FIVE-DAY THEOLOGY COURSE

# ACTS

## The Spirit of God in Mission

TAUGHT BY

**Lec SK. KIERU**

## Chapter 5: Persecution and Witness

The witness of scattered believers, Philip's Spirit-empowered witness in Samaria, the Samaritan outpouring, and Philip's Spirit-directed ministry in Gaza

Day 1: Understanding Acts and Preparing for Pentecost · Day 2: The Spirit-Empowered Church in Jerusalem and Beyond · Day 3: The Gentile Mission and Paul's Missionary Expansion · Day 4: Paul's Missionary Journeys, Jerusalem and Rome

Day 5: Final examination (2026-10-09)

*Based on Acts: The Spirit of God in Mission by Denzil R. Miller. Africa's Hope, 2017.*

**Lec SK. KIERU**
Student notes for class and revision

CHAPTER 5 · UNIT 3 · DAY 2

# Persecution and Witness

*The witness of scattered believers, Philip's Spirit-empowered witness in Samaria, the Samaritan outpouring, and Philip's Spirit-directed ministry in Gaza*

Taught by Lec SK. KIERU

Source: Acts: The Spirit of God in Mission - Denzil R. Miller (Based on Chapter 5)

Chapter purpose. This chapter shows how the church responded to the savage persecution that broke out in Jerusalem: the scattered believers preached everywhere they went, Philip preached Christ in Samaria, and Peter and John came so the Samaritans could be filled with the Holy Spirit.

*The last two chapters showed how two (and probably many more) mighty outpourings of the Spirit made the Jerusalem church a mighty evangelistic force in the city. Those same outpourings also prepared it for the persecution that now scatters it into Judea and Samaria, the next item on Jesus' "Acts 1:8 agenda".*

### Bible reading: Acts 8:1-40

Read Acts 8:1-40 before beginning this chapter. The chapter then asks you to review or read each portion again as you reach it: Acts 8:1-4, Acts 8:5-8, Acts 8:9-25, and Acts 8:26-40.

## Learning Objectives

• Explain why Luke would include the story of the persecution and scattering of the Jerusalem church in his narrative.

• Show how the church's scattering into Judea and Samaria relates to Jesus' statement in Acts 1:8.

• State the indications in the text that the Samaritans were truly saved as a result of Philip's ministry.

• Explain why the apostles sent Peter and John to Samaria, and what the Samaritan outpouring accomplished.

• Explain how the story of Philip and the Ethiopian eunuch is an example of a "divine appointment".

## Before This Lesson, Read Your Bible

### Acts 8:1-40

Read the whole of Acts 8 before the lesson. Each part of the lesson has its own portion to review: Acts 8:1-4 for the witness of scattered believers, Acts 8:5-8 for Philip in Samaria, Acts 8:9-25 for the Samaritan outpouring, and Acts 8:26-40 for the road to Gaza.

## The Big Idea

**The church transitioned from a Jewish sect to an international missionary force.**

## The Transitional Period Begins

• In the last two chapters we saw how, as a result of two (and probably many more) mighty outpourings of the Holy Spirit on the church in Jerusalem, it became a mighty evangelistic force in the city.

• The church was equipped to fulfill its mission of reaching the people of Jerusalem (1:8), but it was also prepared for what lay ahead.

• The Jerusalem Christians were soon to experience a savage outbreak of persecution that would cause them to flee for their very lives.

• The believers were unaware of what was to come, but God knew. He was preparing them by filling them again and again with His Holy Spirit.

• The time had come for the church to move to the next item on Jesus' "Acts 1:8 agenda", the evangelization of Judea and Samaria.

• We are calling this the transitional period of the book of Acts (see Table 2.1). It is the time period when the church transitioned from being a purely Jewish sect to an international missionary force.

• During this period three powerful outpourings of the Holy Spirit occurred. Each served to prepare the church for its upcoming Gentile mission, which will be

discussed in Unit 4.

