

Chapter 8 (1-40)

God uses this intensified persecution to spread the gospel beyond the borders of Jerusalem (v. 5)

Acts 7:58; 22:20

**I. Saul the Persecutor:**

Earlier attempts to silence the apostles became relentless after the death of Stephen. Why?

Acts 22:4; 26:9-11

**II. Philip the Preacher:**

Acts 6:5; 21:8 -not Philip the apostle (v. 1), but one of the seven.

**III. Simon the Pretender:**

a. **Pride** (9)

b. **Popularity** (10-11)

c. **Profession** (12-13)

Acts 2:38; 8:36; 9:18; 16:33

Did these disciples receive miraculous "spiritual gifts?" How do we know?

Acts 19:6  
Rom 1:11  
II Tim 1:6

d. **Perversion** (18-19)

e. **Punishment** (20-23)

1 And Saul approved of his execution. And there arose on that day a great persecution against the church in Jerusalem, and they were all scattered throughout the regions of Judea and Samaria, except the apostles.

2 Devout men buried Stephen and made great lamentation over him.

3 But Saul was ravaging the church, and entering house after house, he dragged off men and women and committed them to prison.

4 Now those who were scattered went about preaching the word.

5 Philip went down to the city of Samaria and proclaimed to them the Christ. Jerusalem was at a higher elevation than Samaria

6 And the crowds with one accord paid attention to what was being said by Philip when they heard him and saw the signs that he did.

7 For unclean spirits came out of many who were possessed, crying with a loud voice, and many who were paralyzed or lame were healed.

(v. 39)

8 So there was much joy in that city.

9 But there was a man named Simon, who had previously practiced magic in the city and amazed the people of Samaria, saying that he himself was somebody great.

10 They all paid attention to him, from the least to the greatest, saying, "This man is the power of God that is called Great."

11 And they paid attention to him because for a long time he had amazed them with his magic.

12 But when they believed Philip as he preached good news about the kingdom of God and the name of Jesus Christ, they were baptized, both men and women.

13 Even Simon himself believed, and after being baptized he continued with Philip. And seeing signs and great miracles performed, he was amazed.

14 Now when the apostles at Jerusalem heard that Samaria had received the word of God, they sent to them Peter and John,

15 who came down and prayed for them that they might receive the Holy Spirit,

16 for he had not yet fallen on any of them, but they had only been baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus.

17 Then they laid their hands on them and they received the Holy Spirit.

18 Now when Simon saw that the Spirit was given through the laying on of the apostles' hands, he offered them money,

19 saying, "Give me this power also, so that anyone on whom I lay my hands may receive the Holy Spirit."

20 But Peter said to him, "May your silver perish with you, because you thought you could obtain the gift of God with money!"

Acts 11:19

The church is always the church, even at home.

Matt 10:5-6  
John 4:9  
Acts 1:8

Heb 2:4 - God used signs and wonders to validate the Gospel message

Philip's real "signs" stood in contrast to Simon's pretend miracles.

Mark 16:16 - There was no difference between the faith of Simon and that of the other Samaritans

Acts 2:38 - Did these disciples receive the "gift of the Holy Spirit" at their baptism as promised at Pentecost? - Rom 8:9

Once Simon saw that the apostles had the power to bestow the Spirit, his desire for personal fame was rekindled!

<sup>21</sup> You have neither part nor lot in this matter, for your heart is not right before God.

<sup>22</sup> Repent, therefore, of this wickedness of yours, and pray to the Lord that, if possible, the intent of your heart may be forgiven you.

<sup>23</sup> For I see that you are in the gall of bitterness and in the bond of iniquity."

f. Plea (24-25)

<sup>24</sup> And Simon answered, "Pray for me to the Lord, that nothing of what you have said may come upon me."

<sup>25</sup> Now when they had testified and spoken the word of the Lord, they returned to Jerusalem, preaching the gospel to many villages of the Samaritans.

