

The Gospel Spreads

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The Gospel Spreads

USING THE ATLAS

🌐 Study the map titled “The Early Spread of Christianity” on page 213 of *Baker’s Bible Atlas*. It shows some of the travels of early missionaries. From the map, answer the following questions.

1. Which of the following towns on this map are farthest apart?

- A. Caesarea and Gaza
- B. Gaza and Samaria
- C. Caesarea and Jerusalem
- D. Jerusalem and Gaza

Circle *T* if the statement is true or *F* if it is false.

2. **T F** The map shows where Philip encountered the Ethiopian eunuch.

Read Your Bible

Read – Acts 8:3-24

Write your initials on the line when you have finished reading the passage. _____

Bible Vocabulary

bewitched (bi witchd’): amazed and influenced by witchcraft

Complete the exercises.

3. Look up the word *haling* in *Strong’s Concordance* and circle the letter of the best definition for it:
- A. calling
 - B. capturing
 - C. dragging
 - D. committing
4. By what means had Simon impressed the people of Samaria?
- _____
5. What happened in Samaria that was similar to an event at Pentecost?
- _____
6. In what way did Simon think he could obtain the ability to give others the Holy Spirit?
- _____

ANALYZE THE BIBLE READING

At the close of the last LightUnit we learned that Satan hates anyone who serves Jesus. He was glad Stephen was killed and persecution against the church had increased. Many had turned to Jesus, but Satan fought back. As Saul cast men and women into prison, it looked as if Satan were making progress.

However, God used the persecution for His own purposes. Christians fleeing from persecution in Jerusalem preached the Gospel as they went. Filled with the Holy Spirit and love for Jesus, they boldly spoke of Jesus Christ. Philip traveled to Samaria where he preached Christ. Philip's preaching was confirmed as God drove evil spirits out of people and healed the paralyzed and lame. Great joy came upon the city as many were baptized in Jesus' name.

As more and more people converted to Christ, the apostles sent a delegation to help perfect the new Christians' faith. The apostles took seriously their responsibility to guide the church in following Jesus. They wanted to establish each group of believers upon the teachings of Christ.

All Christians need the life of Jesus, which is imparted by the indwelling presence of the Holy Spirit. We do not know why, but none of the new believers in Samaria had received the Holy Spirit when they were first converted. Perhaps God wanted the apostles to witness the coming of the Spirit upon the Samaritans so they would understand that God's promise was for all nations. Maybe Jewish Christians needed to be reminded that all Christians are equal in God's eyes. There was only one other time when an apostle laid his hands on new Christians so they could receive the Holy Spirit—Paul did so in Ephesus.

Simon, a prominent citizen of Samaria, was among those who turned to Christ and was baptized. The people of Samaria held Simon in high regard because he used magic powers. But the power Simon used was of the devil.

However, Simon now believed in Jesus. He was amazed to see the Samaritans receive the Holy Spirit. Perhaps he thought laying hands on someone to impart the Spirit would bring him greater wealth than his magic had. Even though Simon had been converted, he missed his lost fame and income. He did not understand God's reason for coming into people's lives.

The Holy Spirit does not come into people because they do something to deserve His presence. He comes into those who by faith trust in the Lord Jesus to save and forgive them. Jesus provided the great sacrifice for sin; a person's salvation begins, continues, and is completed as he lives in and trusts in the Lord Jesus. God's Holy Spirit in a person makes him a child of God and gives him the life of Jesus. The apostles here were not giving some magical thing that they possessed, but were acting as God's representatives, helping people receive the riches that are available to all through Jesus Christ.

Peter rebuked Simon sharply for thinking he could buy the Holy Spirit who is so precious and yet is given without cost to those who believe. He urged Simon to repent and warned him that God would judge him for such thoughts.

Did Simon realize the seriousness of what he had tried to do? He was certainly convicted by Peter's words and asked the apostle to pray for him. The purity of the Gospel was maintained, and God's wonderful gift continued to spread throughout Samaria.

UNDERSTANDING THE LESSON

Complete the exercises.

7. Put a check in front of the ones that are results of Philip's ministry and show God at work.

- A. _____ Lame people walked.
- B. _____ Great joy came into people's lives.
- C. _____ Citizens renounced their Roman citizenship.
- D. _____ Many people were baptized in Jesus' name.
- E. _____ Evil spirits were cast out.
- F. _____ People spoke in tongues.
- G. _____ Sorcery was used to cast out devils.