## The Story: The Witness of Scattered Believers (Acts 8:1-4)

On the same day Stephen was stoned, a great persecution led by Saul of Tarsus broke out against the church in Jerusalem. Saul began moving from house to house, assaulting and arresting Christian men and women and putting them into prison. Many believers fled for their lives from Jerusalem, scattering throughout the regions of Judea and Samaria. Amazingly, they preached the gospel everywhere they went! The apostles, however, remained in Jerusalem, enduring the full force of the persecution.

## Commentary on Acts 8:1-4

• The Jews' pent-up anger and resentment against the church suddenly erupted into a frenzy of violent persecution.

• Until now, the church had reached out to Jews only. Later in 13:1-4, the church would launch its Gentile mission. However, before that could happen, it needed to go through a period of transition.

### 8:1 Persecution broke out against the church

• The persecution was fierce and violent. Its source was the Jewish religious elite.

• The church's response to persecution is a major theme in Acts. Luke records how persecution came repeatedly against believers (compare Acts 4:1-22; 5:17-40; 6:12-15; 7:54-60; 8:1-3; 9:23-30).

• This realization helps us to understand Luke's intent in writing Acts. His original audience was likely enduring persecution, and as a result, it had significantly limited its evangelistic and missionary work.

• Luke wrote to address this unacceptable situation. He wrote to show how believers could triumph over persecution: by being filled with the Spirit and by remaining focused on Christ's mission to witness to all peoples before He comes again.

### 8:1 Scattered throughout Judea and Samaria

• Because of the persecution, the church was scattered throughout Judea and

Samaria.

• This scattering represents a major step forward in the church developing from a regional Jewish sect to a universal body of believers. It is the next step in the fulfillment of Jesus' agenda as stated in Acts 1:8.

• It is also the church's first venture into non-Jewish missions, and it challenged the long-held prejudices that Jewish Christians had brought into the church from their religious and cultural past.

### 8:4 [They] preached the word wherever they went

• The persecution of the church did not have the result hoped for by the Jewish authorities. Instead of stamping out the movement, it only scattered the embers of evangelism.

• Those who were scattered faithfully preached the gospel wherever they went.

• Some have said that the persecution was an act of God designed to compel the church to do what it was otherwise unwilling to do, that is, preach the gospel outside Jerusalem.

• The true message found in this story, however, is that believers of any church, if they will be filled with the Spirit and remain true to Christ's commission, can triumph over adversity and remain effective witnesses for Christ.

• What caused these persecuted believers to keep preaching, even during a time of great persecution and trauma? It was the empowerment by the Holy Spirit (2:4; 4:31).

## The Story: Philip's Spirit-Empowered Witness in Samaria (Acts 8:5-8)

Philip, one of the scattered believers, went to a city in Samaria and began preaching Christ. His Spirit-empowered preaching was accompanied by miraculous signs, including the healing of paralytics and cripples and the deliverance of people from demonic possession. Because of this, great crowds of people gathered and listened intently to his message. A great soul harvest resulted as people believed Philip's message about the good news of the kingdom of God and the name of Jesus Christ. Philip baptized those men and women who received Christ as Savior.

## Commentary on Philip in Samaria

### 8:5 Philip went down to a city in Samaria and proclaimed the Christ there

• The proclamation of Christ (that is, the gospel) is again emphasized.

• Jesus said that His disciples would be His witnesses (1:8). Two implications flow from this truth: (1) they would be witnesses for Him, that is, they would be His representatives, and (2) He would be the subject of their witness.

• Philip represents both concepts.

### 8:6 Crowds heard Philip and saw the miraculous signs he did

• Philip's witness, like that of Jesus, was not in word only but also in works (compare Acts 1:1). His Spirit-inspired proclamation was accompanied by powerful miraculous signs generated by the Spirit.