IV. Philip the Preacher (2) :

<sup>26</sup> Now an angel of the Lord said to Philip, "Rise and go toward the south to the road that goes down from Jerusalem to Gaza." This is a desert place. {A region without population

{ Eunuchs were forbidden full religious privileges by the Jews  
-Deut 23:1

"Candace" - the title of the queens of Ethiopia  
~like "Pharaoh" in Egypt

<sup>27</sup> And he rose and went. And there was an Ethiopian, a eunuch, a court official of Candace, queen of the Ethiopians, who was in charge of all her treasure. He had come to Jerusalem to worship

<sup>28</sup> and was returning, seated in his chariot, and he was reading the prophet Isaiah.

Probably either a Jew or a Gentile proselyte.

<sup>29</sup> And the Spirit said to Philip, "Go over and join this chariot."

<sup>30</sup> So Philip ran to him and heard him reading Isaiah the prophet and asked, "***Do you understand what you are reading?***"

<sup>31</sup> And he said, "How can I, unless someone guides me?" And he invited Philip to come up and sit with him.

<sup>32</sup> Now the passage of the Scripture that he was reading was this: "***Like a sheep he was led to the slaughter and like a lamb before its shearer is silent, so he opens not his mouth.***

{ Isa 53:7,8

***In his humiliation justice was denied him. Who can describe his generation? For his life is taken away from the earth.***"

<sup>34</sup> And the eunuch said to Philip, "About whom, I ask you, does the prophet say this, about himself or about someone else?"

<sup>35</sup> Then Philip opened his mouth, and beginning with this Scripture he told him the good news about Jesus.

<sup>36</sup> And as they were going along the road they came to some water, and the eunuch said, "See, here is water! **What prevents me from being baptized?**"

<sup>37</sup> And Philip said, "If you believe with all your heart, you may." And he replied, "I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God."

<sup>38</sup> And he commanded the chariot to stop, and they both went down into the water, Philip and the eunuch, and he baptized him.

Baptism was not the focus of Philip's teaching, but it is obvious that it was included in his teachings about the good news of Jesus

<sup>39</sup> And when they came up out of the water, the Spirit of the Lord carried Philip away, and the eunuch saw him no more, and went on his way **rejoicing**. (v. 8)

<sup>40</sup> But Philip found himself at Azotus, and as he passed through he preached the gospel to all the towns until he came to Caesarea.

**The Samaritans Receive the Holy Spirit (Acts 8:5-25)**

*What does it mean that "the Holy Spirit had not yet come upon any of them; they had simply been baptized into the name of the Lord Jesus?" (Acts 8:16)*

*Did they receive the gift of the indwelling Spirit before the Apostles laid their hands on them or after? If before, then what did they receive from the Apostles? If after, then how can we reconcile this with Acts 2:38?*

**Let's Examine the two Possibilities:**

- Preliminary Questions:
  - *Did these Christians receive miraculous "gifts of the Spirit?" How do we know?*
  - *Did all the Samaritans who were baptized receive miraculous "gifts of the Spirit?"*
- Possibility 1: The Indwelling Spirit and Miraculous "Gifts of the Spirit" Given by the Apostles
  - *If this is true, then did all Christians receive the indwelling spirit in this manner? Why was it necessary for the Apostles to travel to Samaria?*
  - *Could this be a special circumstance such as is the case with the Gentiles in Acts 10 & 11? If so, then why was this difference necessary? (Matt 10:5-6 ; John 4:4-26)*
- Possibility 2: Miraculous "Gifts of the Spirit" Given by the Apostles - Indwelling Spirit Received after Baptism
  - *After their water baptism, were they "in Christ?" If "yes," then did they have the indwelling Spirit? If "no," then what else was necessary? (Rom 8:9)*

**Saul the Persecutor**

**1 Corinthians 12:27 (ESV)**

<sup>27</sup> Now you are the body of Christ and individually members of it.

