

The Missionary Works of Philip (Acts 8:1-40; 9:1-43)

I. Introduction

A. *This Week in Clear Living*

1. Philip witnessed in Samaria (8:4-8)
2. Simon the Sorcerer was baptized (8:9-25)
3. Philip encountered the Ethiopian Eunuch (8:26-40)
4. Saul persecuted the Church (8:1-3)
5. Saul was converted on the road to Damascus (9:1-9)
6. Saul was baptized (9:10-31)
7. A paralytic, named Aeneas, was healed at Lydda (9:32-35)
8. Dorcas was restored to life by Peter (9:36-43)

Question: Who was Saul and how did he hurt the church? Who was Philip?

B. In Acts 8:1-4, Saul of Tarsus wreaked havoc on the church, but he also indirectly brought a blessing.

1. havoc (*lumainomai*) - to treat shamefully or with injury, to ravage, devastate, ruin.
1. As a young person, Saul had been trained in Jerusalem by Gamaliel.
 - a. He must have been from an affluent family since his family did not live close to Jerusalem.
 - b. He must have been very zealous in the Jewish faith because of his exposure to the greatest Jewish minds.
 - c. He must have shown much promise to people like Gamaliel for them to take him under their wing.
 - d. Because of his background, we should not be surprised that he was willing to go to great lengths to destroy the church.
2. In verse 1, Saul was consenting to Stephen's death.
 - a. Though forgiven for his sins, he probably never forgot the kind of person that he had been or the grief that he had caused others.
 - b. **Sin sometimes leaves a permanent stain on a person's life.**
3. Haling (*suro*) - to draw or drag one before the judge, to punishment
4. He was doing everything he could to destroy the church.
5. But in verse 4, what he was really accomplishing was driving new Christians from Jerusalem to the uttermost parts of the world, and they carried the gospel with them.
6. Ironically, he was doing as much to build the church as he was to destroy the church.

C. In verses 5-8, Philip went to Samaria.

1. He was one of the original seven deacons (Acts 6:5).
2. While there, he preached Christ and performed many miracles.
3. He cast out demons and healed the sick.

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4. In verse 8, the while city was rejoicing because of Philip.

Question: Why did Peter rebuke Simon? Was Simon saved?

- II. In verses 9-25, the apostles went to Samaria and confronted a man named Simon.
 - A. In verses 9-11, Simon had been a sorcerer that held influence over the people.
 1. Sorcery (*mageuo*) - to be a magician, to practice magical arts
 2. Bewitched (*existemi*) - to amaze, to astonish, and to throw into wonderment.
 3. Simon was practicing witchcraft and using his demonic skills to trick the people into thinking that he was a "great power of God" (verse 10).
 4. Until Philip came along, Simon's deeds had been evil.
 - B. In verses 12-13, Philip preached in Samaria and many people got saved. Even Simon believed and was baptized.
 - C. But Simon's heart was not pure in spiritual matters.
 1. In verse 14, the apostles heard about Philip's work and they came to Samaria.
 2. In verse 15-17, they prayed that the new converts would receive the Holy Ghost. They also laid hands on them.
 3. ***Notice that the new converts did not immediately receive the Holy Spirit.***
 - a. New converts today receive the Holy Spirit at the time that they become new converts, **OR DO THEY?**
 - b. In Acts 19:1-7 while in the upper coasts of Ephesus, Paul encountered twelve men that had not received the Holy Spirit even though they had been baptized under John the Baptist. **Were they saved or not?**
 - c. The Book of Acts was a time of transition from the old Jewish traditions to the new church.
 - 1) John the Baptist was at the very beginning of that transition.
 - 2) One cannot easily conclude that John the Baptist's disciples were lost just because they had not yet received the Holy Ghost. They were saved before the church was born.
 - 3) In Matthew 9:20-22, Jesus healed and made whole a woman that had had an issue of blood for twelve years.
 - a) She was saved through that experience.
 - b) Whole (*sozo*) - to save, keep safe and sound, to rescue from danger or destruction
 - c) The same word for "whole" in that verse is translated "saved" in Romans 10:9; 10:13, and ninety-one other places.
 - d) Dr. J. Vernon McGee wrote that the people in Acts 8:15 had not been saved because they had not received the Holy Ghost. He also wrote that the twelve in Acts 19:1-7 had not been saved for the same reason. However, I do not agree with him on these particular instances.