• The value of signs and wonders in evangelism is illustrated in this story. Because the crowds saw the miraculous signs of Philip, they gave heed to what he said.

• True gospel preaching always involves both a powerful proclamation of the gospel (a truth encounter) and mighty demonstrations of kingdom power (a power encounter); compare Romans 15:18-19.

### 8:8 Great joy

• The Samaritans' great joy is the result of their experience of salvation and the knowledge of sins forgiven.

• Joy is also a sign of the Spirit of God working in one's life (Luke 10:21; Acts 13:52; Romans 14:17; 15:13; Galatians 5:22; 1 Thessalonians 1:6).

### 8:12 They believed Philip as he preached the good news of the kingdom of God and the name of Jesus Christ

• We have here a description of true saving faith: the Samaritans put their faith in Jesus Christ for salvation (compare 16:31).

• The preaching of the good news of the kingdom of God is synonymous with preaching Christ (28:23, 31).

### Baptized, both men and women

• Philip, a man "full of the Spirit and wisdom" (Acts 6:3), would have never baptized these new believers in water had they not been truly converted.

• Luke again specifically mentions women. Since they were baptized in water, it must also be true that they, along with the men, were converted and later received the Holy Spirit when Peter and John prayed for them (v. 17; compare 2:38).

• It also follows that the women received the Spirit for the same purpose as the men: power to proclaim Christ (1:8).

## The Story: The Samaritan Outpouring (Acts 8:9-25)

News soon arrived in Jerusalem that Samaria had accepted the word of God. None of the Samaritans, however, had received the Holy Spirit. This circumstance so concerned the apostles that they sent Peter and John to pray with them to receive the Holy Spirit.

Upon arriving in Samaria, Peter and John began laying their hands on the new Samaritan Christians. One after another they received the Holy Spirit. Then, after praying with them, the apostles joined the Samaritans in proclaiming the gospel to the residents of the city. On their way back to Jerusalem, Peter and John preached the gospel in many Samaritan villages.

Among those who had responded to Philip's preaching in Samaria was a sorcerer by the name of Simon. Because of his occultic displays of power, Simon was followed by many and was even known as the "Great Power" (some versions, "Great Power of God"). Simon nevertheless believed Philip as he preached, and therefore he was baptized. Amazed by the miracles God was working through Philip, Simon followed him everywhere. Then when Peter and John arrived in Samaria, they prayed with the Samaritans to receive the Spirit by laying their hands on them.

Simon was especially impressed. He offered to buy this ability from the apostles. But Peter rebuked him, saying, "May your money perish with you, because you thought you could buy the gift of God with money!" Peter told Simon that he could have no part in such a ministry because his heart was not right with God but rather was full of bitterness and captive to sin. Therefore, he needed to repent of his wickedness. Simon was filled with fear and asked Peter to pray for him.

## A Missing Ingredient (Acts 8:14-16)

• How the apostles must have rejoiced when they received the news of the great soul harvest in Samaria. The gospel had been clearly and powerfully proclaimed, people had been miraculously healed and delivered, and many had been baptized in water.

• Upon closer examination, however, the apostles in Jerusalem realized that a vital ingredient was missing from the Samaritan revival: no one was being filled with the Holy Spirit.

• In the apostles' minds this was a serious issue, for everyone who receives the gospel must also become a proclaimer of the gospel. The same applies to communities of believers. Wherever the gospel goes to, it must go from.

• For this to happen, those who receive the gospel must also be empowered by the Spirit, as was promised by Jesus in Acts 1:8.

• According to the plan of Jesus, the church's witness was to begin in Jerusalem and then proceed into Judea and Samaria. It was not, however, to stop there. It was to spread from there until it reached the "ends of the earth".

• The issue was so serious that the apostles sent their two most prominent members, Peter and John, to Samaria to pray with the Samaritans to receive the Holy Spirit.

### 8:14 Samaria... accepted the word of God

• There is no indication in the text that the Samaritans' conversion was defective in any way, as some have claimed.

