-25 Simon the Sorcerer

- ☛ He observed the power of the Lord and offered money.
- ☛ What is the cost of following Christ?
- ☛ Simon thought he could get it with money.
- ☛ **God wants to give us the name of Christ and all its power.** But what will it cost us?
- ☛ Simon's heart was full of bitterness and captive to sin. If not money, what would it have cost him?

vss.26-40 Philip and the Ethiopian

- 📖 Philip was on the desert road. God's will is for His followers to be in the desert to find His opportunities.
- 📖 The Ethiopian had gone to Jerusalem to worship. He also had a scroll of Isaiah. He was ready for Christ.
- 📖 Philip preached Jesus, revealing exactly Who the passage was talking about.
- 📖 "Why shouldn't I be baptized?" This is the conviction by the Holy Spirit through the Word.

- 📖 “Why shouldn’t I be **baptized**?” Why did the Eunuch ask this question? Is God looking for certain qualifications? How did God through Philip bring the Eunuch to this point?
- 📖 Why should we be **baptized**? How do we need to repent in our understanding of baptism and the reason for it? The answer is found in the next chapter about Saul’s conversion.

Ch.9 Saul’s Conversion – True

Baptism!

- ✚ The Call: do we have to be stopped and blinded on our road to be called?
- ✚ It doesn’t matter what you believe. It’s what God is calling through Christ. Saul was passionately doing what he thought was right but he was persecuting God Almighty!
- ✚ But when Jesus revealed to him his error, he repented.
- ✚ Why did God reveal Himself to Saul, the chief of sinners, a person with murder in his heart? Saul knew the Scriptures and yet had an intense desire to murder people he thought were wrong. This is clearly not the teaching of Scripture and Jesus Christ who said love your enemies.
- ✚ Thus, Saul was blinded and did not eat nor drink for 3 days to prepare him for real sight.
- ✚ The Lord said to Ananias, **“I will show him how much he must suffer for My name.”**
- ✚ When his eyes were opened, he was **baptized!**
- ✚ **Discussion:** So what is **true baptism**?

Saul in Damascus and Jerusalem

- 📖 At once, he began preaching the Jesus is the Son of God.
- 📖 Saul grew more and more powerful, baffling the Jews by proving that Jesus is the Christ.
- 📖 He now became the target of murderous persecution.
- 📖 Barnabas convinced the apostles that Saul was really a believer.
- 📖 With boldness and freedom, Saul preached Jesus in Jerusalem.
- 📖 The Grecian Jews tried to kill Saul, but the apostles sent him to Tarsus.
- 📖 Then came a time of peace for the church, encouraged by the Holy Spirit, growing in numbers, and living in the fear of the Lord.
- 📖 The right man for the right job at the right time. What does it profit to gain the whole world and lose his soul. Look at Michael Jordan...Tiger Woods?

Aeneas and Dorcas

- ✚ Peter traveled about the country, looking for opportunities.
- ✚ The Gospel is not stagnant and complacent but rather reaching out and available.
- ✚ Peter was able to heal and raise the dead.
- ✚ Tabitha (Dorcas) was remembered as a person as always doing good and helping the poor.
- ✚ Peter stayed with a person whom the Jews frowned upon because of the dealings with dead animal bodies and the removing of their skins.
- ✚ All who lived in Lydda and Sharon turned to the Lord.
- ✚ The Gospel’s ministry is to heal and resurrect. People need to be healed spiritually, emotionally, relationally, as well as physically. Do not focus on ministry to the masses but rather the power of the Gospel in the lives of individuals.
- ✚ When Aeneas was healed and Dorcas raised from the dead, many came to the Lord. The Lord’s heart is for individuals; He sees individuals with infinite worth, enough to die for and raise from the dead. All of this is because of God’s grace; He is good.

Ch.10 Cornelius calls for Peter

- ✚ Vs.4 – Cornelius’ prayer reached the heart of God, a gentile! “...when you do it to the least of these, you do it unto Me.”
- ✚ How do prayers, praises, and petitions get to the throne of God? A broken and contrite heart, God will not despise.
- ✚ But Cornelius still needed Christ, thus Peter was sent. God will give them the Way!
- ✚ The Lord prepared Peter to be sent while Cornelius was ready for the Gospel, anticipating what God would do in his life.
- ✚ We need to prepare our hearts for God to do His wonders through the Gospel! How? Vs.2 – give generously to those in need and pray to God regularly.
- ✚ Vss.39-43 Peter shares the Gospel. Cornelius had incomplete knowledge; he needed Christ.
- ✚ While Peter was still speaking, the **Holy Spirit fell on all those who heard the message.**
- ✚ **Baptism** was the next immediate action.

Baptism

[To identify with the name of Jesus Christ] **is the compulsion of the Holy Spirit.**

What is God doing?

- 📖 God is preparing all things for the transmission of the Gospel to enable individuals to be baptized by His Spirit.
- 📖 Baptism is the renewing power through the blood of Jesus Christ [the identity of the Reconciling, Freeing God].
- 📖 Baptism is the Indescribable Gift of His Holy Spirit that compels us to experience His grace and truth (death and resurrection) to be transformed in mind and heart and eventually body.

Ch.11 Confirmation that God will baptize Gentiles also with His Holy Spirit

- 📖 Vss.2-3, “I desire mercy and not sacrifice.” They were repeating the same mistake that the Pharisees made.
- 📖 God used Peter, the head of the church, through the vision and experience with Cornelius, to address this error and to explain God’s mercy to the Gentiles.
- 📖 **“...but you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit.”**
- 📖 Vs.17 - !!!
- 📖 Having become aware of God’s desire for the Gentiles [**baptism of the Holy Spirit**], and having been scattered due to persecution, they were ready to spread the Gospel and have many turn to the Lord.
- 📖 Barnabas was brought to the church at Antioch to see the grace of God and continue the edification of the church. Barnabas also went and brought Saul to help build.

The Power of God

- ✦ A famine [God's wrath] had spread throughout the entire Roman world.
- ✦ King Herod must've had some resources to distribute food.
- ✦ King Herod put James to death and put Peter in prison, seeking to do the same to him.
- ✦ In prison, Peter was dead asleep! The angel had to strike him to wake him.
- ✦ Peter miraculously escapes from prison. Verse 11!!! God continually amazes His people when they live according to His will, accepting whatever comes their way faithfully.

☂ When man seeks to control the situation without God, God according to His perfect timing executes His will. Peter was guarded thoroughly but by the power of God, what was meant for evil was turned to good. **“But the word of God continued to increase and spread.” (vs.24)**

✦ The Power of God (the Holy Spirit) continues to baptize us with fire; His Power is life altering, life transforming, life healing, and life rescuing. It's not about the physical [although that will be the final destination]; it's about the spiritual, relational, and emotional.

✦ Herod's death was God's answer to man's attempt to obtain the praise reserved only for God [only God can deliver from *famine*].

☂ Peter's rescue was indicative of God's salvation in the midst of the wrath of God. The significant outcome to see is **“But the word of God continued to increase and spread.” (vs.24)**