

Word of God

The Book of Acts

EDITOR'S NOTE: *THE BIBLE IS LIKE NO OTHER BOOK, FOR IT HOLDS THE VERY WORDS OF GOD, WHICH HAVE POWER TO CHANGE THE LIVES OF ANY WHO READ IT AND PUT THEIR FAITH IN OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST. PSALM 34:8 SAYS, "OH, TASTE AND SEE THAT THE LORD IS GOOD! BLESSED IS THE MAN WHO TAKES REFUGE IN HIM!" THROUGH THE NEBRASKA LIVING TIMES YOU MAY "TASTE" AND SEE THE GOODNESS OF GOD THROUGH HIS VERY OWN WORDS, EACH MONTH, RIGHT HERE. MAY GOD BLESS YOU WITH HIS WORD!*

(CONTINUED FROM MAY 2018)

THE BOOK OF ACTS

CHAPTER 8

SAUL RAVAGES THE CHURCH

1 AND SAUL APPROVED OF HIS EXECUTION.

AND THERE AROSE ON THAT DAY A GREAT PERSECUTION AGAINST THE CHURCH IN JERUSALEM, AND THEY WERE ALL SCATTERED THROUGHOUT THE REGIONS OF JUDEA AND SAMARIA, EXCEPT THE APOSTLES. 2 DEVOUT MEN BURIED STEPHEN AND MADE GREAT LAMENTATION OVER HIM. 3 BUT SAUL WAS RAVAGING THE CHURCH, AND ENTERING HOUSE AFTER HOUSE, HE DRAGGED OFF MEN AND WOMEN AND COMMITTED THEM TO PRISON.

PHILIP PROCLAIMS CHRIST IN SAMARIA

4 NOW THOSE WHO WERE SCATTERED WENT ABOUT PREACHING THE WORD. 5 PHILIP WENT DOWN TO THE CITY OF SAMARIA AND PROCLAIMED TO THEM THE CHRIST. 6 AND THE CROWDS WITH ONE ACCORD PAID ATTENTION TO WHAT WAS BEING SAID BY PHILIP WHEN THEY HEARD HIM AND SAW THE SIGNS THAT HE DID. 7 FOR UNCLEAN SPIRITS, CRYING OUT WITH A LOUD VOICE, CAME OUT OF MANY WHO HAD THEM, AND MANY WHO WERE PARALYZED OR LAME WERE HEALED. 8 SO THERE WAS MUCH JOY IN THAT CITY.

SIMON THE MAGICIAN BELIEVES

9 BUT THERE WAS A MAN NAMED SIMON, WHO HAD PREVIOUSLY PRACTICED MAGIC IN THE CITY AND AMAZED THE PEOPLE OF SAMARIA, SAYING THAT HE HIMSELF WAS SOMEBODY GREAT. 10 THEY ALL PAID ATTENTION TO HIM, FROM THE LEAST TO THE GREATEST, SAYING, "THIS MAN IS THE POWER OF GOD THAT IS CALLED GREAT." 11 AND THEY PAID ATTENTION TO HIM BECAUSE FOR A LONG TIME HE HAD AMAZED THEM WITH HIS MAGIC. 12 BUT WHEN THEY BELIEVED PHILIP AS HE PREACHED GOOD NEWS ABOUT THE KINGDOM OF GOD AND THE NAME OF JESUS CHRIST, THEY WERE BAPTIZED, BOTH MEN AND WOMEN. 13 EVEN SIMON HIMSELF BELIEVED, AND AFTER BEING BAPTIZED HE CONTINUED WITH PHILIP. AND SEEING SIGNS AND GREAT MIRACLES PERFORMED, HE WAS AMAZED.

14 NOW WHEN THE APOSTLES AT JERUSALEM HEARD THAT SAMARIA HAD RECEIVED THE WORD OF GOD, THEY SENT TO THEM PETER AND JOHN, 15 WHO CAME DOWN AND PRAYED FOR THEM THAT THEY MIGHT RECEIVE THE HOLY SPIRIT, 16 FOR HE HAD NOT YET FALLEN ON ANY OF THEM, BUT THEY HAD ONLY BEEN BAPTIZED IN THE NAME OF THE LORD JESUS. 17 THEN THEY LAID THEIR HANDS