• They had truly believed in Christ and acted on the demands of the gospel.

### 8:15 They prayed for them that they might receive the Holy Spirit

• As will later be the case with Paul in Ephesus, the apostles' first order of business upon arriving in Samaria was to see that those who had received Christ were immediately baptized in the Holy Spirit, as were the believers on the Day of Pentecost.

• The reason for this insistence was not to complete the Samaritans' salvation but to ensure that they had been empowered by the Spirit to carry the gospel to others.

### 8:16 The Holy Spirit had not yet come upon any of them

• Though these Samaritans had been truly converted, they had not been baptized in the Holy Spirit as prescribed by Jesus in Acts 1:8.

• Note that Luke uses the same terminology here ("come upon") as Jesus used in 1:8, where He said, "But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes upon you," indicating that their experience with the Spirit was the same, and for the same purpose, as the believers at Pentecost.

### They had simply been baptized into the name of the Lord Jesus

• The Samaritans' baptism in water is a clear indicator that they had been truly converted before the arrival of Peter and John.

• Philip, a man "full of the Spirit and wisdom" (Acts 6:3), would never have baptized them in water had they not been truly converted.

## Samaritans Receive the Spirit (Acts 8:17, 25)

• The Samaritan outpouring is the third key outpouring of the Spirit in Acts. It is the first outpouring during the transitional period (see Table 2.1).

### 8:17 Placed their hands on them

• The apostles laid hands on the Samaritans for them to receive the Holy Spirit.

• Some today have claimed that people could only receive the Spirit if the apostles (or their representatives) laid hands on them. Is this true? No, since in Acts some were filled with the Spirit without the laying on of hands (2:4; 10:44), and one was filled when someone other than an apostle laid hands on him (9:17-18).

• We lay hands on people to encourage them to be filled and, to a certain degree, to impart the Spirit to them.

• Another important reason we lay hands on people to receive the Spirit is to commission them to service, as was the case with the seven deacons (6:6), Saul (9:15-17), and the Ephesian believers (19:6).

• It was probably the case here also. Peter and John were not only praying for the Samaritans to receive the Spirit, they were also commissioning them to missional witness (compare 1:8).

• Everyone who receives the Spirit is thus commissioned as Christ's witness.

### They received the Holy Spirit

• This is not the moment of the Samaritans' conversion. That had already occurred when they believed and received the message of Christ preached by Philip.

• This is rather the moment when they were empowered by the Spirit for witness.

### 8:25 Testified and proclaimed the word of the Lord

• The Samaritan outpouring is another important example of Luke's empowerment-witness motif as stated by Jesus in Acts 1:8: "You will receive power... and you will be my witnesses."

• The apostles' testimony and proclamation in this case seems to be directed not at the Samaritan Christians (whom they had likely taught on other occasions), but toward the non-Christian residents of Samaria.

• Proclamation in Acts is always directed at those who are lost (4:2; 5:42; 8:5, 25; 13:5, 38; 17:3, 23; 20:27; 26:23).

• Acts 8:25 contains the first mention of the phrase "the word of the Lord" in Acts. In Acts the phrase is synonymous with the gospel (compare Acts 13:44, 48-49; 15:35-36; 16:32; 19:10, 20).

• It is used interchangeably with the phrase "the word of God" (Acts 4:31; 6:2, 7; 8:14; 11:1; 12:24; 13:5, 7, 46; 17:13; 18:11). The "Lord" in the phrase "the word of the Lord" is to be understood as the Lord Jesus Christ.

### Preaching the gospel in many Samaritan villages

• Not only did the apostles join with the Samaritans in preaching the gospel in Samaria, but on their return trip to Jerusalem they began preaching the gospel in many Samaritan villages.

• This is the first time the apostles preached to anyone other than pure-blooded Jews.

