

The Holy Spirit – 3 – Conversion of Individuals:-

The teaching of the Lord Jesus Christ goes a long way to reveal the work of the Holy Spirit in the lives of individuals. In John chapter 3, verses 1 – 9 the Lord Jesus stated very clearly that “*the wind* (‘spirit’ or ‘breath’) *blows where it wills . . . so it is with everyone who is born of the Spirit*”. (verse 8). Whether it is a individual coming to a knowledge of the Lord or ‘mass conversions’ it is the work of the Holy Spirit of God in the hearts of women and men that brings them to faith.

Acts chapter 8, verses 26 – 40 – “The Ethiopian Eunuch”:- The background to this example of the work of the Holy Spirit is the preaching of Philip in “*a city of Samaria*” (Acts chapter 8, verses 4 – 7). As at the Day of Pentecost “*the multitudes with one accord gave heed to what was said by Philip . . .*” (verse 6). Why? Because he “*proclaimed to them the Christ*” (verse 5). Again, the Lord Jesus Christ was glorified in response to the work of the Holy Spirit through the proclamation of the ‘Gospel’.

We need to remember that all this was a fulfilment of the words of the Lord Jesus at his Ascension see Acts chapter 1, verse 8. The Gospel was to be proclaimed in “*Jerusalem and all Judea and Samaria and to the end of the earth*”.

Verse 14:- When the news of the revival in Samaria reached Jerusalem, two of the leaders of the believers there came to ‘confirm’ the validity of the experience. Remember that it was the first time that ‘non-Jews’ had come to believe in the Lord Jesus Christ through the preaching of the disciples – compare with John chapter 4, verses 25 – 26 and verses 39 – 42.

Verse 26 - 27:- What is really striking in this story is the fact that the Lord God removed Philip from a highly successful ‘mission field’ into the desert to minister to one man! Sent into the desert! “*And he rose and went.*” No questions just faithful obedience. Remember, this Ethiopian was a Jewish believer “*who had come to Jerusalem to worship*”.

Verses 28 – 30:- Again, simple obedience to the prompting of the Spirit. We often ask unnecessary questions! Was the chariot stationary or did Philip have to trot alongside? There was seating in the vehicle so plenty of room for passengers – not a ‘Ben Hur’ Roman racing chariot – rather an equipage comfortable and suitable for an important official.

Verses 30 – 34:- If the Holy Spirit was guiding Philip to minister to this solitary official, then the Spirit must have been at work in his heart and mind. Opening the man’s ‘spiritual eyes’ and preparing the ground for the ministry of the Word. Isaiah chapter 53, verses 7 – 8 - what a glorious passage of Scripture to use in proclaiming ‘the Cross and Resurrection’.

Verses 35 - 40:- Note the use that Philip makes of the text. “*beginning with this scripture he told him the good news of Jesus*”. Note that some ancient texts include verse 37 which is not in the ‘best’ documents. It would be an obvious question to ask someone who wishes to be baptised and become a member of the Body of Christ - “*If you believe with all your heart, you may. And he replied, ‘I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God’*”. (see 1 Corinthians chapter 12, verse 3).

The conversion and baptism of the ‘Ethiopian Eunuch’ shows the importance of the individual to the Lord God. The work of the Holy Spirit in this instance is well documented and serves as a reminder, that faithfulness and obedience are necessary for the effective proclamation of the Gospel! We may get excited at the news of mass revivals but the important work goes on, often unseen and known only to the Lord God.