

# PERSECUTION BEGINS



- Acts 8 is a pivot point
- Stoning of Stephen marks the beginning of persecution of Believers
- Issues are matters of *halakhah*, mainly over who the Messiah is
- Labels are a communication shorthand, causing subconscious mental images
- Labels often elicit knee-jerk emotions, and become stereotypes that are difficult to correct later on

**HELLO! I AM**

What you  
label me





# LABELS: CHRISTIAN & CHURCH

- “Church” concept didn’t occur for at least another century
- Antioch first use of term “Christians” is misleading
- ***Christianos***
- ***Christos*** = anointed one
- ***Mashiach*** = anointed one
- Messianic = followers of Messiah
- ***Christianos*** = followers of Messiah





# THE WAY



- Jewish Believers called themselves “The Way”
- Called by others, “*Notzrim*” and “*Natzratim*”
- Translates to Nazarenes, people from Nazareth
- Chabad - Lubavitch      Rabbi Schneerson
- Lubavitch faction believes Schneerson is Messiah, rest of Chabad does not
- Issues over *halakhah*, Traditions, Oral Torah caused Chabad to split
- Despite fervent differences, no thought that Believers abandoned Judaism, stopped being Jews, or formed new religion

# LOVE ! NOT TOLERANCE

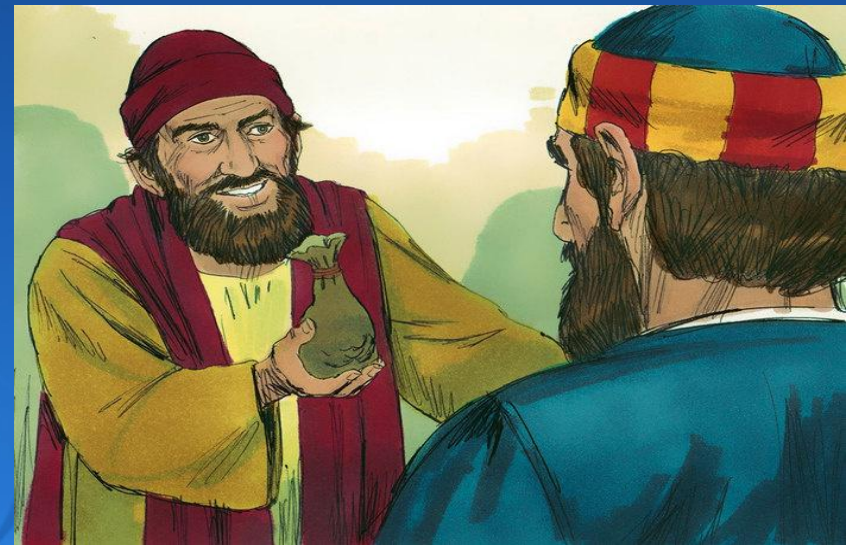


- If we count on Yeshua for redemption, then we all share one Spirit
- We can disagree on doctrines, leave one group to join another, but we're still brothers and sisters in the faith
- Goal is to encourage Believers to return to God's Word, abandon manmade doctrines, and live by God's laws and commandments
- Hatred towards other Believers is wrong



# THE SAMARIAN SURPRISE

- Samaritans seen as ungodly hybrids
- Samaria seen as foreign by Jews
- Philip brings the Gospel to Samaria and many come to faith
- Peter and John come to investigate, because it seems improbable
- Shimon the sorcerer also accepted Yeshua
- Belief comes suddenly, but deeper understanding takes time and effort





# TRUE EVANGELISM

- You don't have to be a Bible expert to take the Good News to others
- One on One: relational, not informational
- Gaza is no longer a city, only a general location
- Gaza Road led to Via Maris trade route
- Ethiopia (Kush) south of Egypt
- Eunuch on his way home





# PHILIP AND THE EUNUCH



- Kandake, a dynasty of Ethiopian Queens
- A castrated male
- Bible views this as wrong, mutilation
- No offspring, end of the bloodline
- Deut.23:2
- Violates Abrahamic Covenant
- Castrated male can participate in worship on a limited basis
- Eunuch likely went to a Synagogue, not to the Temple
- A God-fearer, not a convert to Judaism



# PHILIP TEACHES ABOUT ISAIAH 53

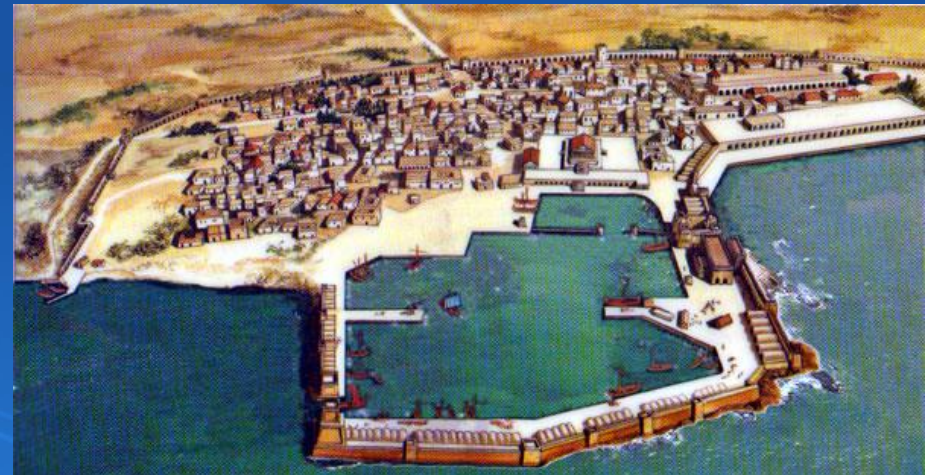
- Philip has been going to the outcasts
- He brought them into the Kingdom!
- As used in Acts 8, Isaiah passage is from the Greek LXX
- The Suffering Servant
- Judaism generally saw the servant as Israel
- Philip explains it is Yeshua





# PHILIP IMMERSSES THE EUNUCH

- Eunuch raises the issue of immersion (baptism)
- ***“Anything to PREVENT me from being immersed ?”***
- As a eunuch he likely had not been allowed to immerse in mikveh
- Suddenly Philip “snatched away”
- ***Harpazo***; also in 1Thess. 4 to describe being caught up in the clouds to meet Christ
- Philip finds himself in Ashdod, eventually journeys to Caesarea Maritima



**CAESAREA MARITIMA**



# ACTS CHAPTER 9



- Story focuses on Paul of Tarsus
- We only find out who Paul is and what his terms meant to him in the Book of Acts
- A Diaspora Jew, tribe of Benjamin
- Sha'ul is Hebrew, Paul is Latin
- Acts 13:9 assures us that Sha'ul is his given name
- Tarsus about 1/2 million population, with many Synagogues



