

# THE REVIVAL IN SAMARIA, A RESULT OF PERSECUTION

## BIBLE TEXT : Acts 8:1-25.

LESSON 290 Junior Course

**MEMORY VERSE:** "The promise is unto you, and to your children, and to all that are afar off, even as many as the Lord our God shall call" (Acts 2:39)..

### BIBLE TEXT in King James Version

#### **Acts 8:1-25**

<sup>1</sup> And Saul was consenting unto his death. And at that time there was a great persecution against the church which was at Jerusalem; and they were all scattered abroad throughout the regions of Judaea and Samaria, except the apostles.

<sup>2</sup> And devout men carried Stephen *to his burial*, and made great lamentation over him.

<sup>3</sup> As for Saul, he made havock of the church, entering into every house, and haling men and women committed *them* to prison.

<sup>4</sup> Therefore they that were scattered abroad went every where preaching the word.

<sup>5</sup> Then Philip went down to the city of Samaria, and preached Christ unto them.

<sup>6</sup> And the people with one accord gave heed unto those things which Philip spake, hearing and seeing the miracles which he did.

<sup>7</sup> For unclean spirits, crying with loud voice, came out of many that were possessed *with them*: and many taken with palsies, and that were lame, were healed.

<sup>8</sup> And there was great joy in that city.

<sup>9</sup> But there was a certain man, called Simon, which beforetime in the same city used sorcery, and bewitched the people of Samaria, giving out that himself was some great one:

<sup>10</sup> To whom they all gave heed, from the least to the greatest,

### BIBLE REFERENCES:

#### NOTES:

##### **Our Introduction to Paul**

What a dark introduction we have to the Apostle Paul! He who was to become the great Apostle to the Gentiles started out persecuting the Church. He was eager to see Stephen, the first Christian martyr, die. He thought, as the high priest did, that the Christians were blaspheming God, and he was zealously trying to be a defender of the Law.

Not only did Stephen lose his life but many other Christians were taken from their homes, put into prison, and even killed. Think how terrible it is when a group of Christian people are sitting in their own homes singing hymns or reading the Bible, and are suddenly arrested and taken to prison for doing so. In our land of religious freedom, we can hardly imagine such treatment; but many Christians have had to suffer in this way because of their faith in God.

Paul himself said of his work among the Christians: "I punished them oft in every synagogue, and compelled them to blaspheme; and being exceedingly mad against them, I persecuted them even unto strange cities" (Acts 26:11). He even followed them when they tried to escape by leaving town. But he added later, "I obtained mercy, because I did it ignorantly in unbelief" (I Timothy 1:13).

##### **Preaching Everywhere**

The priests, along with Paul, made such a great effort to destroy the Christian Church in Jerusalem, that most of the Christians moved away. But wherever they went, they preached about Jesus. The persecution did not hush them up. Instead of the Gospel's being stamped out, it spread into many lands.

Throughout Judaea and Samaria the followers of Jesus preached that Jesus was the Son of God, that He had died and had risen again. They no doubt also told about the vision of Christ glorified which Stephen had seen. That was an added proof to them that Jesus was alive; and He was no longer the humble Galilean, the man of Nazareth, but He was a glorified Christ. What a Saviour they had to preach about! Though it might cost their lives, they continued to tell the people everywhere that Jesus was the long-awaited Messiah, the Deliverer of Israel.

##### **Philip's Revival in Samaria**

Another deacon appointed with Stephen was a man named Philip. The stoning of Stephen did not frighten Philip, nor stop his preaching. He accepted the challenge, and went right on preaching; and God worked through him, performing great miracles. As a result of Philip's ministry, the sick were healed and the unclean spirits came out of people who had been possessed by them. Jesus had said that such signs would follow the preaching of the Gospel, and Philip surely proved those words to be true. The Spirit of God was upon him, and people listened.

saying, This man is the great power of God.

<sup>11</sup> And to him they had regard, because that of long time he had bewitched them with sorceries.

<sup>12</sup> But when they believed Philip preaching the things concerning the kingdom of God, and the name of Jesus Christ, they were baptized, both men and women.

<sup>13</sup> Then Simon himself believed also: and when he was baptized, he continued with Philip, and wondered, beholding the miracles and signs which were done.

<sup>14</sup> Now when the apostles which were at Jerusalem heard that Samaria had received the word of God, they sent unto them Peter and John:

<sup>15</sup> Who, when they were come down, prayed for them, that they might receive the Holy Ghost:

<sup>16</sup> (For as yet he was fallen upon none of them: only they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus.)

<sup>17</sup> Then laid they *their* hands on them, and they received the Holy Ghost.

<sup>18</sup> And when Simon saw that through laying on of the apostles' hands the Holy Ghost was given, he offered them money,

<sup>19</sup> Saying, Give me also this power, that on whomsoever I lay hands, he may receive the Holy Ghost.

<sup>20</sup> But Peter said unto him, Thy money perish with thee, because thou hast thought that the gift of God may be purchased with money.

<sup>21</sup> Thou hast neither part nor lot in this matter: for thy heart is not right in the sight of God.

