

## ACTS 8:1-40

April 13, 1976

I worked this chapter again in my heart and mind today and I really don't know much more than what's written in the Receiving the Holy Spirit Today book. I trust God will give us by His grace and mercy continued opportunities to work this and that in no way will the adversary be allowed to obstruct this kind of ministry or work. I think perhaps as early as 33 or 35 A.D. the record here would stand.

### Acts 8:1

“great persecution” - You never have a great persecution until you first have a persecution. It always starts small. Then it increases in viciousness and it ends up in what historically once was called the Inquisition. I call it the murderers of the Inquisition. And when Christians begin to persecute Christians, it can only be because we haven't gone back to the Word and really allowed that Word to speak; we have closed our minds off and refuse to accept that Word as the authority that it really is. The persecution had started earlier, already. We saw even the chief priest (remember?) getting involved. That's right at the top echelon; they were giving that authority.

“they were all scattered abroad” – because of that persecution. Persecution helped move the Word of God. It wouldn't hurt us any. Persecution has never hurt believers; hurts all unbelievers. Because the seeds of the persecution make the Word grow. This stuff that they're saying about The Way Ministry is not going to hurt The Way Ministry. That's right. Some of us are going to be hurt by people who are going to believe it, but for those who really want to know God's Word and are really concerned about the outreach of God's Word instead of the persecution, it's only going to make you move the Word of God, and there'll be more response to it.

### Acts 8:2

“devout men” - dedicated men

“made great lamentation over him” - I don't really know if that meant they wept loudly. What it meant is that they were deeply hurt. It was a great hurt to the body, to the believers.

### Acts 8:3

Saul, he made havock of the church” - Saul thought he was right; Saul thought he was doing God's will. Saul was just as sure of being right as he was later on when he changed. Some place in the Word it says every man is right in his own eyes. (**Proverbs 21:2**)

“every house” - wherever the Twigs were meeting. As he could find those home meetings, he went in there and got the men and women and committed them to prison.

### Acts 8:4

“preaching the word” - It says they went everywhere doing the same thing they had been doing all along; preaching the Word. Isn't that something? I think maybe that's a good lesson for us. We talk about the greatest defense is a dynamic offense. Well, why isn't that true in the spirit field? Same truth; the more the opposition, the stronger the opposition is, the greater our offense. The greater our move has to be with one thing, the same thing as in that day, the Word. And we do not need to defend it; we just witness to it. You don't even try to explain it half the time. Witness to it. Say, “This is what the Word says.” And they'll say, “Yes, but...” and you let them say whatever they want to say, and you go right back and say, “Well, that's what the Word says.” Boy, I wish I could remember

that, because I haven't always done that. You know, you write back to them and tell them to keep their mouth shut. They may have done that on a few occasions, too. I don't know. But it says they went everywhere preaching the Word. It doesn't say they didn't make other mistakes, too. They could have written a few letters, but they found out that didn't work. It's the preaching of the Word. Boy, that Word as we just keep holding it forth, doesn't return void. Cast you bread upon the waters and it's going to float back to you. It's the Word at the center of our life and our ministry. Everything else is secondary. Not even that far up the totem pole. You will see that Philip wasn't the most dynamic and instructed and totally knowledgeable person in the whole world at that time, and yet, with the little knowledge he had of God's Word, he still did a fantastic job. Just watch this develop. You know, Philip baptized the Ethiopian, eunuch; he didn't minister the holy spirit into manifestation. In many respects he was just a youngster in the greatness of the Word. But he knew enough Word to go into a town and do a job.

### Acts 8:5

"the city of Samaria" - that wasn't an easy place to go. No place is easy. Show me one place that's easy to move God's Word - That would be a new dawn. I'm talking about the world. Sure it's easy here among our people. We could all get together on the spur of the moment and the greatest joy and rejoicing of our hearts is when anybody says, "Let's do the Word." But that's not the world. Out there in the world, every place is tough, difficult. He went down to the city of Samaria. These were the kind of people that nobody was paying much attention to. Nobody liked the Samaritans, and yet Philip went down to the city of Samaria. Doesn't that touch your heart that he went to the people who were despised, who were looked down upon by the religious leaders?