• It seems that they received a "reciprocal blessing" when they prayed with the Samaritans to receive the Spirit. They, too, were empowered anew and inspired to preach the gospel to the lost.

• Those who pray with others to receive the Spirit are themselves blessed.

## Simon the Sorcerer (Acts 8:9-11, 13, 18-24)

• Why did Luke include the story of Simon the Sorcerer in the book of Acts? It seems that he included this narrative as a warning to those who would be tempted to seek the power of God for personal gain.

• The ministry of Simon is contrasted with the ministries of Philip, Peter, and John, who were used by the Spirit to bring life and blessing to others. Simon, on the other hand, sought the power of God for personal gain.

### 8:13 Simon himself believed... And he followed Philip

• It is difficult to determine whether Simon was truly converted. If he was, his commitment to Christ was very shallow.

• It seems that he was more interested in following Philip and observing his miracles than he was in following Christ.

### 8:18 Simon saw that the Spirit was given

• The Samaritans' experience of receiving the Spirit must have been dramatic and observable, for when Simon saw what had happened, he wanted to buy the power from the apostles (v. 18).

• It is likely that Simon saw the Samaritans speaking in tongues, as the 120 on the Day of Pentecost (2:4), the Gentiles at Caesarea (10:46), and the twelve Ephesian believers (19:6) also did.

### 8:20 The gift of God

• The "gift of God" mentioned here is the baptism in the Holy Spirit promised by Jesus in 1:4-8.

• Since it is a gift, the experience, like the experience of salvation, is not earned or merited. It is freely given by the Heavenly Father to any child of God who will humbly and sincerely ask for it (Luke 11:9-13).

## Samaria: A New Center of Missions

• A few paragraphs after the Samaritan episode, one discovers that "the church throughout Judea, Galilee and Samaria enjoyed a time of peace. It was strengthened; and encouraged by the Holy Spirit, it grew in numbers, living in the fear of the Lord" (9:31).

• This verse is a summary statement concerning the progress of the church from

the persecution and dispersal of the Jerusalem Christians in 8:1 through the conversion and early ministry of Saul (Paul).

• It gives us insight into the missionary result of the outpouring of the Holy Spirit in Samaria.

• In 9:31 Luke notes how, along with the churches in Judea and Galilee, the church in Samaria enjoyed a time of peace and growth as it was strengthened and encouraged by the work of the Holy Spirit.

• It further demonstrates that a Spirit-empowered missional church was indeed planted in Samaria as a result of the ministry of Philip and the apostles.

## The Story: Philip's Spirit-Directed Ministry in Gaza (Acts 8:26-40)

In the midst of the great revival in Samaria, an angel of the Lord appeared to Philip and directed him to go south to a certain road in Gaza in southwestern Judea. There he encountered an Ethiopian eunuch riding in a chariot. The man was a high government official in the court of Candace, queen of Ethiopia. He was returning home after a pilgrimage to worship at the temple in Jerusalem.

As he rode along, the man was reading from the book of Isaiah. The Spirit of God then directed Philip to draw near to the chariot. As he did, he heard the man reading aloud from Isaiah 53:7-8. Philip asked him if he understood what he was reading. The Ethiopian replied, "How can I unless someone explains it to me." Philip then joined him in his chariot and explained to him how this passage was talking about Jesus.

Soon they passed a body of water where Philip baptized the Ethiopian man. Immediately the Spirit of the Lord caught Philip away, and the eunuch continued on his journey rejoicing. Philip was next seen in Azotus, about twenty miles (32 kilometers) to the north. He continued his journey northward along the coastline, preaching the gospel in all the towns until he arrived in Caesarea.

## Commentary on Acts 8:26-40

• The story of Philip and the Ethiopian eunuch is a good example of what has been called a "divine appointment".

• A divine appointment is an occasion when God providentially arranges circumstances and divinely leads His servants into situations where the gospel can be presented with maximum effect.

