

CHAPTER EIGHT Acts 8

Influence for Revival

Overview

1. Saul: Persecutor of the Church (Verses 1-4)

Saul was a witness to the stoning of Stephen and had consented to his death. Great persecution came upon the church at Jerusalem through Saul as he dragged Christian men and women from their homes and had them thrown into prison. Many believers fled the city, but boldly preached the gospel wherever they went.

2. Philip: The Evangelist (Verses 5-8)

Philip went to Samaria and preached Christ to them. He also performed miracles, cast out unclean spirits from those who were possessed, and healed many paralyzed and lame people by the power of God. There was great joy in the city because of the miracles performed and the salvations that occurred.

3. Simon: The Sorcerer: (Verses 9-25)

Simon was a sorcerer who had previously practiced sorcery in the city of Jerusalem and was now in Samaria proclaiming he was someone great. The people believed him because he astonished them with magic. However, when Philip preached Christ, many of the same people believed Philip's message, including Simon. Simon was amazed by the miracles and signs God performed through Philip and followed him as he preached.

Hearing about the conversion of the Samaritans (the first Gentiles to be converted), Peter and John were sent to the converts and prayed for them to receive the baptism in the Holy Spirit. Peter and John laid hands on the Samaritan believers and they received the Holy Spirit. The assumption can be made that the infilling of the Samaritan believers was accompanied by speaking in tongues since Simon sought what the apostles had.

Simon offered Peter and John money for the power of the Holy Spirit he saw demonstrated through their hands. Peter immediately rebuked Simon for supposing he could purchase a gift from God and told him to repent.

After preaching the Word of God in Samaria and many Samaritan villages, Peter and John returned to Jerusalem.

4. The Ethiopian Eunuch: (Verses 26-40)

An angel instructed Philip to take a road from Jerusalem to Gaza. Philip obeyed and came upon an Ethiopian eunuch of great authority, reading the book of Isaiah. The Holy Spirit instructed Philip to approach the eunuch's chariot, which he did, and he heard the eunuch reading from the book of Isaiah. The eunuch invited Philip to join him in the chariot to explain the passage he was reading (Isaiah 53:7-8). In explaining the scripture, Philip preached Jesus to the eunuch. The eunuch received Jesus and asked Philip to baptize him in water, which Philip did. The moment Philip and the eunuch came up out of the water, Philip was caught away by the Holy Spirit, and the eunuch went his way rejoicing in all that had transpired. Philip was carried away by the Spirit to Azotus, where he continued to preach in that city and in all the cities from Azotus to Caesarea.