**4 They therefore that were scattered abroad**-It is probable that the events took place in A.D. 37; this was the year in which Tiberius died and Caligula succeeded him. There was a time when there was no Roman governor in Judea, and the Jewish factions reigned

supreme. Hence, the opponents of Christianity visited Christian homes and thrust Christian men and women into vile prisons, and then brought them before the elders in the synagogue, who tried to force them to deny Jesus; on their refusal some of them were put to death ([Acts 22:4](#); [26:10](#)), others were beaten ([Acts 26:11](#)), and all suffered many outrages ([1 Tim. 1:13](#)). —Gospel Advocate Commentaries

**Acts 7:58 (ESV)**

<sup>58</sup> Then they cast him out of the city and stoned him. And the witnesses laid down their garments at the feet of a young man named Saul.

**Acts 22:4-5 (ESV)**

<sup>4</sup> I persecuted this Way to the death, binding and delivering to prison both men and women, <sup>5</sup> as the high priest and the whole council of elders can bear me witness. From them I received letters to the brothers, and I journeyed toward Damascus to take those also who were there and bring them in bonds to Jerusalem to be punished.

**Acts 22:17-21 (ESV)**

<sup>17</sup> "When I had returned to Jerusalem and was praying in the temple, I fell into a trance <sup>18</sup> and saw him saying to me, 'Make haste and get out of Jerusalem quickly, because they will not accept your testimony about me.' <sup>19</sup> And I said, 'Lord, they themselves know that in one synagogue after another I imprisoned and beat those who believed in you. <sup>20</sup> And when the blood of Stephen your witness was being shed, I myself was standing by and approving and watching over the garments of those who killed him.' <sup>21</sup> And he said to me, 'Go, for I will send you far away to the Gentiles.'"

**Acts 11:19 (ESV)**

<sup>19</sup> Now those who were scattered because of the persecution that arose over Stephen traveled as far as Phoenicia and Cyprus and Antioch, speaking the word to no one except Jews.

**Acts 26:9-11 (ESV)**

<sup>9</sup> "I myself was convinced that I ought to do many things in opposing the name of Jesus of Nazareth. <sup>10</sup> And I did so in Jerusalem. I not only locked up many of the saints in prison after receiving authority from the chief priests, but when they were put to death I cast my vote against them. <sup>11</sup> And I punished them often in all the synagogues and tried to make them blaspheme, and in raging fury against them I persecuted them even to foreign cities.

**Philip the Preacher**

**Acts 6:5 (ESV)**

<sup>5</sup> And what they said pleased the whole gathering, and they chose Stephen, a man full of faith and of the Holy Spirit, and Philip, and Prochorus, and Nicanor, and Timon, and Parmenas, and Nicolaus, a proselyte of Antioch.

**Acts 21:8-9 (ESV)**

<sup>8</sup> On the next day we departed and came to Caesarea, and we entered the house of Philip the evangelist, who was one of the seven, and stayed with him. <sup>9</sup> He had four unmarried daughters, who prophesied.

**Matthew 10:5-15 (ESV)**

<sup>5</sup> These twelve Jesus sent out, instructing them, "Go nowhere among the Gentiles and enter no town of the Samaritans, <sup>6</sup> but go rather to the lost sheep of the house of Israel. <sup>7</sup> And proclaim as you go, saying, 'The kingdom of heaven is at hand.' <sup>8</sup> Heal the sick, raise the dead, cleanse lepers, cast out demons. You received without paying; give without pay. <sup>9</sup> Acquire no gold nor silver nor copper for your belts, <sup>10</sup> no bag for your journey, nor two tunics nor sandals nor a staff, for the laborer deserves his food. <sup>11</sup> And whatever town or village you enter, find out who is worthy in it and stay there until you depart. <sup>12</sup> As you enter the house, greet it. <sup>13</sup> And if the house is worthy, let your peace come upon it, but if it is not worthy, let your peace return to you. <sup>14</sup> And if anyone will not receive you or listen to your words, shake off the dust from your feet when you leave that house or town. <sup>15</sup> Truly, I say to you, it will be more bearable on the day of judgment for the land of Sodom and Gomorrah than for that town.

