Conversion Of A Heathen City

Intro: Jesus gave the apostles (and thus us) a great commission (Mat. 28:19-20 “Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: 20Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world. Amen.” Mark 16:15-16 “And he said unto them, Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature. 16He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned.” Luke 24:46-49 “And they believed the things concerning the kingdom of God, and the name of Jesus Christ, they were baptized, both men and women”). In Acts 2 we see the Gospel being preached in Jerusalem. In Acts 8 we see the Gospel being preached to the Samaritans for the first time.

The preaching to the Samaritans came as a result of persecution; something Christ foretold His disciples would undergo. However, persecution has always helped the church (Acts 8:4-5, 12 “Therefore they that were scattered abroad went every where preaching the word. 5Then Philip went down to the city of Samaria, and preached Christ unto them…. 12But 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”). We want to notice four outstanding lessons to be learned from this narrative.

I. THE PEOPLE OF SAMARIA.

A. They were spiritually ignorant

1. Superstitious and credulous (having a readiness to believe things)
2. This is evident by the fact they gave heed to sorcery.
   a. Acts 8:9-11 “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: 10To whom they all gave heed, from the least to the greatest, saying, This man is the great power of God. 11And to him they had regard, because that of long time he had bewitched them with sorceries.”
   b. They felt that sorcery was the great power of God.
   c. They felt it was right.
   d. Feelings are not to be relied upon in religious matters.
      (1) Pro. 14:12 “There is a way which seemeth right unto a man, but the end thereof are the ways of death.”
      (2) Jer. 10:23 “O LORD, I know that the way of man is not in himself: it is not in man that walketh to direct his steps.”
      (3) Isa. 55:8-9 “For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, saith the LORD. 8For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways, and my thoughts than your thoughts.”
      (4) In so many (if not all) of the conversions recorded in the Bible it was of those who felt right previously.

B. They were unbiased

1. When they saw the miracles performed by Philip, they gave heed to his message.
2. Acts 17:11 “These were more noble than those in Thessalonica, in that they received the word with all readiness of mind, and searched the scriptures daily, whether those things were so.”
3. One of the great hindrances to the salvation of souls today is the prejudice we encounter in the hearts of men.

C. They were people of conviction
1. When they saw they were wrong religiously, they immediately forsook the wrong way for the right.
2. How the world needs this characteristic today.

II. The Preacher.
A. Philip the evangelist
B. He is one of the seven:
1. Acts 6:3-5 “Wherefore, brethren, look ye out among you seven men of honest report, full of the Holy Ghost and wisdom, whom we may appoint over this business. But we will give ourselves continually to prayer, and to the ministry of the word. And the saying pleased the whole multitude: and they chose Stephen, a man full of faith and of the Holy Ghost, and Philip, and Prochorus, and Nicanor, and Timon, and Parmenas, and Nicolas a proselyte of Antioch:"
2. He (as the other six) was a man:
   a. Honest report
      (1) He had a good reputation both within and without the church.
      (2) He was an example of Christianity:
         (a) 2 Cor. 3:2 “Ye are our epistle written in our hearts, known and read of all men:"
         (b) 1 Tim. 4:12 “Let no man despise thy youth; but be thou an example of the believers, in word, in conversation, in charity, in spirit, in faith, in purity.”
         (c) Mat. 5:13-16 “Ye are the salt of the earth: but if the salt have lost his savour, wherewith shall it be salted? it is thenceforth good for nothing, but to be cast out, and to be trodden under foot of men. Ye are the light of the world. A city that is set on an hill cannot be hid. Neither do men light a candle, and put it under a bushel, but on a candlestick; and it giveth light unto all that are in the house. Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven.”
   b. Full of the Holy Spirit
      (1) He possessed a holy life producing the fruit of the Spirit in his life.
      (2) Gal. 5:22-23 “But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, Meekness, temperance: against such there is no law.”
   c. Wisdom
      (1) He had good practical sense.
      (2) Jam. 3:13-18 “Who is a wise man and endued with knowledge among you? let him shew out of a good conversation his works with meekness of wisdom. But if ye have bitter envying and strife in your hearts, glory not, and lie not against the truth. This wisdom desceneth not from above, but earthly, sensual, devilish. For where envying and strife is, there is confusion and every evil work. But the wisdom that is from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, and easy to be intreated, full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality, and without hypocrisy. And the fruit of righteousness is sown in peace of them that make peace.”
C. The world and the church need this type of men today.
III. The Message.

