Acts Sermon V

Why Shouldn’t I Be Baptized?

Acts 8:1-4 After the persecution which was the result of Stephen’s martyrdom, God forced the Church to begin doing what he had told them to do in Acts 1:8. I love v. 4.

Those who were scattered throughout Arvin, Weedpatch, Bakersfield, Delano, McFarland, Lamont and Shafter (oh, and Merced) preached the word wherever they went.

We are going to look at three places they went.

I. Acts 8:5-24 Philip went to Samaria.

These are Samaritans! (obviously). Jews do not like Samaritans. Who do you not like? Raider fans? Old people? Young people? Rich people? Homeless people? Hoity Toity people? Tatted people? White collar workers? Blue collar workers?

v. 5 Philip proclaimed the Messiah there. Q: Have you proclaimed the Messiah wherever you go?

Lots of miracles happened, and even Simon the Sorcerer believed.

(Later, in the 2nd century, the church that this guy, also known as Simon Magus, became the first Gnostic teacher)

v. 12 They were baptized. v. 13 Even Simon was baptized

Acts 2:38 What can we assume they did before they were baptized? (repent).

Then, what can we assume God did for them after they repented and were baptized? (forgiven of their sins and received the gift of the Holy Spirit)

This is the “one baptism” of Ephesians 4:5.

This is the act referred to in Acts 5:32 … and so is the Holy Spirit, whom God has given to those who obey him.”

OK, so what about Acts 8:14-17 v. 16 OK, what is going on here. I am confused!

Acts and the Holy Spirit: Three phenomena

1. The miraculous pouring out of the Holy Spirit/baptism of the Holy Spirit, as prophesied by John the Baptist (Matthew 3:11 He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit) Joel (Joel 2:28-32 And afterward I will pour out my Spirit on all people) and Jesus (Acts 1:8 But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you).

These prophecies were fulfilled in Acts 2 and Acts 10. This was a one-off (or two-off) event given by God as a declaration of the coming of the Kingdom of God to Jew and Gentile.

It was an act of God. It was spontaneous, and it was not the result of anything that any human did. It is not an act of obedience a la Acts 5:32.

2. The promised gift of the Holy Spirit which is a deposit, guaranteeing our salvation until the coming of Jesus (2 Cor 5:5, Eph 1:13-14), which is received by the “one baptism” (Ephesians 4:4-5). Acts 2:36-41, Acts 5:32, Acts 19:1-7.

a. This is the only aspect of the Holy Spirit which is ever promised to Christians in general.

b. It is the one received upon obedience to the command to repent and be baptized.

3. The miraculous gifts of the Holy Spirit, given by the laying on of hands of the apostles.

From Acts 8:14-18 we know that these gifts were given by the laying on of hands of apostles. This is specified in Acts 8:18.

Another nearly identical example: Acts 19:4-7 Also, 2 Tim 1:6, Hebrews 2:4 (these miracles testify to the message of salvation).

Some teach that the receipt of such gifts is the real sign of our salvation. This is not biblical. There is no general promise to believers that they will receive such miraculous gifts. There is no promise anywhere in the Bible that Christians will be given miraculous gifts.

Rem: Those who were scattered preached the word wherever they went.

II. Acts 8:26-40 Philip, through the eunuch, went to Ethiopia. Ethiopian Eunuch baptized. Now the gospel is spreading to Ethiopia!

Actually, ancient Ethiopia was probably in the area west of the Red Sea, in present-day Sudan where the Kandake, also known as Candace ruled.

Ethiopia is one of the very earliest churches!

The Eunuch was probably a convert (proselyte) to Jerusalem. To the Jew he would be considered “unclean” because he was a eunuch.

v. 26 Philip is listening to the voice of God and to the Holy Spirit, sharing the gospel.

v. 29 I like this line: The Spirit told Philip, “Go to that chariot and stay near it.”

Go get in that line at the grocery store.

Go sign up for Hist 110 so you can meet Emily

Go, buy that house, as you will be converting your neighbor.

He is looking for an “open” person. But the eunuch would not fit any Jewish person’s idea of an “open” person.

Rich, powerful, African, a eunuch, not a full Jew,

But guess what, God had prepared his heart. In fact, he was reading from Isaiah 53.

Q: Who will be your Ethiopian Eunuch?

Note: v. 30 He ran up to the chariot. I love that!

v. 34 “Tell me, please, who is the prophet talking about.

v. 35 Philip preached the good news about Jesus. What did this include? Probably Acts 2:14-41!

Jesus fulfilled prophecy (Isaiah 53)

Jesus worked fantastic signs, wonders and miracles

You (with the help of wicked men) put him to death

But God raised him from the dead.

You need to repent and be baptized. (we know he taught that! v. 36)

Side note: Some teach that baptism is sprinkling. OK, then why did they get down from the chariot, got down into the water and then come back up out of the water? (8:38)

Those who were scattered…

III. Acts 9:1-19, Acts 22:3-21 and Acts 26:12-18.

This is truly one of the most remarkable personal transformations in history. Paul was an amazing man in his own right. A Hebrew of Hebrews.” “Pharisee of Pharisees” (Phil 3:5). He studied under Gamaliel (Acts 22:3), the most famous Rabbi of his day. The most zealous man of his day (Phil 3:6). A man clearly of conviction. He was an extremely sincere Jew. A very persuasive speaker (Acts 9:22 He powerfully proved that Jesus was the Christ). Being from Tarsus (southeastern Turkey) he spoke good Greek.

We can see why God chose Saul.

But…. Acts 9:1-2

But… Did he seem like a good candidate for conversion?

Would you have shared with Saul?

Q: Who would be the hardest imaginable person for you to share with?

Possibly he was actually open, despite all appearances. Why? Because he had personally witnessed the conviction of Stephen and others. Paul was attracted to “The Way.”

9:2 Christianity is called “the Way” Christianity is not merely a religion—a list of prescribed rites and a list of dos and don’ts, it is a way of Life. It is a way of living.

Acts 9:3-5

Actually, let’s read Acts 22:6-16

Paul believed in Jesus 22:7

Paul has confessed Jesus as Lord in 22:8

Paul has repented and begun obeying in 22:10-11

But when were his sins forgiven, and when did he receive the Holy Spirit?

Acts 22:16.

We have some here today who are studying the Bible. To you I say, “And now, what are you waiting for?

You know that Jesus fulfilled prophecy.

You know that Jesus worked incredible miracles.

You know that, because of your sin, you are responsible for his death on the cross.

You know that despite your having killed Jesus, God raised him from the dead.

You are cut to the heart.

So what should you do?

“And now what are you waiting for? Get up, get out of your chariot, get down into the stream and be baptized, so that God can wash your sins away.

If time: Acts 9:17-22 Paul proved that Jesus is the Messiah, and many were saved.

Acts 9:31 Acts 1:8 part II You will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, in Judea and Samaria…

Acts 10 Phase III begins.