"preached Christ unto them" - Whenever you preach the Word, sooner or later you've got to get to Christ.

### Acts 8:6

"gave heed" - They listened to what he said, and they believed what he said about the Word.

"miracles which he did" - I think all of us were raised and taught that the miracles, the signs, and the wonders are done by God. The Word says that the men of God do them.

### Acts 8:7-8

Here is a city of possession, (no wonder so many people are so sick) a city where the devil spirits and the Adversary has had free play. I am convinced that among the people in these our United States or any place where there is an abundance of unclean spirits, palsies or sickness, it is because that territory has been invaded by the Adversary and "...the thief cometh not but for to steal, and to kill, and to destroy.." (**John 10:10a**) He'll do it every time.

### Acts 8:9

Now we get to an individual record in this city. One of the great teaching records in the Word that is for our learning, so that when you're ministering in an area and see certain things occur, you're not ignorant of his devices; you know what he's already done.

"beforetime" - before the coming of Philip

"himself was some great one" - This has all the earmarking of a reincarnation teaching; that in some previous existence, he was so and so, and now he represents the great so and so.

### Acts 8:10

“the great power of God” – I wish I knew more about that phrase. It looks, in the context of what I just told you about reincarnation, that this man is the great representative of ‘God’, which you and I know is the wrong god. But Simon was a top fellow; he was being operated by big stuff.

### Acts 8:11

“regard” – respect – he was not just some renegade. Simon was most likely a highly educated person because Satan, whenever possible, is not going to use anybody that has no ability. He’ll try and get the most prominent, the most outstanding person he can.

“long time” – like maybe a 20 year period. A lot of times things don’t show up in such a big way in the first generation, like here it’ll show up in the next one. Your teaching of the greatness of God’s Word, it will start showing up in the children

### Acts 8:12

“baptized” - It doesn’t say water in here so I would prefer to leave it out. You might think because later on he baptized the Ethiopian eunuch, therefore, he did water here. Maybe he did, maybe he didn’t. As far as the Word is concerned it doesn’t say he did. In **Acts 2:38** “to be baptized” was to be baptized in the name.

### Acts 8:13

“Simon himself believed also” – I think that’s the miracle of all miracles in this chapter. That’s something that ought to encourage us not to be discouraged by people who work for the Adversary. Just hold forth the Word. Simon heard and believed the Word. He heard and God saved him. Why shouldn’t He? We know people who are born again of God’s spirit that are possessed and working mostly for the adversary. Why shouldn’t Simon get saved? Salvation is on absolutely legal grounds. All hell can’t stop anybody from getting saved if and when they believe the Word.

“continued with Philip” - He followed Philip around; he wanted ‘to be with him.

“he wondered” - Simon, himself, had seen some tremendous things by the power that was operating through him, and here was a man operating power by the freedom of his own will. No wonder he wondered.

### Acts 8:14

“received” – *dechomai* – spiritually received

“the word of God” – in **verse 4** they preached the Word, **verse 5** Philip preached Christ, here the Word of God.

“they sent unto them Peter and John” - The key is in the word “received.” The information got to Jerusalem. As far as I know God’s Word, this is the first time in the history of the Christian Church, that when someone went to minister the Word, and the Word was believed, that they did not speak in tongues immediately after they were born-again. It is God’s law and rule and regulation that when you’re born-again, you should immediately speak in tongues. Here there were people born-again but they were not speaking in tongues. Who sent this information to Jerusalem, I do not know. I would like to believe that Philip himself penned the letter asking for help. I don’t think that’s a disgrace on Philip’s life. I think it’s a showing and a teaching of God’s Word of the tenderness and the love we must have one for another and not criticize, but help one another. Peter and John were their top two trouble shooters. Why not? The apostles at Jerusalem heard it and they made the decision to send

Peter and John. The apostles, in whom the spirit of God works, they made the decision. You're called upon to make decisions as men and women of God. You and I looking back can already see how God is softening up Peter, getting him ready to really move (household of Cornelius – remember that one?). Things that you today don't quite understand, ten years from now, you will. Just stay faithful because God is taking some of you just like he took Peter.

