

LESSON #95 – PHILIP AND THE GOSPEL TAKEN TO THE GENTILES

Acts 8

Do you think that the death of Stephen made the rest of the members of the church afraid to speak about Jesus? No. But why not? Well, think of some of the promises which Jesus had made: I will be with you always and the gates of hell will not be able to stand against My church. Stephen was dead but they believed that he was now in heaven with Jesus. The Jews in Jerusalem were now angry at all of the people who believed in Jesus. They wanted to get rid of them. The Jews were supposed to be God's people but they had turned away from God again. They had crucified the Son of God and now they would not admit that they were sinners and believe. It was now God's plan to take this Good news to all the world. God had promised Abraham, thousands of years before that all nations would be blessed in his seed. Those who were not Jews at this time were called Gentiles. They were not God's people. But now it was God's plan to make some of the Gentiles from other nations believe in Jesus so that His kingdom would spread over the whole earth!

Now the Jews began to attack all of the believers in Jerusalem. They killed many of them and beat others. One of the men who were in charge of this persecution was named Saul. He took some men and went from house to house looking for believers and when he found them he dragged them off and put them into prison. Many people left Jerusalem and were scattered into the countries around Judea. This appeared to be a bad and horrible thing. But this was God's plan and His way of spreading the news about Jesus and His resurrection and the forgiveness that people could have by believing in Him and being baptized.

Those who were scattered went about telling others about Jesus because they were filled with God's Holy Spirit. One of these was Philip, who had been chosen as one of the deacons of the church in Jerusalem. He went to Samaria, where Israel once had been. There he did many miracles and preached about Jesus to the people. Many people believed and received God's Spirit.

There was a man there named Simon who was a magician. Many people thought that he was a great man because he did many tricks. But when Philip came and performed miracles of healing and preached about Jesus the people began to follow him instead. Then Simon saw that they were not just doing tricks but were really performing miracles which only God could do and he believed and was baptized, too.

When the apostles in Jerusalem heard that Gentiles had believed they sent Peter and John so that they might receive the gifts of the Spirit. At this time God gave special gifts to some in the church to show His power to those around and in this way the church grew very quickly. This was God's plan to build His church. When Simon saw that others were receiving power to do marvelous things he offered the apostles money if they would give him this power. But Peter said that it could not be bought with money. He should ask God to forgive him for such a thought. All we receive from God is free, from God's grace. We do not deserve it and we cannot buy it or earn it.

Meanwhile, Philip continued to preach. God led him where he should go and many people believe through his preaching and teaching. This was a wonderful time in the history of the church. God was working in marvelous ways to call people to believe in Jesus. We should notice the great faith and obedience which the apostles and believers showed at all times. They believed that God was working through them and they boldly told others about Jesus. We should pray that God would so fill us with His Holy Spirit that we may do the same, trusting Him to open the hearts of others to believe in Jesus and to trust in Him for the forgiveness of their sins.

Memory Verse: "Those who had been scattered preached the word wherever they went." – Acts 8:4.

Application: Ask God to help YOU to be a part of His plan to see others!

LESSON #95 – THE CONVERSION OF THE APOSTLE PAUL

Acts 9:1-31

Do you know anyone who is naughty all of the time? They are always getting into trouble. Maybe you think that person could never be a Christian. It won't do any good to tell them about Jesus because they wouldn't believe anyway. We will learn in our lesson today that God is powerful enough to change the heart of anyone, no matter how bad they may be. We will see that God does this in a special way with this person, but He promises that He will use His Word in the same way to change the hearts of those whom He has chosen to be His! We should always be willing to tell anyone about Jesus and pray that God would work in their heart by His Holy Spirit. Pray for your schoolmates who may not know Jesus.

Two weeks ago you learned what happened to Stephen. He was the first Christian martyr. A martyr is a person who dies as a witness for Jesus because someone kills them. If you read carefully where the Bible tells us about Stephen, it also mentions the name of another man, Saul. Saul was a Pharisee who was one of the worst persecutors of the church. He hated Christians and all of their talk about Jesus. He was glad when Stephen was killed. Now he was busy going from house to house, taking the men and women and throwing them into prison.

Saul went to the high priest and asked him to send some letters to the Jews in a city called Damascus so that he could go there and search for Christians. If he found any, he planned to bring them back to Jerusalem and throw them into prison with the rest. So Saul set off for Damascus. But as he came close to the city, something wonderful happened to him.

Suddenly, a light from heaven flashed around him, and he fell to the ground. He heard a voice say to him, "Saul, Saul, why do you persecute Me?" "Who are you, Lord?" Saul asked. The voice replied, "I am Jesus." Yes, it was Jesus who appeared to Saul from heaven. He told Saul to get up and to go into the city and there he would be told what he should do.

Saul had thought that he was getting rid of these Christians for God, but now God was going to show him that the growth of the church was his plan and that Jesus really was the promised Savior. When Saul got up, he could not see. He was blind. The men who were with Saul were afraid, for they had heard the voice but had not seen anything. They led Saul into the city, and he did not see anything or eat or drink for three days.

Then God spoke to a man named Ananias, a different Ananias. He told him to go to Saul and make him see again. At first Ananias did not want to go because he had heard about Saul, and he was afraid of him. God said to him, "Go! This man is my chosen instrument to carry my name before the Gentiles, their kings and before the people of Israel. I will show him how much he must suffer for My name," Yes, God had chosen Saul to be one of the greatest missionaries the church had ever seen.