### 8:26 An angel of the Lord said to Philip, "Go..."

• This is the fifth appearance of an angel of the Lord in Luke-Acts (compare Luke 1:11, 28; 2:9; Acts 5:19) and the second appearance in Acts. Three appearances will follow (10:4; 12:7-11, 23).

• Luke presents angels as active participants in the advancement of God's kingdom. They are, however, never seen preaching the gospel. This task is left to Spirit-filled believers.

• Here, as elsewhere, the angel is the Lord's agent urging a believer to "go" and bear witness to Christ (compare 5:19-20).

### 8:27 An Ethiopian

• This man is the first Gentile to receive the gospel in Acts.

• As the Holy Spirit did with the Samaritans, He again used Philip to open a new door for the gospel.

• A black African man became the first representative in Acts of those at "the ends of the earth" (1:8), as well as those "who are far off" (2:39), who were to receive the gospel and the gift of the Holy Spirit.

### 8:29 The Spirit told Philip, "Go..."

• As before, the Holy Spirit acted as the Superintendent of the Harvest. As such, He inspires and directs the work of missions.

• He will act again in this story, where He will suddenly take Philip away (v. 39).

• Six times in Acts the Lord, through the Spirit, directs the disciples to "go" (9:11, 15; 10:20; 22:10; 22:21; 28:26).

### 8:32 The eunuch was reading

• For Luke, Scripture plays an essential role in the advancement of God's kingdom.

• The Spirit does not work independently of what is written; rather He works in the fulfillment of Scripture (compare 1:20; 7:42; 13:29, 33; 15:15; 23:5; 24:14).

### 8:35 Philip... told him the good news about Jesus

• As a Spirit-anointed evangelist, Philip remained true to his calling of preaching Christ (8:40; 21:8).

### 8:39 The eunuch... went on his way rejoicing

• The eunuch's rejoicing is an indication that he not only received Christ as Savior but that he was possibly also filled with the Spirit in conjunction with his water baptism.

• Luke often connects joy with being filled with the Spirit (Luke 1:44, 47; 10:21; Acts 8:8; 13:52), as does Paul (Romans 14:17; Galatians 5:22; 1 Thessalonians 1:6).

## Conclusion

• Two powerful outpourings of the Spirit in Jerusalem prepared the church for its Spirit-empowered ministry in Jerusalem (2:4; 4:31). These same outpourings helped to prepare the church for the coming persecution (8:1).

• So, when the time of trial did come and the church was scattered, it was ready. It was not diverted from its primary calling but continued to preach the gospel in the power of the Spirit.

• Philip went down to Samaria and preached Christ (v. 4). In Samaria many were saved, healed, and delivered.

• Then, when the apostles arrived in Samaria, they prayed with the new believers to be empowered by the Spirit, just as the church in Jerusalem had been empowered.

• With the evangelization and empowering of the Samaritans, the church took its first step in moving from its Jewish to its Gentile mission (see Table 2.1).

• In the next chapter we will look at the church's second step. As the church continued to expand throughout Judea, Galilee, and Samaria, another outpouring of the Spirit occurred. This outpouring, which we call the Damascene outpouring, further helped prepare the church for its coming Gentile mission.

## The Early Spread of Christianity

Figure 5.1. The Early Spread of Christianity

## Important Terms

Transitional period. The stretch of Acts where the church stops being a Jewish-only movement and becomes a missionary force to all peoples.

Samaritan outpouring. The time Peter and John laid hands on the Samaritan believers and they received the Holy Spirit.

Empowerment-witness motif. Luke's repeated pattern: the Spirit comes, and witness follows.

Missional witness. Witnessing to Christ as a commissioned worker in God's mission.

Truth encounter and power encounter. Preaching the message, and demonstrating the power of the kingdom. Real gospel preaching has both.

Reciprocal blessing. The blessing that comes back on those who pray for others to receive the Spirit.

The word of the Lord. Luke's phrase for the gospel.

