

Interdenominational Sunday School lesson

Good News for Outsiders Acts 8:25-38

Great and miraculous things were happening in the first New Testament Church at Jerusalem. The Apostles, and other believers, numbering in the thousands, were worshipping, praying and witnessing daily. The Holy Spirit was upon them. Many people, including Jewish Priests, were being converted to Christianity and the church was growing fast, but there was trouble brewing for those early believers. This new and powerful Gospel of Jesus, able to heal the sick and cast out demons, was quickly becoming a thorn in the side of the Orthodox religion and their leaders. Something just had to be done to stop it. They had already put Peter and John in jail, only to have them released by an Angel. They were arrested again,

beaten and warned to stop preaching the Gospel; however, these fearless men of God continued. Stephen was arrested on false charges, brought before the ruling court and, after preaching and witnessing to those present, was ordered stoned to death. Up to this point practically all the Gospel preaching and teaching was taking place in the Jerusalem area. The Gospel had not begun to spread beyond this area to any extent. However, following the death of Stephen, the religious authorities started a reign of imprisonment and beatings of the believers in order to stop the spread of the Gospel. The disciples fled from the impending persecution, except for the Apostles, and were scattered over the countryside of Judea and Samaria. The Gospel would now move out of the Jerusalem area, for those who were dispersed began teaching and

preaching to people as they went. eventually it would go into all the world.

Philip is led to the Eunuch Acts 8:25-39

Philip left Jerusalem and went to Samaria. As we read this today it seems of little note. In the first century; however, this was a tremendous move. You see the Jewish people and the Samaritan people hated one another. The Samaritans were not pure Jewish, they were half breeds, or mix breeds, and the two peoples would have nothing to do with one another. The fact that Philip, a Jew, went there to preach indicates that something had happened to him to knock down this inherent barrier. We know, of course, it was God's love, and Philip's zeal for the Gospel. Great numbers of Samaritans believed the Gospel which Philip preached, and were

baptised. It is here in the story of Philip that a strange thing happened.

An Angel appeared and spoke to him (Verse 8:26) directing him to travel toward the south. Philip arose and did so and eventually met a very important Ethiopian who was a proselyte Jew, a person converted to Judaism. When Philip encountered him, he was sitting in his chariot reading Isaiah, the prophet. When Philip approached him, saw that he was reading the Scriptures, he asked, "Do you understand what you are reading?" The eunuch replied, "How can I, except some man should show me?" This gave Philip the opening he needed. An invitation to preach and a text for the sermon. So Philip proclaimed the Gospel to the eunuch and witnessed to him about Christ.

The Eunuch Responds to The Gospel Acts 8:36-38

We wish that we knew all that

Philip said to the eunuch, but it is evident that he mentioned baptism. To preach the Gospel is to preach Jesus. His death, burial and resurrection, but these simple facts have the power to move people to commit their lives to the Lord. That is what the eunuch did, for he said to Philip, "I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God." Philip then and

there baptised him. The eunuch would carry the Gospel message back to his home country of Ethiopia. The Gospel was spreading in ever widening circles.

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