



**The Overcomers Christian Fellowship International  
Plymouth, Headquarters. United Kingdom.**

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**OCFI BIBLE STUDY.**

**23/05/16 "ACTS OF THE APOSTLES"- CHAPTER EIGHT.**

**Memory Verse: Acts 8:4 "Therefore they that were scattered abroad went everywhere preaching the Word".**

**OBJECTIVES IN STUDYING CHAPTER EIGHT.**

- 1) To note the spread of the gospel into Judea and Samaria, as foretold by Jesus (**Acts 1:8**).
- 2) To review the conversions of the Samaritans and the Ethiopian eunuch
- 3) To examine the apostolic ministry of imparting the Spirit through the laying on of hands

**INTRODUCTION:**

Following the martyrdom of Stephen, the church in Jerusalem was severely persecuted. Prominent in leading the persecution was young Saul, going so far as to enter homes and dragging men and women off to prison (**1-3**).

This led to the dispersion of the church throughout Judea and Samaria, though the apostles remained in Jerusalem. Those who were scattered went everywhere preaching the Word, including Philip (one of the seven men selected to help needy widows, Acts **6:5**). Preaching Christ and performing miracles, many Samaritans believed and were baptized, including a sorcerer named Simon. When the apostles heard that the Samaritans had received the Word, they sent Peter and John to impart the Spirit through the laying on of hands. When Simon tried to buy the ability to impart spiritual gifts, Peter strongly rebuked him and told him to repent and pray for forgiveness. Peter and John eventually made their way back to Jerusalem, preaching the gospel in many villages of the Samaritans (**5-25**).

Philip was then told by an angel to go along the road between Jerusalem and Gaza where he saw a man reading in his chariot, who happened to be a eunuch and treasurer of Queen Candace of Ethiopia. Told by the Spirit to overtake the chariot, Philip heard him reading from the prophet Isaiah. Invited to explain the passage in Isaiah (Isa.53:7-8).

Philip proceeded to preach Jesus to him. When they came to some water, the eunuch requested to be baptized and Philip did so upon hearing his confession of faith. When they came up out of the water, the Spirit caught Philip away and the eunuch resumed his journey with great joy. Philip was later found at Azotus, and continued to preach in the cities until he came to Caesarea (**26-40**).

**OUTLINE**

**I. PERSECUTION OF CHRISTIANS AFTER STEPHEN'S DEATH (1-4)**

**A. THE CHURCH PERSECUTED (1-3)**

1. Saul consents to Stephen's death

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2. A great persecution arose against the church in Jerusalem. Christians fleeing into the countryside and towns scattered throughout Judea and Samaria.

Except the apostles who remained in Jerusalem to possibly provide a headquarters for the developing Christian movement.

3. Stephen buried and lamented by devout men; possibly they could have been Pharisees, like Gamaliel, who felt that the Council's reaction had been rash and ill-advised.

4. Saul makes havoc of the church, with systematic, hateful enthusiasm imprisoning men and even the women received no mercy.

**B. THE CHRISTIANS PREACHING (4)**

Those scattered abroad went everywhere preaching the Word. Persecution now having the opposite effect from the one intended spreading as Jesus said it would (Acts 1:8).

**II. CONVERSION OF THE SAMARITANS (5-25)**

**A. PHILIP AT SAMARIA (5-13)**

1. One of Stephen's colleagues on the diaconate had found his way to Samaria preaching Christ to them. Samaritans - sworn enemies of the Jews; they hated each other (John 4:9). The good news is already crossing cultural, religious and racial boundaries, bringing healing and forgiveness.

2. Multitudes give heed to the Word, seeing the miracles he did. Casting out unclean spirits (deliverance service!).

Healing the paralyzed and lame; thus creating great joy in the city

3. Background on Simon the sorcerer; previously practiced sorcery, astonishing the people; claiming to be great to whom people gave heed, calling him "the great power of God"

4. Many Samaritans converted. Believed Philip preaching concerning the kingdom of God and the name of Jesus were baptized, both men and women

Simon also believes and is baptized and continued with Philip; amazed with the signs and miracles that were done (John 14:12).

**Lesson to learn:** Simeon's displays of wonder are called "magic"; Philip's are called "miracles". Simeon talks about himself; Philip's talks about God. After Simon's "magic" people follow him; after Philip's "miracles" people follow Jesus! Is Simeon's conversion genuine (John 2 :23-25)? Are such "believers" in the Church now a days? What are those "believers" looking for in the Church?

**B. PETER AND JOHN AT SAMARIA (14-25)**

1. Peter and John sent to Samaria by the apostles at Jerusalem who heard the Samaritans received the Word of God.

2. Peter and John impart the Holy Spirit praying for the Samaritans by laying hands on them, for they had only been baptized in the name of Jesus.

3. Simon tries to buy the gift of imparting the Spirit and offered Peter and John money for the same gift.

Peter strongly rebukes Simon for both his action and his attitude. Actually he seems to get away with quite lightly compared with Ananias and Sapphira (Acts 5:1-11)! The Apostles cannot be "bought" and neither can God's power!.

