

Leaders Chosen – Signs and Wonders Released! (Acts 6:1-8:40)

I. SEVEN LEADERS CHOSEN

- A. As the young Church begins to take root, the need for leaders to care for the people is realized. The Apostles came together and determined men needed to be chosen to take care of the practical needs of the family of God.

“It is not desirable that we should leave the word of God and serve tables. Therefore, brethren, seek out from among yourselves seven men of good reputation, full of the Holy Spirit and wisdom, whom we may appoint over this business; but we will give ourselves continually to prayer and to the ministry of the word” Acts 6:2-4.

- B. They would appoint these seven so the apostles could give themselves to the most important assignment of all. Prayer and the ministry of the word! Pastor/leader: You cannot outsource the ministry of prayer and teaching and preaching of the word. That is your responsibility!
- C. The qualifications of these seven was to be people ***“of good reputation, full of the Holy Spirit and wisdom” (v.3)***. Reputation means to be a witness. Wisdom is the word Sophia. It means full of intelligence.
- D. Stephen was one of the seven chosen. He became the first martyr (Acts 7). He was a man “full of faith and the Holy Spirit” and that he “did great wonders and signs among the people” (Acts 6:5,8).

II. SAUL PERSECUTES THE CHURCH

- A. Saul who later became a Christian and the apostle Paul, was a zealous Jewish leader who persecuted the church. He was present when Stephen was stoned to death. The persecution at the church in Jerusalem actually had a positive affect as it forced to scatter across the region.

“At that time a great persecution arose against the church which was at Jerusalem; and they were all scattered throughout the regions of Judea and Samaria, except the apostles” Acts 8:1

“As for Saul, he made havoc of the church, entering every house, and dragging off men and women, committing them to prison” Acts 8:3

- B. God had plans for Saul as we will see later that would go beyond anything he would have ever thought possible. No one is ever beyond the reach of God, for His purposes!

III. SAMARITAN CHRISTIANS RECEIVE THE BAPTISM IN THE HOLY SPIRIT

- A. News spread to the apostles that Samaria had received the word of God at the preaching of Philip. In other words, many people were surrendering their lives to Christ (Acts 8:14). Four things Philip preached: (1) The word of God. (2) Jesus Christ. (3) The things of the kingdom of God. (4) The name of Jesus Christ. Then the apostles decided to send Peter and John to them.

“who when they had come down prayed for them that they might receive the Holy Spirit. For as yet He had fallen upon none of them. They had only been baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus. Then they laid hands on them, and they received the Holy Spirit.” (Acts 8:15-17)

- B. We see from this passage that receiving the Holy Spirit was a subsequent experience to receiving Christ as Lord and Savior. ***“They laid their hands on them, and they received the Holy Spirit” (v.17)***. In other words, they received the baptism in the Holy Spirit with the evidence of their prayer language (speaking in other tongues).
- C. We know this to be true because Simon the sorcerer, who was a new convert, offered money to Peter to “buy” this gift so that anyone he laid hands on would receive the Holy Spirit. Simon had a lot to learn about the ways of God (Acts 8:18-24). Peter called him out and told him to repent of his wicked thought.

“Your money perish with you, because you thought the gift of God could be purchased with money. You have neither part nor portion in this matter, for your heart is not right in the sight of God. Repent therefore of your wickedness, and pray God if perhaps the thought of your heart may be forgiven you. For I see you are poisoned by bitterness and bound by iniquity.” (Acts 8:20-23)

IV. CHRIST PREACHED TO THE ETHIOPIAN

- A. An angel of the Lord speaks to Philip to and tells him to head south (Acts 8:26). It is important to note that the ministry of angels is a real. The Bible says they are ministering spirits sent forth to minister to the heirs of salvation (Heb. 1:14).
- B. The ministry of angels in Acts: (1) Deliverance of the apostle from jail (5:19). (2) Directing Philip – Acts 8:26. (3) Directing Cornelius – Acts 10:3. (4) Deliverance of Peter from jail – Acts 12:7. (5) Executing Herod for pride – Acts 12:23. Directing, comforting Paul – Acts 27:23.

“Now an angel of the Lord spoke to Philip, saying, Arise and go toward the south along the road which goes down from Jerusalem to Gaza.”. This is desert. So he arose and went. And behold, a man of Ethiopia, a eunuch of great authority under Candace the queen of the Ethiopians, who had charge of all her treasury, and had come to Jerusalem to worship. Was returning. And sitting in his chariot, he was reading Isaiah the prophet” (Acts 8:26-28)

- C. The Ethiopian was reading the passage in Isaiah talking about Christ suffering (Isa. 53:7-8) and needed clarification about who the prophet was talking about. ***“Then Philip opened his mouth, and beginning at this scripture, preached Jesus to him.” (v.35)***.

- A. Apparently Philip preached the whole counsel of God to him because he asked, ***“What hinders me from being baptized?” v.36***. Philip then baptized him in the river.

“Now when they came up out of the water, the Spirit of the Lord caught Philip away, so that the eunuch saw him no more; and he went on his way rejoicing. But Philip was found at Azotus. And passing through, he preached in all the cities till he came to Caesarea.” (Acts 8:39-40)