The gift of God. The baptism in the Holy Spirit. It cannot be bought or earned, only asked for.

Divine appointment. A meeting God sets up, where the gospel can be shared with maximum effect.

Superintendent of the Harvest. Luke's picture of the Holy Spirit as the one who directs and oversees the work of missions.

## Key People

• Saul of Tarsus: Led the great persecution that broke out against the church in Jerusalem on the same day Stephen was stoned, moving from house to house, assaulting and arresting Christian men and women and putting them into prison.

• Philip: One of the scattered believers. A man "full of the Spirit and wisdom" (Acts 6:3) and a Spirit-anointed evangelist. He preached Christ in a city in Samaria with miraculous signs, then was directed to the Ethiopian on the Gaza

road.

• The apostles: Remained in Jerusalem, enduring the full force of the persecution. When they heard Samaria had accepted the word of God, they sent Peter and John.

• Peter and John: The apostles' two most prominent members, sent to Samaria to pray with the Samaritans to receive the Holy Spirit. They laid hands on the believers, then preached the gospel in the city and in many Samaritan villages.

• Simon the Sorcerer: A sorcerer who, because of his occultic displays of power, was followed by many and was even known as the "Great Power". He believed Philip and was baptized, but offered to buy the ability to give the Spirit and was rebuked by Peter.

• The Ethiopian eunuch: A high government official in the court of Candace, queen of Ethiopia, returning from a pilgrimage to worship at the temple in Jerusalem. He is the first Gentile to receive the gospel in Acts.

• An angel of the Lord: Appeared to Philip and directed him to go south to a certain road in Gaza. This is the fifth appearance of an angel of the Lord in Luke-Acts and the second in Acts.

## Key Places

• Jerusalem: Where the persecution broke out against the church, and where the apostles remained.

• Judea and Samaria: Where the believers scattered, preaching the gospel everywhere they went. This is the next step in the fulfillment of Jesus' agenda as stated in Acts 1:8.

• A city in Samaria: Where Philip proclaimed the Christ, many were saved, healed and delivered, and where Peter and John later placed their hands on the believers to receive the Holy Spirit.

• Samaritan villages: Where Peter and John preached the gospel on their return trip to Jerusalem. This is the first time the apostles preached to anyone other than pure-blooded Jews.

• Gaza, in southwestern Judea: The angel of the Lord directed Philip south to a certain road there, where he met the Ethiopian eunuch.

• Azotus: About twenty miles (32 kilometers) to the north, where Philip was next

seen after the Spirit caught him away.

• Caesarea: Where Philip arrived after preaching the gospel in all the towns along the coastline.

## Key Event

The Samaritan outpouring: Peter and John place their hands on the Samaritan believers, and one after another they receive the Holy Spirit (Acts 8:14-17).

This is the third key outpouring of the Spirit in Acts and the first during the transitional period. It was not the moment of their conversion, which had already happened when they believed Philip's message. It was the moment they were empowered by the Spirit for witness and commissioned to missional witness.

## Key Verse

*"[They] preached the word wherever they went."*

Acts 8:4

## Remember This

• Those who were scattered faithfully preached the gospel wherever they went.

• A vital ingredient was missing: no one was being filled with the Holy Spirit.

• Everywhere the gospel goes to, it must proceed from.

• Those who pray with others to receive the Spirit are themselves blessed.

## Life Application: When Persecution Comes

• Although we do not seek persecution, persecution will sometimes come, especially if we are faithful to boldly proclaim the message of Christ.

• When persecution does come, we must be ready.

• We can do this, if we, like those first Christians in Jerusalem, will stay focused on Christ's mission and remain full of the Holy Spirit.

## Life Application: Preach Christ in the Spirit's Power

• We must never forget that our primary message is the gospel, the message of

Christ, and we must always strive to preach that message in the power of the Holy Spirit.

• If we will faithfully do this, we can expect God to confirm His word through signs and wonders.