**John 4:9 (ESV)**

<sup>9</sup> The Samaritan woman said to him, "How is it that you, a Jew, ask for a drink from me, a woman of Samaria?" (For Jews have no dealings with Samaritans.)

**Acts 1:8 (ESV)**

<sup>8</sup> But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you, and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth."

**Hebrews 2:1-4 (ESV)**

<sup>1</sup> Therefore we must pay much closer attention to what we have heard, lest we drift away from it. <sup>2</sup> For since the message declared by angels proved to be reliable and every transgression or disobedience received a just retribution, <sup>3</sup> how shall we escape if we neglect such a great salvation? It was declared at first by the Lord, and it was attested to us by those who heard, <sup>4</sup> while God also bore witness by signs and wonders and various miracles and by gifts of the Holy Spirit distributed according to his will.

**Simon the Pretender**

**Acts 2:37-38 (ESV)**

<sup>37</sup> Now when they heard this they were cut to the heart, and said to Peter and the rest of the apostles, "Brothers, what shall we do?" <sup>38</sup> And Peter said to them, "Repent and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins, and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.

**Acts 9:18 (ESV)**

<sup>18</sup> And immediately something like scales fell from his eyes, and he regained his sight. Then he rose and was baptized;

**Acts 16:33 (ESV)**

<sup>33</sup> And he took them the same hour of the night and washed their wounds; and he was baptized at once, he and all his family.

**Mark 16:15-16 (ESV)**

<sup>15</sup> And he said to them, "Go into all the world and proclaim the gospel to the whole creation. <sup>16</sup> Whoever believes and is baptized will be saved, but whoever does not believe will be condemned.

**Romans 8:9-11 (ESV)**

<sup>9</sup> You, however, are not in the flesh but in the Spirit, if in fact the Spirit of God dwells in you. Anyone who does not have the Spirit of Christ does not belong to him. <sup>10</sup> But if Christ is in you, although the body is dead because of sin, the Spirit is life because of righteousness. <sup>11</sup> If the Spirit of him who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you, he who raised Christ Jesus from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies through his Spirit who dwells in you.

**Acts 19:1-7 (ESV)**

<sup>1</sup> And it happened that while Apollos was at Corinth, Paul passed through the inland country and came to Ephesus. There he found some disciples. <sup>2</sup> And he said to them, "Did you receive the Holy Spirit when you believed?" And they said, "No, we have not even heard that there is a Holy Spirit." <sup>3</sup> And he said, "Into what then were you baptized?" They said, "Into John's baptism." <sup>4</sup> And Paul said, "John baptized with the baptism of repentance, telling the people to believe in the one who was to come after him, that is, Jesus." <sup>5</sup> On hearing this, they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus. <sup>6</sup> And when Paul had laid his hands on them, the Holy Spirit came on them, and they began speaking in tongues and prophesying. <sup>7</sup> There were about twelve men in all.

**Romans 1:11 (ESV)**

<sup>11</sup> For I long to see you, that I may impart to you some spiritual gift to strengthen you—

**2 Timothy 1:6 (ESV)**

<sup>6</sup> For this reason I remind you to fan into flame the gift of God, which is in you through the laying on of my hands,

**Philip the Preacher**

**Deuteronomy 23:1 (ESV)**

<sup>1</sup> "No one whose testicles are crushed or whose male organ is cut off shall enter the assembly of the Lord.

**Isaiah 53:7-8 (ESV)**

<sup>7</sup> He was oppressed, and he was afflicted, yet he opened not his mouth; like a lamb that is led to the slaughter, and like a sheep that before its shearers is silent, so he opened not his mouth. <sup>8</sup> By oppression and judgment he was taken away; and as for his generation, who considered that he was cut off out of the land of the living, stricken for the transgression of my people?