ON THEM AND THEY RECEIVED THE HOLY SPIRIT. 18 NOW WHEN SIMON SAW THAT THE SPIRIT WAS GIVEN THROUGH THE LAYING ON OF THE APOSTLES' HANDS, HE OFFERED THEM MONEY, 19 SAYING, "GIVE ME THIS POWER ALSO, SO THAT ANYONE ON WHOM I LAY MY HANDS MAY RECEIVE THE HOLY SPIRIT." 20 BUT PETER SAID TO HIM, "MAY YOUR SILVER PERISH WITH YOU, BECAUSE YOU THOUGHT YOU COULD OBTAIN THE GIFT OF GOD WITH MONEY! 21 YOU HAVE NEITHER PART NOR LOT IN THIS MATTER, FOR YOUR HEART IS NOT RIGHT BEFORE GOD. 22 REPENT, THEREFORE, OF THIS WICKEDNESS OF YOURS, AND PRAY TO THE LORD THAT, IF POSSIBLE, THE INTENT OF YOUR HEART MAY BE FORGIVEN YOU. 23 FOR I SEE THAT YOU ARE IN THE GALL OF BITTERNESS AND IN THE BOND OF INIQUITY." 24 AND SIMON ANSWERED, "PRAY FOR ME TO THE LORD, THAT NOTHING OF WHAT YOU HAVE SAID MAY COME UPON ME."

25 NOW WHEN THEY HAD TESTIFIED AND SPOKEN THE WORD OF THE LORD, THEY RETURNED TO JERUSALEM, PREACHING THE GOSPEL TO MANY VILLAGES OF THE SAMARITANS.

PHILIP AND THE ETHIOPIAN EUNUCH

26 NOW AN ANGEL OF THE LORD SAID TO PHILIP, "RISE AND GO TOWARD THE SOUTH TO THE ROAD THAT GOES DOWN FROM JERUSALEM TO GAZA." THIS IS A DESERT PLACE. 27 AND HE ROSE AND WENT. AND THERE WAS AN ETHIOPIAN, A EUNUCH, A COURT OFFICIAL OF CANDACE, QUEEN OF THE ETHIOPIANS, WHO WAS IN CHARGE OF ALL HER TREASURE. HE HAD COME TO JERUSALEM TO WORSHIP 28 AND WAS RETURNING, SEATED IN HIS CHARIOT, AND HE WAS READING THE PROPHET ISAIAH. 29 AND THE SPIRIT SAID TO PHILIP, "GO OVER AND JOIN THIS CHARIOT." 30 SO PHILIP RAN TO HIM AND HEARD HIM READING ISAIAH THE PROPHET AND ASKED, "DO YOU UNDERSTAND WHAT YOU ARE READING?" 31 AND HE SAID, "HOW CAN I, UNLESS SOMEONE GUIDES ME?" AND HE INVITED PHILIP TO COME UP AND SIT WITH HIM. 32 NOW THE PASSAGE OF THE SCRIPTURE THAT HE WAS READING WAS THIS:

"LIKE A SHEEP HE WAS LED TO THE SLAUGHTER AND LIKE A LAMB BEFORE ITS SHEARER IS SILENT, SO HE OPENS NOT HIS MOUTH.

33 IN HIS HUMILIATION JUSTICE WAS DENIED HIM.

WHO CAN DESCRIBE HIS GENERATION? FOR HIS LIFE IS TAKEN AWAY FROM THE EARTH."

34 AND THE EUNUCH SAID TO PHILIP,

"ABOUT WHOM, I ASK YOU, DOES THE PROPHET SAY THIS, ABOUT HIMSELF OR ABOUT SOMEONE ELSE?" 35 THEN PHILIP OPENED HIS MOUTH, AND BEGINNING WITH THIS SCRIPTURE HE TOLD HIM THE GOOD NEWS ABOUT JESUS. 36 AND AS THEY WERE GOING ALONG THE ROAD THEY CAME TO SOME WATER, AND THE EUNUCH SAID, "SEE, HERE IS WATER! WHAT PREVENTS ME FROM BEING BAPTIZED?" 38 AND HE COMMANDED THE CHARIOT TO STOP, AND THEY BOTH WENT DOWN INTO THE WATER, PHILIP AND THE EUNUCH, AND HE BAPTIZED HIM. 39 AND WHEN THEY CAME UP OUT OF THE WATER, THE SPIRIT OF THE LORD CARRIED PHILIP AWAY, AND THE EUNUCH SAW HIM NO MORE, AND WENT ON HIS WAY REJOICING. 40 BUT PHILIP FOUND HIMSELF AT AZOTUS, AND AS HE PASSED THROUGH HE PREACHED THE GOSPEL TO ALL THE TOWNS UNTIL HE CAME TO CAESAREA.