**Acts 8:15**

“receive” – *lambano*

“the Holy Ghost” – *pneuma hagion* - holy spirit, the gift

**Acts 8:16-17**

Verse sixteen is a parenthesis, a figure of speech for clarification.

“he” - it - *pneuma hagion*

“fallen” – *epiipto* - in manifestation

“baptized in the name” – this sort of corroborates that there was no water in **verses 12 & 13**

**Acts 8:18**

“through” - by means of

“given” – in manifestation - he saw something, and he assumed that the apostles had special power when they laid their hands on them. Then they could *lambano*. The laying on of hands was revelation. There is nothing communicated in the laying on of hands. It isn't that in the laying on of hands the manifestation came into evidence; it's because of their believing that as these men of God laid hands on them. I believe many times people are stopped from speaking in tongues by devil spirits. Speaking in tongues is your responsibility; getting saved is God's.

**Acts 8:19**

“power” – *exousia* - exercised power in evidence

**Acts 8:20**

“perish” – rot – we know it's not the spiritual rotting. The only thing about Simon that could perish is his body and it could perish just like money. Why didn't Peter handle him a little easier, saying, “He's just a babe. I gotta give him time.”? But the first time it crosses the Word, Peter spiritually takes care of the baby. It took a little courage and a great love. Courage mixed with love is a fantastic thing. Love without the truth and courage of God's Word is encasing; it is not genuine.

“thou hast thought” – his problem was in his head

**Acts 8:21**

“matter” - ministry

“heart” – seat of the personal life - the reason his personal life was not right in the sight of God is because he was trying to buy a ministry. You cannot buy a ministry; it's a gift of God.

### Acts 8:22

“repent” - forsake

“if perhaps” - that

“forgiven” - when he got born again, he got remission. In **verse 22**, Peter says, “Get forgiveness.” It’s remarkable to me that a man trying to buy a ministry is sin, because he had to be forgiven. And you don’t need forgiveness, except as you sin, to get back into fellowship.

### Acts 8:23

“I perceive” - I believe he perceived it by revelation.

“iniquity” - wickedness

“in the gall of bitterness, and *in* the bond of iniquity” - I believe this was the attempt of the Adversary to re-enter Simon and possess and control him again. Look at the greatness of this teaching and Peter’s boldness to share this with a brother. That’s wonderful.

### Acts 8:24

See, there’s the key: “spoken” and “come upon me.” Evidently that gall of bitterness, bond of iniquity - Peter told him some things he saw. And I love Simon, turning right back to Peter and saying, “Look, you and John pray for me...” Do you think Peter and John did? Boy, I do.

### Acts 8:25

“testified” - could be translated - born full and complete witness. “exhorted earnestly” could be the text here and I like that very much.

### Acts 8:26

“angel... spake unto Philip” - A lot of things that happen in my life and occur I never say anything about. Let me ask you something. If the angel of the Lord could speak unto Philip then, and the same angel of the Lord is still the angel of the Lord, how come he’s out of business now? And I see none of the writers of the New Testament taking a crack at Philip because the angel of the Lord spoke to him. People, our God is not dead.

“Arise and go...unto Gaza...” - That’s all He told him. He didn’t tell him anything else. He didn’t say “I want you to minister to a man.” He just said “I want you to go there.” You know what Philip did? **verse 27** - “he arose and went” – Sense-knowledge wise that’s screwy. He could have said, “Look, I’ve got a good thing going in Samaria. Lord I’m working for you. Man, we just got the ministry rolling. I just got things together here. These are my people.” Philip didn’t say one lousy thing. He could have said, “Nobody is in that stupid desert.” This stuff is just so real to me and so simple and beautiful. That’s how God is. Why does He have to tell you that the water’s going to recede when your feet hit? He says, “Go through the water: I’ll take care of you.” So the priests started walking; when their feet hit, the waters went back.

### Acts 8:27-28

“he arose and went” - Boy, you talk about obedience; the Word of God being the Will of God and meaning what it says. And it wasn’t written out on a wall. It wasn’t substantiated by all the priests and all the theologians: just one man and an angel from the Lord. Man, oh, man, look at that. He didn’t wait to get the cooperation of his denomination. He just walked. He arose and went. You can’t

ever “went” until you “arose.” You first have got to get up before you go. People ought to both get up and go.