A. Preached Christ; Acts 8:5 “Then Philip went down to the city of Samaria, and preached Christ unto them.”

B. What does it mean to preach Christ?

1. His name
   a. Lord
      (1) Means master or ruler.
      (2) Acts 2:36 “Therefore let all the house of Israel know assuredly, that God hath made that same Jesus, whom ye have crucified, both Lord and Christ.”
      (3) Acts 10:36 “The word which God sent unto the children of Israel, preaching peace by Jesus Christ: (he is Lord of all:)
   b. Jesus
      (1) Means “Savior.”
      (2) Mat. 1:21 “And she shall bring forth a son, and thou shalt call his name JESUS: for he shall save his people from their sins.”
      (3) John 14:6 “Jesus saith unto him, I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me.”
      (4) Acts 4:12 “Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved.”
   c. Christ
      (1) Means anointed one
      (2) He is anointed as priest, prophet, and king.
         (a) Priest; Heb. 3:1 “Wherefore, holy brethren, partakers of the heavenly calling, consider the Apostle and High Priest of our profession, Christ Jesus;”
         (b) Prophet; Acts 3:22-23 “For Moses truly said unto the fathers, A prophet shall the Lord your God raise up unto you of your brethren, like unto me; him shall ye hear in all things whatsoever he shall say unto you. 23And it shall come to pass, every soul, which will not hear that prophet, shall be destroyed from among the people.”
         (c) King; Acts 2:30-33 “Therefore being a prophet, and knowing that God had sworn with an oath to him, that of the fruit of his loins, according to the flesh, he would raise up Christ to sit on his throne; 31He seeing this before spake of the resurrection of Christ, that his soul was not left in hell, neither his flesh did see corruption. 32This Jesus hath God raised up, whereof we all are witnesses. 33Therefore being by the right hand of God exalted, and having received of the Father the promise of the Holy Ghost, he hath shed forth this, which ye now see and hear.”

2. Preach the church
   a. Acts 8:12 “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.”
   b. It is impossible to separate Christ from His church.
      (1) He is the head, the church is the body; Eph. 1:22-23 “And hath put all things under his feet, and gave him to be the head over all things to the church, 23Which is his body, the fulness of him that filleth all in all.”
      (2) When Saul persecuted the church, Jesus said he was persecuting Him; Acts 9:4 “And he fell to the earth, and heard a voice saying unto him, Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me?”
3. **Preach baptism**
   a. Acts 8:12 “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.”
   b. Acts 8:36-38 “And as they went on their way, they came unto a certain water: and the eunuch said, See, here is water; what doth hinder me to be baptized? 37And Philip said, If thou believest with all thine heart, thou mayest. And he answered and said, I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God. 38And he commanded the chariot to stand still: and they went down both into the water, both Philip and the eunuch; and he baptized him.”

**IV. THE RESULTS**

A. **Acts 8:12** “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.”

   1. They believed.
      a. The name of Jesus Christ—His authority.
      b. The kingdom of God—the church.
   2. They were baptized.

B. **This is the same as others:**

   1. The Ethiopian eunuch
      a. Acts 8:26-40
      b. Philip preached Jesus to him; Acts 8:35 “Then Philip opened his mouth, and began at the same scripture, and preached unto him Jesus.”
      c. He believed and was baptized; Acts 8:36-38 “And as they went on their way, they came unto a certain water: and the eunuch said, See, here is water; what doth hinder me to be baptized? 37And Philip said, If thou believest with all thine heart, thou mayest. And he answered and said, I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God. 38And he commanded the chariot to stand still: and they went down both into the water, both Philip and the eunuch; and he baptized him.”
   2. It is the same as all the conversions recorded in Acts.
   3. The results will ever be the same.

Conclusion: God has provided the way for salvation. Will you, like the Samaritans, have the conviction of heart and mind to obey God’s plan?