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- e) Dr. Richard N. Longenecker, in my opinion, offers the more logical explanation.
 - 1) The Samaritans and Jews hated each other, so they would not have greeted Peter very eagerly had the Lord sent him to Samaria.
 - 2) Philip was a Hellenist and also despised by the Jews. So, the Samaritans and he had a common bond.
 - 3) If the believing Samaritans had received the Holy Spirit as a result of Philip's preaching, then they would have still been outside the church fold since most were still Jewish.
 - 4) By Peter and the apostles going to Samaria and by Peter laying on his hands for them to receive the Holy Spirit, the saved Samaritans and saved Jews were brought together.
 - 5) Peter would do the same thing in Acts 10 when he went to Cornelius' house.
- f) The consequences of not believing Dr. Longenecker.
 - 1) Sacramental Catholics use this passage to justify a separation between baptism and confirmation.
 - 2) Charismatic believers use this passage to justify their belief of a second work of grace.
- g) It is very important to focus on the message of the apostles rather than their experiences.
 - 1) During these early days of transition, many theologians believe that events often occurred a little differently than what they do today.
 - 2) Catholics and Charismatic believers disagree.
 - 3) **You have to make up your own mind.**
- 4. In verses 16-25, Simon had watched what had happened, and he wanted in on the action.
 - 1. He wanted to have the power to do what the apostles had done.
 - 2. Notice that Philip had not even had that kind of power, but Simon wanted to buy it from Peter.
 - 3. Peter rebuked him because God's power is not for sale.
- D. In verses 20-25, Peter told Simon that he did not have "part nor lot in this matter."
 - 1. Was Peter telling Simon that he could not lay hands on people or that he was not really saved?**
 - 2. If Peter was telling Simon that he was not saved, had he been saved and then lost it?**
 - 3. Most theologians hold the view that Simon was never saved. He was a Christian imitator or imposter just like some of those in churches today.

Question: Did the saints in Acts 8:14-17 experience a second work of grace. Why or why not?

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III. A Second Work of Grace

- A. In verse 16, the new converts were saved. In verse 17, they received the Holy Spirit. Was that a second work of grace?
- B. Some would say so, others would say not.
- C. See the above discussion.

Question: How did Philip feel about missions? What part of the Bible did Philip explain to the Ethiopian eunuch?

IV. Philip was a missionary

- A. He cared about reaching the lost.
- B. He preached the gospel wherever he went.
- C. He was willing to go, and He went where the Lord led him.
 - 1. In verse 26, an angel (*aggelos* - messenger from God) sent Philip to Gaza.
 - 2. In verse 29, ***the Holy Spirit told Philip to speak to the Ethiopian eunuch.***
 - a. All we have to do is be faithful to obey the Holy Spirit.
 - b. If in this life I only do what the Holy Spirit wants me to say, then I will have done enough.
 - c. If in this life I only say what the Holy Spirit wants me to say, then I will have said enough.
- D. In verses 30-38, Philip ran to talk to the man.
 - 1. When the Holy Spirit leads us, we should run to do what He wants us to do.
 - 2. The eunuch was reading Isaiah 53, and Philip explained the prophecy to him.
 - 3. The eunuch believed, received Christ as Savior, and was baptized.
- E. In verses 39-40, the Holy Spirit called Philip away to another assignment.

Question: Did Saul get saved on the road to Damascus or in Damascus? How did the Lord describe to Ananias the future ministry of Saul?

V. In Acts 9:1-43, the Saul of Tarsus got saved.

- A. In verses 1-2, he was eager to go to Damascus to bring back Christians for trial.
- B. In verses 3-9, Saul met Jesus and got saved.
 - 1. Jesus confronted His enemy.
 - 2. We know that Saul of Tarsus got saved at that time because his attitude immediately changed ("What wilt thou have me to do?").
 - 3. That should be the natural attitude of every one that knows Jesus personally.
 - 4. Christians simply cannot resist the call of the Lord. He is very compelling.
- C. In verses 10-25, Saul of Tarsus met Ananias and began preaching Christ almost immediately.

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1. Soon the Jews were trying to kill him.
 2. But he escaped by being let out of the town by the wall in a basket.
 3. Acts 9:16 says, "For I will shew him how great things he must suffer for my name's sake."
- D. In verses 26-30, Saul returned to Jerusalem.
1. The apostles were suspicious of his sudden conversion.
 2. But Barnabas took him in.
 3. Soon Paul had won the confidence of the others.
 4. In verse 30, he was sent to Tarsus. While there, it is believed that he suffered many of the perils that are mentioned in II Corinthians 11:23-27.
- E. In verses 31-43, Peter healed Aeneas and Dorcas.
1. He had been bedridden for eight years with palsy (a form of paralysis).
 2. Peter went from Lydda to Joppa and raised a dead woman named Dorcas.
 - a. Sometimes the person was just unconscious, not actually dead.
 - b. In Matthew 9:18-24, the little girl was unconscious, not dead.
 - 1) Dead in verse 18 (***teleutao***) - to have an end or close, come to an end
 - 2) Dead in verse 24 (***apothnesko***) - of the natural death of man.
 - c. Dorcas, however, was actually dead.
 - d. Dead (***apothnesko***) - of the natural death of man.

VI. Next week's lesson: "A Ministry to the Gentiles" (Acts 10:1-48; 11:1-30)