“an eunuch” - Naturally every man who worked and served the queen was a eunuch, mainly because the king didn’t want him getting her too pregnant. So they would many times take people who were by nature eunuchs, or if not, they would castrate them. They did that without anesthetic.

“had come to Jerusalem for to worship” - Jerusalem was the religious center. If there’s any place that the Word of God should have been rightly divided, it should have been there. There is no reason for the existence of the Way ministry if the ministers had done the job that God expected of them. The Church ought to be teaching what we’re teaching the Corps. This old boy came to Jerusalem; he didn’t find it either.

### **Acts 8:29**

“the Spirit” – God – In **verse 26** it’s the angel here it’s the Spirit, God, the *pneuma*. What difference does it make as long as it’s the Word you get? What difference does it make who teaches the Word as long as the Word’s taught? What difference does it make how you get your revelation, whether you hear it, see it, smell it, taste it or touch it, as long as you get the revelation? “Spirit” has to be the Giver; the gift doesn’t talk to you. What a walk of believing. Here’s a man who didn’t have the ability to minister holy spirit, but look at the ability of believing he had. Like Abraham, he went not knowing whither he went. That doesn’t mean he was stupid. It meant he was headed out to where God told him to go, but he didn’t know what would happen after he got there.

### **Acts 8:30**

“Philip ran” - Can you imagine? God speaking and the fellow not even walking; he ran to get there. The Word of God speaks to the people today and they ‘hem and haw’. We’ve got it in writing, and we doubt it. The only way he heard it was God yakking, and he could have said it sounds like thunder. No, he says, “It’s God.” And instead of waiting, he ran.

“understandest thou what thou readest?” - What a question: What’s the use of reading the Word if you don’t understand it?

### **Acts 8:31**

“How can I” – right text – “No! For how can I”

“some man should guide me” - This Ethiopian eunuch was believing for someone to guide him. He had been at Jerusalem, and there was nobody there to guide him, nobody there to help him. And he was believing that God would send him someone, so he just kept reading the Word. And he was at the most unlikely place for God to send him anybody. He’d been at Jerusalem--the most likely place, right? Now he was sitting on that stupid desert, having a sip of tea, sitting there reading Isaiah and all at once a fellow walks up and says, “Hey, you understand what you’re reading?” They are never going to understand God’s Word until you help them. We certainly don’t want any Jerusalems; we want the desert, if necessary, where people can read the Word. And someone like you can join with them and teach them the Word. That’s how they get understanding.

“he desired Philip...come up and sit” - Philip never invited himself until the man invited him. He said to Philip, “Come on in here and sit down, man. Open her up to me.”

**Acts 8:32-35**

“preached unto him Jesus” - Why? Because the text talks about a lamb dumb before his shearer, something upon the earth, and he preached unto him Jesus.

**Acts 8:36-37**

“I believe that Jesus Christ is the son of God” – he didn’t say he was God. That Ethiopian eunuch was smarter than most theologians today. He said, “He is the Son of God”; that’s what gave him the new birth, but he still wanted to be baptized. No problem with me. When Paul wrote the Word of God he said, “Well, I almost think I wasted my time on you fellows who want to be circumcised.” And he turns right out and takes Timothy out and circumcises him. Well, he did, didn’t he? Like today, if someone came along and said, “I believe in the Lord Jesus Christ; but I believe with all my heart that I want to be water baptized.” You know what I’d say? “Let’s get Walter Cummins and do it”

**Acts 8:38**

“he commanded the chariot to stand still” – that has to be a figure of speech because it had horses in front of it.

**Acts 8:39**

“saw him no more” - I don’t know what that means but there are two things it could mean. It could mean that he couldn’t see Philip, you know, caught him away to the end that he didn’t see him; like their eyes were holden in Luke (**Luke 24:16**) and they didn’t know Jesus. Or it could mean the Lord caught him away and transported him over to that city.

The eunuch had been to that city of religion and didn’t get it. He was in a desert by himself reading the Word when God met his needs. Ladies and gentlemen, when you get to the place in those deserts of life and you’re still with God’s Word, God will meet your need.

**Acts 8:40**

Wonderful, isn’t it? Well, that’s our Philip.