<sup>22</sup> Repent therefore of this thy wickedness, and pray God, if

They were glad to receive his message of good tidings. "And there was great joy in that city."

Every true Christian has a deep feeling of peace and joy in his heart. This joy and peace can be found in no other way than through having one's sins forgiven. The God of the Christian is a loving Father who demands obedience and respect from His children, but who also showers them with love and blessings. We are glad to obey Him because we love Him. Jesus called even the little children unto Himself and said, "Of such is the kingdom of heaven." How happy we are that our God loves us and always wants to do good things for us!

The gods of the heathen are not so. The false prophets tell the people that they must make cruel and inhuman sacrifices to soothe the anger of their gods; sometimes even tell them to offer their own children. Their worship is often attended with terror while they try to make amends for their sins and bring happiness into their hearts. But always there is only sorrow and bitterness. We are happy that we know a better way, and can tell the story of Jesus' love, which gives His children joy.

The people who listened to Philip preach were so glad to hear his message that many believed what he said. He told them about the peace they had always wanted.

### **Satan's Miracles**

There was a man named Simon who had performed miracles among the people of Samaria by the power of Satan. The people had thought he was a god because of what he could do. But there had been no joy in following him. He had fooled the people with the lies of the devil. Everyone who performs miracles is not of God.

Witches, fortune-tellers, and magicians are spoken of in the Bible, but with the warning that the children of God are to have nothing to do with them. Their power is from Satan, and the Christian will not listen to them. God says that they are an abomination. He also said: "Regard not them that have familiar spirits, neither seek after wizards, to be defiled by them: I am the LORD your God" (Leviticus 19:31).

When Simon, the magician, saw how happy the people were who were believing on Jesus and were being baptized as Jesus taught, he believed too. He at least said he did; and he gathered with Philip's congregation to enjoy the blessings of salvation. The things Simon saw Philip do in the name of Jesus were greater than anything he had ever been able to do.

### **Peter and John at Samaria**

When the Apostles in Jerusalem heard of the great revival that was going on in Samaria, they sent Peter and John to help them. Though many people had been saved and sanctified under Philip's preaching, and they had been baptised in water, no one there had yet received the baptism of the Holy Ghost. When Peter and John arrived, they began to pray that they all might be baptized with the Holy Ghost.

What a prayer meeting they had! Those new saints wanted to be filled with the power of God, just as the disciples had been on the Day of Pentecost. Was it possible that they, too, could have that power?

### **Upon All Flesh**

The Prophet Joel had said: "And it shall come to pass afterward, that I will pour out my spirit upon all flesh" (Joel 2:28).

perhaps the thought of thine heart may be forgiven thee.

<sup>23</sup> For I perceive that thou art in the gall of bitterness, and *in* the bond of iniquity.

<sup>24</sup> Then answered Simon, and said, Pray ye to the Lord for me, that none of these things which ye have spoken come upon me.

<sup>25</sup> And they, when they had testified and preached the word of the Lord, returned to Jerusalem, and preached the gospel in many villages of the Samaritans.

Peter also had said: "The promise is unto you, and to your children, and to all that are afar off, even as many as the Lord our God shall call" (Acts 2:39).

Now, if these Samaritans would believe and yield themselves entirely to the will of the Lord, they, too, could receive the baptism of the Holy Ghost. Did they want it badly enough to do so? They surely did. And when Peter and John prayed with them and laid their hands on them, they received the Holy Ghost. What joy a person feels when he becomes the temple of the Holy Ghost!

#### **Not with Silver**

Simon watched as the Spirit of God came upon these holy men in answer to the prayers of Peter and John, and he wanted to have the power they had. He was willing to pay for it with money. Oh, how blind he was to think that he could buy the power of God, with money! There would no doubt be many more Christians in the world today than there are if salvation could be purchased with money. But what is money? It will not last. Even gold and silver will canker.

God wants that part of us that is eternal: our spirit, our will, our love. When we have given Him that, we are His entirely for anything He may want to do with us. Peter was so displeased with Simon that he said: "Thy money perish with thee, because thou hast thought that the gift of God may be purchased with money."

Many religious people have spoiled their churches by making money more important than the Spirit of God. Jesus said, "Freely ye have received, freely give."

Our duty is to preach salvation to the lost souls, to give freely of that which God has given us. And we must live before people each day in such a way that they will know we are Christians. When we have a burden for the Lord's work, we will give of our money to support it – willingly. A Christian will love God so much that he will give his tithes and offerings joyfully.

There was still hope for Simon. If he would repent, the Lord would bless him. He could have the power he wanted if he would give what the Lord wanted — his heart, his will. And down to this very day, one can receive that power, the baptism of the Holy Ghost, if he is truly sanctified, believes the promises of God, and diligently seeks for that glorious experience.

Peter and John returned to Jerusalem after the meeting, and others of the disciples continued to preach in many of the villages of Samaria.

#### **QUESTIONS**

1. What is the first thing we are told about Paul?
2. Why did God have mercy on Paul?
3. Who conducted the revival in Samaria? Why was he in Samaria?
4. How did the people receive him?
5. Who was Simon? and what did he want?
6. What did the people of Samaria receive when Peter and John came?
7. How can we receive power from God?