Ananias went to Saul and placed his hands on him and he could see again. Now Saul was a believer. He got up and was baptized. Now he began to preach about Jesus, telling everyone that He was the Son of God. Those who heard him could not believe that this was the same man. Some of the Jews tried to argue with him that Jesus was not the Son of God or the Savior. But God had made Saul very wise already, and he showed them from the Scriptures that Jesus had fulfilled all of the promises of God and that He really was the promised Savior, the Messiah, the Christ!

Finally the Jews decided that they had better kill him, too. But some Christians heard what they planned to do and let Saul down over the wall of the city in a basket, and he escaped and returned to Jerusalem. When he got there he tried to join the Christians, but they did not believe that he had changed. They thought that he was trying to trick them. Barnabas had seen Saul in Damascus and had heard him, and he took him to the Apostles. Saul told what had happened to him, and the Apostles received him as a brother. Saul is usually called later by his Roman name, Paul.

The Conversion of the Apostle Paul (Continued)

Name: _____ Date: _____

MEMORY VERSE

“This man is my chosen instrument to carry my name before the Gentiles.” – Acts 9:15

APPLICATION

See the difference between the proud man who had been persecuting the Christians, fighting against the church of Jesus, and the man who had the love of Jesus Christ in his heart and was willing to suffer anything to preach about Him? Surely you can see the wonderful power of God at work here. If you are one of God’s people, life itself can be an exciting thing, for you can watch and see how God will work, in you as you pray and read and study His Word. God will use you in some way, whether it be large or small, to bring glory to His name. Ask God to use you and to give you strength. For if you believe, then you have been chosen to serve Jesus, too.

QUESTIONS

Fill in the blanks with the words at the bottom.

1. Since God is powerful enough to change the heart of any person if He so chooses, we should be willing to tell others about Jesus and pray that He would send His _____ to work in their hearts.
2. Saul was a man who was persecuting the church by taking men and women and throwing them into _____.
3. Saul was on his way to the city of Damascus to find some Christians there when _____ appeared to him and spoke to him.
4. When Saul got up, he was _____ and was led into Damascus where he remained that way and did not eat or drink for three days.
5. God changed Saul’s heart as the Holy Spirit worked in him, and he became convinced that Jesus was the _____, the promised Savior whom the prophets had spoken about.
6. God told Ananias to go to Saul because Saul was God’s _____ instrument to carry His name before the Gentiles.
7. God showed Saul that it would not be easy to be a Christian, but that he would have to _____ for His sake.
8. After Saul could see again, he got up and received the sign and seal that God had given to His people to assure them that their sins were forgiven by the blood of Jesus, he was _____.
9. When the Jews heard Saul preach so boldly about Jesus, they decided to try to _____ him.
10. When he got to Jerusalem, Barnabas brought Saul to the _____ and told them everything that had happened.

baptized
Holy Spirit
apostles
Jesus

prison
blind
chosen

Messiah
suffer
kill

Class 5 Memorization	<i>HC Q+A:</i>		<i>Scripture:</i>	
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LESSON #95 – THE ASCENSION OF CHRIST

Read Matt. 28:16-20; Mark 26:15-20; Luke 24:50-53; John 14:1-4; 16:5-16; Acts 1:1-11

Imagine the disciples watching Jesus ascend into heaven. As He disappears from their sight they stand watching the sky. Already they miss Him. But they were no longer the sad men they had been when they had thought that Jesus was dead and they would ever see Him again. Indeed, their sorrow had been turned to joy. Nor were they afraid any longer for they knew that Jesus was with them whatever happened to them, wherever they might go. That same joy can be yours today if you really learn to trust in Jesus. All of the promises of the Covenant are yours. You have a Promised Land waiting for you. You are a part of the family of God. You have been released from your slavery to sin and death. All of this through Jesus Christ, your Savior. Is he your Savior? Do you trust Him? Do you believe that He is living inside of you by His Holy Spirit? Then God calls you to believe that Jesus is at the right hand of god, ruling over all things until the time of judgment. Knowing that you are called to live for Him and with Him every day, trusting Him to take care of you and living with joy and peace no matter what happens. Are you doing that? Remember to ask God for help!

QUESTIONS

1. How many days after His resurrection did Jesus ascend into heaven? _____
2. Who wrote the book of Acts? (See Luke 1:1-4 and Acts 1:1) _____
3. According to Acts 1:3 what did Jesus speak about during the time of His appearances? _____

4. Where did Jesus tell the disciples they should go? _____
5. Even right up to the end the disciples did not understand exactly what was happening. What question did they ask Jesus just before He ascended into heaven? _____
6. According to Matthew, what did Jesus tell them that they were to do? _____

7. What two facts would encourage them at all times? _____
8. Where would the disciples of Jesus witness concerning Him? _____
9. Could these men do all of this? _____
To whom would the job be passed on to then? (See John 17:20 and following) _____
10. What wonderful promise did the angels make? _____
11. According to Luke what did the disciples do after this? (Luke 24:53) _____

QUESTION TO THINK ABOUT

How can you be a disciple of Jesus?