

# **HISTORY OF THE EARLY CHURCH**

## **WEEK 8**

### **THE FIRST LEADERSHIP**

Acts 6:1-7 But as the believers rapidly multiplied, there were rumblings of discontent. The Greek-speaking believers complained about the Hebrew-speaking believers, saying that their widows were being discriminated against in the daily distribution of food. 2 So the Twelve called a meeting of all the believers. They said, “We apostles should spend our time teaching the word of God, not running a food program. 3 And so, brothers, select seven men who are well respected and are full of the Spirit and wisdom. We will give them this responsibility. 4 Then we apostles can spend our time in prayer and teaching the word.” 5 Everyone liked this idea, and they chose the following: Stephen (a man full of faith and the Holy Spirit), Philip, Procorus, Nicanor, Timon, Parmenas, and Nicolas of Antioch (an earlier convert to the Jewish faith). 6 These seven were presented to the apostles, who prayed for them as they laid their hands on them. 7 So God’s message continued to spread. The number of believers greatly increased in Jerusalem, and many of the Jewish priests were converted, too. NLT

### **WHAT PROMPTED THE LEADERSHIP APPOINTMENT?**

### **WHAT WERE THE PREREQUISITES?**

### **WHAT WAS THE RESULT?**

### **MOTIVES TESTED**

Acts 8:9-24 A man named Simon had been a sorcerer there for many years, amazing the people of Samaria and claiming to be someone great. 10 Everyone, from the least to the greatest, often spoke of him as “the Great One—the Power of God.” 11 They listened closely to him because for a long time he had astounded them with his magic. 12 But now the people believed Philip’s message of Good News concerning the Kingdom of God and the name of Jesus Christ. As a result, many men and women were baptized. 13 Then Simon himself believed and was baptized. He began following Philip wherever he went, and he was amazed by the signs and great miracles Philip performed. 14 When the apostles in Jerusalem heard that the people of Samaria had accepted God’s message, they sent Peter and John there. 15 As soon as they arrived, they prayed for these new believers to receive the Holy Spirit. 16 The Holy Spirit had not yet come upon any of them, for they had only been baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus. 17 Then Peter and John laid their hands upon these believers, and they received the Holy Spirit.

Acts 8:18 When Simon saw that the Spirit was given when the apostles laid their hands on people, he offered them money to buy this power. 19 “Let me have this power, too,” he exclaimed, “so that when I lay my hands on people, they will receive the Holy Spirit!” 20 But Peter replied, “May your money be destroyed with you for thinking God’s gift can be bought! 21 You can have no part in this, for your heart is not right with God. 22 Repent of your wickedness and pray to the Lord. Perhaps he will forgive your evil thoughts, 23 for I can see that you are full of bitter jealousy and are held captive by sin.” 24 “Pray to the Lord for me,” Simon exclaimed, “that these terrible things you’ve said won’t happen to me!” NLT

**WHAT WAS THE TEST AND WHY IS IT IMPORTANT?**

**POWER RELEASED**

Acts 8:26-40 As for Philip, an angel of the Lord said to him, “Go south down the desert road that runs from Jerusalem to Gaza.” 27 So he started out, and he met the treasurer of Ethiopia, a eunuch of great authority under the Kandake, the queen of Ethiopia. The eunuch had gone to Jerusalem to worship, 28 and he was now returning. Seated in his carriage, he was reading aloud from the book of the prophet Isaiah. 29 The Holy Spirit said to Philip, “Go over and walk along beside the carriage.” 30 Philip ran over and heard the man reading from the prophet Isaiah. Philip asked, “Do you understand what you are reading?” 31 The man replied, “How can I, unless someone instructs me?” And he urged Philip to come up into the carriage and sit with him. 32 The passage of Scripture he had been reading was this: “He was led like a sheep to the slaughter. And as a lamb is silent before the shearers, he did not open his mouth. 33 He was humiliated and received no justice. Who can speak of his descendants? For his life was taken from the earth.” 34 The eunuch asked Philip, “Tell me, was the prophet talking about himself or someone else?” 35 So beginning with this same Scripture, Philip told him the Good News about Jesus. 36 As they rode along, they came to some water, and the eunuch said, “Look! There’s some water! Why can’t I be baptized?” 38 He ordered the carriage to stop, and they went down into the water, and Philip baptized him. 39 When they came up out of the water, the Spirit of the Lord snatched Philip away. The eunuch never saw him again but went on his way rejoicing. 40 Meanwhile, Philip found himself farther north at the town of Azotus. He preached the Good News there and in every town along the way until he came to Caesarea. NLT

**WHAT IS THE IMPORTANCE OF THIS STORY?**

**WHAT IS THE SPIRITUAL PRINCIPLE?**