

PREACH CHRIST

Acts 8

Intro. Jesus gave the Great Commission to the apostles as he prepared to ascend back to his father (Matt. 28:18-20; Mark 16:15,16). They were to teach people who they taught to teach others. Preach the gospel (Mark 16:15) is to preach Christ (Acts 8:5). Paul would say that it pleased God to use preaching to save men (I Cor. 1:21). The emphasis is not on the act of preaching, rather the message, the gospel, salvation through Christ. Preach the word (2 Tim.4:2). God's plan has not changed. it is still God's pleasure to save men through preaching Christ.

I. Persecution (8:1-4).

A. And Saul. . .

1. Saul gave his approval
2. Acts 26:9-10

B. Great Persecution.

1. The intensity is described by Paul.
2. God, in his providence, used the wicked ways of the enemies of his people to accomplish his purpose in sending the disciples out to proclaim His word to others.
3. The day Stephen was killed saw the beginning of the first of a number of waves of persecution that sept over the church.
4. This "Scattering" is a key point in time.
 - a. Acts 8:4; 11:19
 - b. The disciples went everywhere preaching.
5. Devout men carried Stephen to his burial and made great lamentation (literally "to beat," beating the breast as a sign of great distress.)
6. Saul made havoc (was ravaging the church) Similar to attitude in 7:54-60.

II. The Labors of Philip (8:5-40)

A. Philip in Samaria (8:5-13).

1. Preached Christ to them.
2. The people were responding to the message (v6).
3. He continued to work miracles (John 20:30f; Heb. 2:3,4).
4. Certain man named Simon (vss.9-11)
 - a. He used sorcery, "magic" to astonish the people. (some see "world of occult" in this)
 - b. Claimed to be someone great. Used manipulation and control over people. (Acts 13:6-12)
 - c. Many were listening and giving attention to him.
5. They believed Philip .
 - a. Verse 6 says they gave heed.
 - b. Verse 12 tells us how.
 - c. Even Simon became a Christian (v.13).

B. Peter and John in Samaria (8:14-25).

1. Received miraculous measure of Holy Spirit by the laying on of apostles hands.
2. Philip did not have ability to pass such gifts on to others.
3. When Simon saw this, he tried to buy gift.
 - a. Shows that it was something that could be seen (i.e. results).
 - b. Not every one received the gift.
 - c. Realized that his magic was insignificant compared to what they apostles were doing.
 - d. He wanted the same ability as the apostles.
4. His rebuke (8:20-23).
 - a. Gift of God cannot be purchased.
 - b. "This matter" i.e. the ability to pass on supernatural powers of H/S by laying on of hands...

- c. His heart, his motives, his principles of conduct were not right.
 - d. Repent and pray.
 - e. “If perhaps...” refers to whether Simon would repent or not. Not questioning God’s ability
 - f. “Heart” .. Selfish desire to deceive the people.
 - g. Gall of bitterness—extreme wickedness.
 - h. Bond of iniquity—You are bound by iniquity. Old ways have not been put away.
5. Pray..
- a. You pray for me (too) !
 - b. So I can be forgiven (v.24).
6. The apostles (Peter and John) returned to Jerusalem, preaching as they traveled.
- C. Philip and Ethiopian (8:26-40)
1. Let’s notice four people involved in this.
 2. Angel of the Lord...
 - a. Arise and go toward the south...
 3. Holy Spirit
 - a. “Go near, and join thyself to this chariot.”
 - b. H/S did not tell Philip anything else to do
 - c. Did not say a single word to the Ethiopian .
 - d. Knew that this way all the instruction which Philip needed.
 - e. He knew when a man with Philip’s evangelistic fervor came in contact with a man who was interested in the word of God, that the evangelist would know what to do. All he needed to do was to get the two of them together.
 - f. There is not an example in all the N.T. in which the Holy Spirit, or any one else representing the divine side of the question, ever dealt directly with the sinner in an effort to convert him.
 4. Philip
 - a. Promptly obeyed what he was told.
 - b. Heard the man reading from the scriptures.
 - c. Asked the question
 - d. Began at the scripture and preached unto him Jesus.
 5. Ethiopian
 - a. Queen’s treasurer
 - b. Had been to Jerusalem to worship God.
 - c. Was reading from Isaiah 53.
 - d. Needed help understanding.
 - e. Philip taught him about Jesus.
 6. Obedience and Rejoicing.
 - a. Came to certain water.
 - b. What hinders me?
 - c. Confession
 - d. Went on his way rejoicing
 7. The penitent believer comes to a certain water; goes down into the water; is buried with his Lord in baptism, comes up out of the water, arises to walk in newness of life and goes on his way rejoicing. How very plain ! !

Con: Persecution, everywhere preaching the word, miracles, buying the gift of God, repentance, prayer, certain water. Just a few of the many topics found in this chapter. What hinders you from doing God’s will?