• We should anticipate that women as well as men will be saved, baptized in water, and filled with the Holy Spirit.

• As a result they, too, will become full participants in the ministry of the Spirit (see 2:17-18; 21:9; 1 Corinthians 11:13; 14:31).

## Life Application: Plant Spirit-Empowered Missional Churches

• In our evangelism and church planting efforts, it is important that we address the issue of Spirit baptism.

• It is essential that those involved in gospel work, whether pastoral, evangelistic, or missionary, understand the importance of immediately leading those who have been born again into the experience of Spirit baptism.

• This work must not be delayed for at least two reasons. The first is personal: the new convert will need the power of the Spirit to resist the temptations and attacks he or she will encounter from the world, the flesh, and the devil.

• The second reason is missional: every believer must be empowered by the Spirit because every believer must be Christ's witness to the lost (1:8).

• The gospel worker must further understand that everywhere the gospel goes to, it must proceed from. This can only happen if believers in that new church are empowered by the Holy Spirit and taught about their responsibility to win others to Christ.

• We must therefore ensure that the churches we plant are Spirit-empowered missional churches, that is, churches that are willing to plant and capable of planting other Spirit-empowered missional churches. Only then will the gospel spread spontaneously throughout a community or region.

## Life Application: Follow the Spirit's Leading

• From Philip's ministry to the Ethiopian eunuch we learn the importance of following the leading of the Holy Spirit in performing our work as ministers of the

gospel.

• Had Philip not been full of the Spirit and open to the Spirit's voice, he would have missed this opportunity.

• Further, had he not understood the great importance of presenting Christ, he would have wasted the opportunity.

• We can also take great encouragement from this story, knowing that when the Lord leads us into a ministry opportunity, He has also been at work providentially arranging circumstances and preparing the people to receive the gospel.

## Textbook Review and Application

• 1. Why would Luke include the story of the persecution and scattering of the Jerusalem church in his narrative?

• 2. How does the church's scattering into Judea and Samaria relate to Jesus' statement in Acts 1:8?

• 3. What indications are there in the text that the Samaritans were truly saved as a result of Philip's ministry?

• 4. How is the story of Philip and the Ethiopian eunuch an example of a "divine appointment"?

• 5. What cross-cultural "divine appointments" have you had in your life?

## Quick Review

1. Who led the persecution that broke out against the church in Jerusalem, and when did it begin?

Answer: Saul of Tarsus led it, and it broke out on the same day Stephen was stoned.

2. What did the scattered believers do wherever they went?

Answer: They faithfully preached the gospel. Instead of stamping out the movement, the persecution only scattered the embers of evangelism.

3. Which of the seven key outpourings is the Samaritan outpouring?

Answer: The third, and the first outpouring during the transitional period.

4. Why did the apostles send Peter and John to Samaria?

Answer: Because none of the Samaritans had received the Holy Spirit. Peter and John went to

pray with them so they would be empowered by the Spirit to carry the gospel to others.

5. Who is the first Gentile to receive the gospel in Acts?

Answer: The Ethiopian eunuch, a high government official in the court of Candace, queen of Ethiopia.

## Chapter Summary

The church transitioned from a Jewish sect to an international missionary force.

• Persecution scattered the Jerusalem church throughout Judea and Samaria, and the scattered believers preached the word wherever they went.

• Philip proclaimed Christ in a city in Samaria, and his Spirit-inspired preaching was accompanied by miraculous signs, so many were saved, healed, delivered, and baptized in water.

• Peter and John placed their hands on the Samaritans and they received the Holy Spirit. This is the third key outpouring in Acts and the first of the transitional period.

Lead new believers straight into the baptism in the Holy Spirit, because everywhere the gospel goes to, it must proceed from.

ONE-SENTENCE MEMORY

**Persecution scattered the church, but the scattered believers preached the word wherever they went, and in Samaria the Spirit was poured out so the new church could carry the gospel on.**