Peter counsels Simon to repent and pray for forgiveness for he is poisoned by bitterness and bound by iniquity. Simon pleads with Peter to pray for him

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**QUESTIONS:**

- (1) Jealousy played a big part in Simeon's downfall. Why is it so dangerous? How do we spot it in ourselves? What can we do to conquer it?
- (2) Can "ministers" of God be bought in today's Christendom? Which one is easier to be bought today- "ministers" of God or "God's power"?
- (3) Should we expect the miraculous in our evangelism? What problems might it cause?
- (4) Make a list of why do we follow Jesus / worship God? Reasons could either be "us-centred" (e.g. saves us, joyful...) & "God-centred" (e.g. holy, Almighty...). What can we learn from the exercise?

**III. CONVERSION OF THE ETHIOPIAN EUNUCH (26-40)**

**A. PHILIP SENT TO THE EUNUCH (26-29)**

1. An angel of the Lord supernaturally tells Philip to go south toward Gaza in a desert area to meet a man of great authority; a eunuch from Ethiopia in charge of the treasury (chancellor of the exchequer) of Candace, queen of Ethiopia.
2. A religious man who had travelled to Jerusalem to worship, reading from Isaiah on his return home; the Spirit tells Philip to overtake the chariot.

**B. PHILIP PREACHES JESUS TO THE EUNUCH (30-40)**

1. Philip approaches the eunuch (probably an official title & not a physical description denoting the removal of his testicles)! Hears him reading from **Isaiah 53:7-8**; & asked him if he understands what he was reading. The eunuch desires help in understanding the subject of the passage
2. Beginning with that scripture, He preached Jesus to him & coming to an oasis, the eunuch requests baptism which requires faith in Jesus, which the eunuch confesses.
3. Both went into the water, and Philip baptized the eunuch and went on his way rejoicing.
4. After the baptism Philip disappears, adding a supernatural ending to a story with a supernatural start; and was later found at Azotus, and preached in all the cities till he came to Caesarea.

**CONCLUSION:**

The gospel makes another advance: first the Jews, then the Samaritans, now a black African in a position of great influence. Jesus is alive because His power & message continue to change lives!. As the story of the Church unfolds in Acts, we see the gospel reaching out to more and more people. These people are not only distant from Jerusalem geographically, but also in culture, religion, race & colour. Almost all the prejudices of a first - century Jew are confronted. No one is barred; everyone is welcome; the gospel knows no "exclusion zones".

**QUESTIONS:**

- (1) Baptism is very important in Acts 8:36; 2:38 & 41. Have you been baptised? Why is it important?
- (2) Notice the three divine "nudges" Philip got in this story (vv.26,29 & 39). Why is it important to be sensitive to the Holy Spirit in evangelism? How can we learn to listen to Him as we witness?
- (3) Isaiah was talking about Jesus & so was Philip. Who are we talking about? Does Jesus feature strongly in our conversation and lives? Why? / Why not?.

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**REVIEW QUESTIONS FOR THE CHAPTER**

- 1) What are the main points of this chapter?
- 2) Who consented to Stephen's death? (1)
- 3) What happened at that time? What was the result? (1)
- 4) What was Saul doing? (3)
- 5) What did those who were scattered do? (4)
- 6) Who went to Samaria and preached Christ to them? (5)
- 7) How did the multitudes respond? Why? (6)
- 8) What kind of miracles did Philip perform? (7)
- 9) Who had the Samaritans previously heeded? (9-11)
- 10) What things did Philip preach that the Samaritans believed? (12)
- 11) How did the Samaritans respond to Philip's preaching? (12)
- 12) Who else believed and was baptized? (13)
- 13) Who was sent to Samaria by the apostles? Why? (14-16)
- 14) How was the Holy Spirit imparted to the Samaritans? (17-18)
- 15) What did Simon try to do? (18-19)
- 16) Why did Peter refuse and then rebuke Simon for his offer? (20-23)
- 17) What did Peter tell Simon to do in order to be forgiven? What did Simon ask? (22)
- 18) As Peter and John returned to Jerusalem, what did they do? (25)
- 19) Where was Philip told to go next? Who told him? (26)
- 20) Who did Philip see? What was the man doing? (27-28)
- 21) Who told Philip to overtake the chariot? (29)
- 22) When Philip heard him reading, what did he ask? How did the eunuch respond? (30-31)
- 23) Where in Isaiah was the eunuch reading? (32-33)

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- 24) What did the eunuch want to know? (34)
- 25) Beginning from that passage, what did Philip preach? (35)
- 26) When they came to water, what did the eunuch ask? How did Philip respond? (36-37)
- 27) How did Philip baptize the eunuch? (38-39)
- 28) What happened when they came up out of the water? What did the eunuch do? (39)
- 29) Where was Philip found? What did he then do? (40)

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