

LESSON 6

THE CHURCH ON THE MOVE

Read Acts 8 & Study Note: Prophets & Prophecy

FACT QUESTIONS

1. How did the Lord use the great persecution in Jerusalem to spread the Good News? Have you ever been through a difficult time in your life, yet looking back on it later, you saw that the Lord had used it for good (**Genesis 50:20 & Romans 8:28**)?
2. What was Saul doing to try to stop the growth of the church (**Matthew 16:18**)? According to God's Word in **Matt. 16:18**, what does it say about trying to stop the message of Christ and His church?
3. Who had gone before Philip (the deacon, not the apostle) to prepare hearts in Samaria (**John 4**)? Why were Peter and John sent to Samaria when Philip was already there?

LESSON QUESTIONS

4. Why do you think that Peter rebuked Simon so harshly when he asked (even offered money) for the ability to lay hands on people so that they would receive the Holy Spirit?

5. The Ethiopian was reading the Book of Isaiah the prophet. What did the Holy Spirit tell Philip to do?

6. How did the Ethiopian respond to the good news about Jesus? What happened to Philip when they came up out of the water?

7. **CHALLENGE:** Read **Isaiah 53** and list all the ways that the Lord Jesus fulfilled the words of this prophecy.

HEART APPLICATION QUESTIONS

8. List the responses to the truth of Jesus through **Acts 8**. Which one do you most relate to? What is your response to God's offer of salvation (**Romans 10:9**)? What has been your response to Jesus this week?

9. Persecution comes in many forms as we choose to follow Jesus. How have you experienced persecution from a family member, your workplace, school, or even someone in your community? What has been your response? Ask this of someone on the mission field and stop to pray for them!

10. Read aloud the memory verse below! What attributes of God do you see in it? In prayer, personalize **Isaiah 53:6**.

Memory Verse - Isaiah 53:6

"All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned - every one - to his own way; and the LORD has laid on him the iniquity of us all."

LESSON 6

STUDY NOTES

PROPHETS & PROPHECY

The Bible is filled with prophecy from Genesis to Revelation.

Prophecy is simply a message from God. Whether by vision or dream or a revelation through the Holy Spirit, God spoke to various men and women called prophets in order to bring His message to His people.

Prophecy can be a revelation of future events - "God recording history in advance" - or it can be any authoritative message from God.

The very first prophecy in the Bible, referred to by Bible scholars as the "proto-evangelium," was given by God Himself in the Garden of Eden. After Adam and Eve sinned, the Lord pronounced judgment. But, in the midst of the punishments was a promise - a prophecy that would not be fulfilled until the coming of Jesus Christ.

Genesis 3:15 says, "And I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your offspring and hers; he will crush your head, and you will strike his heel."

This promise declared that the offspring of the woman would triumph over sin, crushing Satan's head by defeating the work of the devil on the cross. God was proclaiming the Gospel message, the promise of the Savior who would come through Eve's distant offspring, the Lord Jesus Christ.

Moses, the great lawgiver of Israel, was a prophet and recorded the first five books of the Bible - also called the Torah or Pentateuch. In **Deuteronomy 18**, Moses spoke of another "Prophet," another promise of the Messiah to come, the Lord Jesus Christ. He alone is Prophet, Priest and King.

Moses' sister, Miriam, was a prophet in her day and led the women who had come out of Egypt in praise to God. Deborah, one of Israel's judges, was also a prophet, and she led Israel into battle against a powerful army (**Judges 4-5**).

From the time of Samuel on there is a concentration of prophetic messages in the Bible. Samuel was both a prophet and a priest and the last of the judges of Israel. Samuel anointed David, Israel's greatest king. David wrote many Psalms including prophetic Psalms (Messianic Psalms) - **Psalms 2, 22, 69 and 110**.

After Solomon's reign, the nation of Israel was divided. Elijah was a prophet to the northern kingdom of Israel. He warned of impending judgment if the nation refused to repent and turn from idol worship back to worship of the one true God. The prophet Elisha followed in Elijah's footsteps. The prophets that followed Elijah and Elisha were what are called the "writing prophets."

In the Old Testament there are four major “writing” prophets: Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel and Daniel as well as twelve minor prophets. They are called “minor” not because their message is less important, but rather because their message is shorter in length. Each of these books bears the name of the prophet who wrote it. The message remained the same throughout, “repent and seek the Lord.”

Often the message of the prophets was not well-received by the people. Jeremiah was thrown into a cistern and threatened with death. He was called the “weeping prophet,” because of his deep sorrow and grief over the judgment of God that would lay waste to the Holy City of Jerusalem.

The prophet Ezekiel was given a great vision of God and His glory and years later a vision of a valley of dry bones that came to life. Ezekiel’s prophecy ends with a vision of the restoration of the Temple in Jerusalem and God’s glory returning to the Temple. Ezekiel prophesied for over two decades during Israel’s captivity in Babylon.

The prophet Daniel prophesied as a captive in Babylon for 70 years. Like Ezekiel, Daniel had visions of things to come. In addition, Daniel was given the ability to interpret dreams. Daniel was thrown into a lion’s den for refusing to stop praying to the one true God. Being a prophet is not for the faint of heart.

Amos and Zechariah saw visions, Joel spoke of judgment, and the prophet Hosea was told to live out God’s message to His people.

In the Sermon on the Mount Jesus said, “Blessed are you when people insult you, persecute you and falsely say all kinds of evil against you because of me. Rejoice and be glad, because great is your reward in heaven, for in the same way they persecuted the prophets who were before you” (**Matthew 5:11-12**).

John the Baptist was the last of the Old Testament prophets. He came as the forerunner of Israel’s Messiah. Like many prophets before him, John was eventually martyred for speaking the truth. But his message lives on, “Repent, for the kingdom of heaven has come near” (**Matthew 3:2**).

Unfortunately, not all prophets speak the truth. Throughout the Bible there are warnings about false prophets. Moses said that the signs of a true prophet would be if what they said about the future came to pass and if they directed the people to worship God alone (**Deuteronomy 13**).

Jesus warned, “Watch out for false prophets. They come to you in sheep’s clothing, but inwardly they are ferocious wolves. By their fruit you will recognize them” (**Matthew 7:15-16**).

LESSON 6: MESSAGE NOTES

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PRAISES & PRAYER REQUESTS