

Acts #13 (7.19.20) #20055

Acts 8:1-24

Samaritan Mission

I. The Gospel spread effectively from Jerusalem to all Judea.

- A. The Church was growing.
- B. The Leadership was expanding
 - 1. The authority of the Apostles was delegated to these Hellenistic 7 leaders.
- C. The Word was spreading, 1:8
 - 1. The Hellenistic “7” brought a new thrust to the ministry
 - 2. Stephen became the first martyr.
 - 3. Philip became the first missionary. Crossing cultures.

II. Samaria. Acts 8:1-24

A. The Gospel produces Opposition: Saul and the Jewish leaders. 1-3

- 1. Why did the gospel produce opposition?
 - a) It was influential and popular. Thousands were coming to Christ. 5:17
 - (1) *And what is not to like about being forgiven and promised eternal life by simply repenting and submitting to the lordship of Christ?*
 - (2) *What’s not to like about a new and hopeful life not grounded in the events and traumas of this world? Col/3:1-4*
 - b) It was new and different. Not Judaism. Stephen made this clear.
 - (1) This is the New Covenant, not the Old one with a new look.
 - (2) To come to Jesus as Messiah meant shifting confidence from Judaism to Jesus.

B. The Opposition produces Expansion: Philip. 4-8

- 1. Philip goes to the Samaritans. (Acts 1:8)
 - a) A Cult, a rival religion with its own temple (Mt. Gerizim).
 - (1) Looked for a Messiah (taheb) who would be Moses redivivus.
- 2. *Note: The Lord often uses us in the cultural environment that we understand and fit in with.*
- 3. *What forces have scattered you? Could God have a plan?*

C. The Expansion produces the Unexpected. 9-13

- 1. A Samaritan Sorcerer? The Great Simon gets baptized?!
 - a) Claiming to be someone great. *He has discovered a lot of prestige in spirituality.*
 - b) A very powerful and famous man in Samaria.
 - c) Early Church Fathers considered Simon Magus the founder of Gnosticism.
- 2. He follows Philip around and hangs out with him. 13
 - a) Not amazed by repentance and grace, but by power and influence.

D. The Unexpected requires the Apostles. 14-17

- 1. Why did the apostles need to come down?
 - a) This is the only time that there is a separation between baptism and Spirit.
 - (1) In John 3 and 7 Jesus promises the Spirit to all who come to him.
 - (2) Acts 2 Peter promises the Spirit in conjunction with baptism/conversion.
 - (3) Acts 10 the Spirit enters the believing gentiles before they are baptized.
 - (4) In 1 Cor 12 and Romans 8 and Titus 3, Paul says that the Spirit is the one who makes us Christians in the first place and that there is no such thing as a Christian without the Spirit.
- 2. Probably because this took place in Samaria, Cult Center of Israel.
 - a) What if they had received re-birth at Philip’s hand?
 - (1) A new cult of “Samaritan Christianity/gospel” would certainly have developed. And they would have seen Philip as the leader.
 - (2) The Samaritans would have continued in animosity against the Jews.
 - (3) The Jerusalem church would have been suspicious of the new converts.
 - b) *There is only one gospel, on one apostolic foundation. (1 Cor.3)*

3. Apparently, the Lord decided to save the Samaritans this way for a specific reason—but this passage is not to be seen as normative for all Christians.
a) *So, don't use Acts as the normative template for pneumatology.*

E. The Apostles require a genuine faith. 18-24

1. Simon's "faith" was not accurate or deep or repentant.
 - a) His understanding of the Lordship of Christ and the nature of the gospel was dangerously wrong.
2. And since he was a "spiritual leader" among the Samaritans already, there was a direct competition between his "spirituality industry" and the Apostolic gospel
 - a) May you and your silver perish!
 - (1) Because you *thought* you could purchase the Spirit ...
 - (2) Pray that the *intention of your heart* may be forgiven you ...
 - b) *Does God judge intentions? You bet!*
3. Was Simon a real believer? It doesn't say, and commentators are split, but there is real doubt.

III. What do we learn from the Samaritan Work? 3 things and some advice

A. The gospel is what's happening in the world. 25

1. The main point is the progress of the gospel across racial, ideological, theological and political boundaries.
2. *The declaration of Jesus as the Saving Lord and Messiah.*
3. Talk about racial, religious and political differences!

B. But not all responses to the gospel are genuine. Matt.13:1-23 (Sower)

1. Simon was not asking the Spirit to simply fill him, but for the power to use the Spirit as a source of power. *He wanted a Holy Spirit Franchise.*
2. Just claiming to be a Christian isn't the same as being one.
 - a) Some people "come to Christ" for the wrong reasons.
3. *The intent of the heart is crucial and must be forgiven.*

C. And repentant faith is the only kind that saves. Jas.2:14. (Jn.6:29)

1. False faith will perish. Matt.7:21-23
2. You and your silver perish? (apoleia, eternal destruction)

IV. So, identify your previous worldview and repent of it specifically

- A. Religion (legalism).
 1. Whatever other religion you were a part of must be put on the altar.
- B. Spiritism: that there is an invisible reality, but YHWH is not Lord.
 1. All magic, New Age Gnosticism, Wicca, everything.
- C. Naturalism. Philosophical Naturalism and Secularist utopianism.
 1. That nature is all there is.
 2. Secular Philosophy that denies YHWH and Christ.

V. And receive the Gift of Eternal Life. Rom.3:23; 6:23; 10:9-10; 8:1-2

- A. The gift of God in Christ cannot be bought, earned, or coerced. It can only be received by repentant faith.