CHAPTER 9

THE CONVERSION OF SAUL

1 BUT SAUL, STILL BREATHING THREATS AND MURDER AGAINST THE DISCIPLES OF THE LORD, WENT TO THE HIGH PRIEST 2 AND ASKED HIM FOR LETTERS TO THE SYNAGOGUES AT DAMASCUS, SO THAT IF HE FOUND ANY BELONGING TO THE WAY, MEN OR WOMEN, HE MIGHT BRING THEM BOUND TO JERUSALEM. 3 NOW AS HE WENT ON HIS WAY, HE APPROACHED DAMASCUS, AND SUDDENLY A LIGHT FROM HEAVEN SHONE AROUND HIM. 4 AND FALLING TO THE GROUND HE HEARD A VOICE SAYING TO HIM, "SAUL, SAUL, WHY ARE YOU PERSECUTING ME?" 5 AND HE SAID, "WHO ARE YOU, LORD?" AND HE SAID, "I AM JESUS, WHOM YOU ARE PERSECUTING. 6 BUT RISE AND ENTER THE CITY, AND YOU WILL BE TOLD WHAT YOU ARE TO DO." 7 THE MEN WHO WERE TRAVELING WITH HIM STOOD SPEECHLESS, HEARING THE VOICE BUT SEEING NO ONE. 8 SAUL ROSE FROM THE GROUND, AND ALTHOUGH HIS EYES WERE OPENED, HE SAW NOTHING. SO THEY LED HIM BY THE HAND AND BROUGHT HIM INTO DAMASCUS. 9 AND FOR THREE DAYS HE WAS WITHOUT SIGHT, AND NEITHER ATE NOR DRANK.

10 NOW THERE WAS A DISCIPLE AT DAMASCUS NAMED ANANIAS. THE LORD SAID TO HIM IN A VISION, "ANANIAS." AND HE SAID, "HERE I AM, LORD."

11 AND THE LORD SAID TO HIM, "RISE AND GO TO THE STREET CALLED STRAIGHT, AND AT THE HOUSE OF JUDAS LOOK FOR A MAN OF TARSUS NAMED SAUL, FOR BEHOLD, HE IS PRAYING, 12 AND HE HAS SEEN IN A VISION A MAN NAMED ANANIAS COME IN AND LAY

HIS HANDS ON HIM SO THAT HE MIGHT REGAIN HIS SIGHT." 13 BUT ANANIAS ANSWERED, "LORD, I HAVE HEARD FROM MANY ABOUT THIS MAN, HOW MUCH EVIL HE HAS DONE TO YOUR SAINTS AT JERUSALEM. 14 AND HERE HE HAS AUTHORITY FROM THE CHIEF PRIESTS TO BIND ALL WHO CALL ON YOUR NAME." 15 BUT THE LORD SAID TO HIM, "GO, FOR HE IS A CHOSEN INSTRUMENT OF MINE TO CARRY MY NAME BEFORE THE GENTILES AND KINGS AND THE CHILDREN OF ISRAEL. 16 FOR I WILL SHOW HIM HOW MUCH HE MUST SUFFER FOR THE SAKE OF MY NAME." 17 SO ANANIAS DEPARTED AND ENTERED THE HOUSE. AND LAYING HIS HANDS ON HIM HE SAID, "BROTHER SAUL, THE LORD JESUS WHO APPEARED TO YOU ON THE ROAD BY WHICH YOU CAME HAS SENT ME SO THAT YOU MAY REGAIN YOUR SIGHT AND BE FILLED WITH THE HOLY SPIRIT." 18 AND IMMEDIATELY SOMETHING LIKE SCALES FELL FROM HIS EYES, AND HE REGAINED HIS SIGHT. THEN HE ROSE AND WAS BAPTIZED; 19 AND TAKING FOOD, HE WAS STRENGTHENED.

SAUL PROCLAIMS JESUS IN SYNAGOGUES

FOR SOME DAYS HE WAS WITH THE DISCIPLES AT DAMASCUS. 20 AND IMMEDIATELY HE PROCLAIMED JESUS IN THE SYNAGOGUES, SAYING, "HE IS THE SON OF GOD." 21 AND ALL WHO HEARD HIM WERE AMAZED AND SAID, "IS NOT THIS THE MAN WHO MADE HAVOC IN JERUSALEM OF THOSE WHO CALLED UPON THIS NAME? AND HAS HE NOT COME HERE FOR THIS PURPOSE, TO BRING THEM BOUND BEFORE THE CHIEF PRIESTS?" 22 BUT SAUL INCREASED ALL THE MORE IN STRENGTH, AND CONFOUNDED THE JEWS WHO LIVED IN DAMASCUS BY PROVING THAT JESUS WAS THE CHRIST.

