

The Book of Acts

Chapter 8

Growth of the New Testament Church

Quiz

2

- According to Stephen, why did Joseph's brothers sell him?
 - They were envious or jealous
- How many years was Joseph not free?
 - 13
- Give the 3 divisions and durations in Moses' life.
 - 40 years in Egypt, 40 years in Midian, 40 years as leader
- What was Israel's rebellious act in Exodus 32?
 - Made a golden calf and worshipped it

Quiz

3

- What does the word “stiffnecked” mean?
 - Stubborn
- What was the first bad reaction to Stephen’s sermon?
 - The religious enemies grit their teeth
- What did Stephen say was God’s witness during Moses’ life?
 - The tabernacle of witness
- What was Stephen’s last prayer?
 - “Lord, lay not this sin to their charge.”

Saul Persecuted the Church, v.1-4

4

- Saul was consenting unto Stephen's death, v.1
 - He was pleased with it. He approved, agreed and applauded it.
 - This was a time of GREAT persecution. Christians were scattered.
- Devout men (i.e., pious, reverent) buried Stephen, v.2
- Saul made havock of the church (i.e., to treat shamefully or with injury, to ravage, devastate, or ruin), v.3
 - He entered every house, haling (i.e., dragging) men and women to prison.
- Christians scattered everywhere preaching the word, v.4

Philip Preached in Samaria, v.5-8

5

- Philip went down to Samaria and preached Christ, v.5
 - Was the city of Samaria down? Lower, yes, but north not south. Everything is said to be down from Jerusalem the capital.
- The people listened and responded to his preaching, v.6
- God used Philip to do many miracles in Samaria, v.7



Simon Claimed to Believe, v.9-13

6

- Simon the wizard posed as a great one and deceived the people of Samaria, v.9
 - People believed his power was of God, v.10
 - For a long time he had deceived the people, v.11
- The people believed Philip of Jesus the Messiah and were baptised, v.12
 - Some time earlier, Jesus had preached in Sychar of Samaria ([John 4](#))
- Simon also believed and was baptized, v.13
 - He was amazed at the signs and great miracles.

Peter & John Visited Samaria, v.14-17

7

- The Jerusalem church sent Peter and John to Samaria, v.14
- They prayed that the Samaritan believers would receive the Holy Spirit, v.15.
 - The Holy Spirit had not yet come upon them, v.16.
 - Samaritans were half Jew and half Gentile. **Could they be saved?**
 - After laying on of hands, they were filled with the Spirit, v.17.
 - The fact that God points this out shows that it was not to be the norm after the transitional period of the book of Acts.

The laying on of hands is always for the purpose of **identification**. Here the two Apostles were identifying these people with themselves in the church of God, and with the Jerusalem church, and simultaneously acknowledging Philip's ministry. This laying on of hands was uniquely important here for it established the oneness between the new Samaritan church and the church in Jerusalem.

Here the **result** of the laying on of hands was identification, and as prepared vessels, once the identification had take place, the Holy Spirit was received. But **we should not see the Holy Spirit as communicated by the laying on of hands** (that was Simon's error). While the Holy Spirit came because of their identification with the church at Jerusalem He did not come from the Apostles, he came from the Baptiser in the Holy Spirit. Peter Pett

Delayed Holy Spirit Indwelling

8

Simon's Ungodly Desire, v.18-25

9

- Simon wanted to by the ability to give the Holy Spirit, v.18-19
- Peter rebuked him for his evil desire, v.20
 - He had not part nor lot in this matter and was not right with God, v.21
 - He must repent and seek God's forgiveness, v.22
 - He was in the gall of bitterness and bond of iniquity, v.23. This was a serious sin in his heart that held him in bondage. Peter did not say he was unsaved as some claim.
- Simon asked Peter to pray for him.
- Peter and John returned to Jerusalem.

Many claim that he was never truly saved and that Peter condemned him to hell. True, he had not lot in giving the Holy Spirit to others. We do not know his eternal destiny. Do not assume the worst.

Peter Pett notes, “Nothing is further said about the incident. This leaving an incident in mid-air is typical of the Bible elsewhere. When Scripture leaves something in the air like this it usually signifies that what was spoken of followed. Thus we have the right here to assume that Peter did pray for him, and that he was forgiven. He was after all new in the faith and had needed his thinking sorted out, and deliverance from what had previously gripped him.”

What happened to Simon?

10

An Angel Directed Philip, v.26-29

11

- An angel sent Philip southwest to the desert, v.26
 - This seems odd during the revivals in Samaria. **God knows best!**
- Philip obeyed! He met a chariot belonging to an Ethiopian, v.27
 - He was a eunuch of great authority, the Minister of Finance, under Queen Candace of Ethiopia. He came to Jerusalem to worship. He was a proselyte (converted to Judaism). This trip may have been his life-long dream, yet it left him unfulfilled and reading Isaiah, v.28.
- The Holy Spirit told Philip to go near and run alongside the chariot, v.29

The Ethiopian's Questions, v.30-35

12

- Philip asked if he understood what he read, v.30.
- He said he could not understand without a teacher. He then invited Philip up into the Chariot, v.31.
- He was reading **Isaiah 53:7-8**, v.32-33.
- He then asked Philip, of whom the Prophet Isaiah was speaking, v.34.
- Philip then used Isaiah 53 to preach unto him Jesus.
 - This is a perfect example of using a question to begin witnessing of the Gospel of Christ.

The Ethiopian Baptised, v.36-40

13

- They passed by a lake or river and the Ethiopian asked if he could be baptized.
 - Had Philip mentioned that or had he heard it in Jerusalem? ??
- Philip's response is critical. Read **v.37** carefully.
- The chariot stopped.
 - They both went **down into** the water. He was baptized, v.38
 - They both came **up out** of the water, v.39. Philip disappeared.
- Philip appeared in Azotus (Ashdod, a Philistine city) and he preached his way up the coast to Caesarea, v.40.

It is sad that so many today have been deceived into thinking that baptism is not ONLY by immersion. The word *baptizo* means to dip or submerge. In the Bible, baptism always follows faith in Christ, which is impossible for an infant or young child. Philip and the Ethiopian went down into the water for the baptism. No hint of baby baptism is found anywhere in the Bible, or until the 2nd Century. Immersion is not an optional mode of baptism, it is the ONLY biblical mode.

So-called “baptism” in any other form than immersion after salvation is a serious unbiblical error.

Baptism is ONLY by Immersion

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Applications for us today

15

- When persecution came, the Christians scattered with the Gospel.
 - Sharing the Gospel is our privilege and duty. When is the last time you told someone how to be saved?
 - We must not stop sharing the Gospel if persecution comes our way.
- Philip preached the Gospel and people were saved.
 - It is not our words that save anyone.
 - God saves through the Gospel.
- Simon sinned. Peter told him to repent and seek God's forgiveness.
 - Like Simon, we too sin. The solution is always the same, repent and seek God's forgiveness.
- God moved Philip to a desert area during a great revival. It seemed odd!
 - The Ethiopian needed Philip's witness.
 - When God brings someone into your path who needs Christ, do not fail to share the Gospel. He needs your help!