SAUL ESCAPES FROM DAMASCUS

23 WHEN MANY DAYS HAD PASSED, THE JEWS PLOTTED TO KILL HIM, 24 BUT THEIR PLOT BECAME KNOWN TO SAUL. THEY WERE WATCHING THE GATES DAY AND NIGHT IN ORDER TO KILL HIM, 25 BUT HIS DISCIPLES TOOK HIM BY NIGHT AND LET HIM DOWN THROUGH AN OPENING IN THE WALL, LOWERING HIM IN A BASKET.

SAUL IN JERUSALEM

26 AND WHEN HE HAD COME TO JERUSALEM, HE ATTEMPTED TO JOIN THE DISCIPLES. AND THEY WERE ALL AFRAID OF HIM, FOR THEY DID NOT BELIEVE THAT HE WAS A DISCIPLE. 27 BUT BARNABAS TOOK HIM AND BROUGHT HIM TO THE APOSTLES AND DECLARED TO THEM HOW ON THE ROAD HE HAD SEEN THE LORD, WHO SPOKE TO HIM, AND HOW AT

DAMASCUS HE HAD PREACHED BOLDLY IN THE NAME OF JESUS. 28 SO HE WENT IN AND OUT AMONG THEM AT JERUSALEM, PREACHING BOLDLY IN THE NAME OF THE LORD. 29 AND HE SPOKE AND DISPUTED AGAINST THE HELLENISTS. BUT THEY WERE SEEKING TO KILL HIM. 30 AND WHEN THE BROTHERS LEARNED THIS, THEY BROUGHT HIM DOWN TO CAESAREA AND SENT HIM OFF TO TARSUS. 31 SO THE CHURCH THROUGHOUT ALL JUDEA AND GALILEE AND SAMARIA HAD PEACE AND WAS BEING BUILT UP. AND WALKING IN THE FEAR OF THE LORD AND IN THE COMFORT OF THE HOLY SPIRIT, IT MULTIPLIED.

THE HEALING OF AENEAS

32 NOW AS PETER WENT HERE AND THERE AMONG THEM ALL, HE CAME DOWN ALSO TO THE SAINTS WHO LIVED AT LYDDA. 33 THERE HE FOUND A MAN NAMED AENEAS, BEDRIDDEN FOR EIGHT YEARS, WHO WAS PARALYZED. 34 AND PETER SAID TO HIM, "AENEAS, JESUS CHRIST HEALS YOU; RISE AND MAKE YOUR BED." AND IMMEDIATELY HE ROSE. 35 AND ALL THE RESIDENTS OF LYDDA AND SHARON SAW HIM, AND THEY TURNED TO THE LORD.

DORCAS RESTORED TO LIFE

36 NOW THERE WAS IN JOPPA A DISCIPLE NAMED TABITHA, WHICH, TRANSLATED, MEANS DORCAS. SHE WAS FULL OF GOOD WORKS AND ACTS OF CHARITY. 37 IN THOSE DAYS SHE BECAME ILL AND DIED, AND WHEN THEY HAD WASHED HER, THEY LAID HER IN AN UPPER ROOM. 38 SINCE LYDDA WAS NEAR JOPPA, THE DISCIPLES, HEARING THAT PETER WAS THERE, SENT TWO MEN TO HIM, URGING HIM, "PLEASE COME TO US WITHOUT DELAY." 39 SO PETER ROSE AND WENT WITH THEM. AND WHEN HE ARRIVED, THEY TOOK HIM TO THE UPPER ROOM. ALL THE WIDOWS STOOD BESIDE HIM WEeping AND SHOWING TUNICS AND OTHER GARMENTS THAT DORCAS MADE WHILE SHE WAS WITH THEM. 40 BUT PETER PUT THEM ALL OUTSIDE, AND KNELT DOWN AND PRAYED; AND TURNING TO THE BODY HE SAID, "TABITHA, ARISE." AND SHE OPENED HER EYES, AND WHEN SHE SAW PETER SHE SAT UP. 41 AND HE GAVE HER HIS HAND AND RAISED HER UP. THEN CALLING THE SAINTS AND WIDOWS, HE PRESENTED HER ALIVE. 42 AND IT BECAME KNOWN THROUGHOUT ALL JOPPA, AND MANY BELIEVED IN THE LORD. 43 AND HE STAYED IN JOPPA FOR MANY DAYS WITH ONE SIMON, A TANNER.

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