8. What good thing did God accomplish through the persecution at Jerusalem?

9. Circle the letter of the reason early Christians preached about Jesus everywhere they went.

- A. They left Jerusalem with that purpose.
- B. They could not find any other way to earn their living.
- C. They loved Jesus and were filled with the Holy Spirit.
- D. They were all deacons and needed to obey their calling.

Circle *T* if the statement is true or *F* if it is false. Correct any false statements.



- 10. **T** **F** The Samaritan Christians were filled with the Holy Spirit when *they were baptized with water*.
- 11. **T** **F** Christians receive the life of Jesus *through the presence of the Holy Spirit*.
- 12. **T** **F** God confirmed Philip's preaching by *miracles of healing*.
- 13. **T** **F** The Holy Spirit's coming upon the Samaritan Christians *showed that God's promise was for all people*.

FOR MORE UNDERSTANDING

- ① Twice in Acts it is recorded that the apostles laid their hands on believers and the believers received the Holy Spirit. However, most believers did not receive the Spirit in this way. Sometimes people get confused about how and when new Christians receive the Spirit.

Circle the letter of the answer.

14. Read Acts 2:38, 39. Here Peter gives the requirements for receiving the gift of the Spirit. He says, "Repent and be baptized in Jesus' name." To whom does this requirement apply?

A. a select few
B. all believers
C. all Jews
D. the apostles

Write an answer.

- △ 15. Give a brief account of a way you have seen God's power at work. If you cannot think of any, tell of something you would like to see take place.

BIBLE MEMORY

Read the memory verse several times and then write it, including the reference.

16.

USING THE ATLAS

- 🌐 Read “**Philip’s Journey**” on pages 214-216 of *Baker’s Bible Atlas* and review the map on page 213.
1. Philip’s interest in non-Jewish people was **common, non-existent, rare** in his day.
 2. Philip left Samaria and traveled **south, north, east** to encounter the eunuch.
- ① The Ethiopian’s trip probably was costly. It would have taken several weeks to cover at least 500 miles (805 km). He rode in a chariot, but probably also sailed on the Nile River for part of the trip.
3. Look at the map on page 10 of *Baker’s* and find Jerusalem and Ethiopia. *Think!* What does this journey tell us about the eunuch?
 - A. He had plenty of leisure time for travel.
 - B. He was confused about whom to worship.
 - C. He had a strong desire to worship God and to know Him better.
 - D. A pleasure trip was more important to him than his duties at home.

Read – Acts 8:25-40

Write your initials on the line when you have finished reading the passage. _____

Answer the question.

4. What did the eunuch need to have explained as he read Isaiah’s (Esaias’s) words?

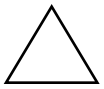
- ① The Bible contains many stories of God calling diligent people from one work to another.

Read the following verses and complete the sentences.

5. Amos 7:14, 15. God called _____ from being a _____ to go _____ to Israel.
6. Judges 6:11-14. God called _____ from his work of _____ and sent him to _____.
7. Acts 8:5, 26 God called _____ from his work of _____ in Samaria and told him to go to _____.

- △ 8. Contrast Philip’s call with the others’ above. Do you think Philip’s call would have been easier or harder to obey? _____ Explain. _____

Vocabulary Word



recognition (re' kig ni' shən): attention, special notice or credit

ANALYZE THE BIBLE READING

God is most honored when we obey Him—even if obedience seems to defy logic. Philip illustrated this truth by being sensitive to God's voice and obeying Him even though His leading seemed unreasonable. Philip's preaching and healing work in Samaria was having tremendous results. Many came to the Lord. But then the Lord's angel told Philip to leave Samaria and head south into the desert. It may have seemed to Philip as though he were leaving a golden opportunity. It would have been normal for

Philip to think, *God is using me here in Samaria. I'm needed here!* However, Philip did not grasp at fame or honor. Sure of God's leading, he left the important work in Samaria and headed off to an uncertain task in the wilderness.

Meanwhile, God had been preparing a eunuch for conversion. This man was an important government official from Ethiopia, a country just south of Egypt. He had traveled a long way to worship in Jerusalem and now was on his return journey. This Ethiopian believed in God and was a student of the Scriptures. God had prepared his heart to become a disciple of Jesus Christ.

As the eunuch rode along in his chariot, he read from the book of Isaiah. The Holy Spirit told Philip to go up to him. Philip found the man reading verses about Jesus' death. The eunuch did not understand Isaiah's words about God's suffering Servant. Philip began with those verses and told the man all about Jesus. God opened the eunuch's heart, and he understood and believed. He was so convinced that he asked to be baptized. Philip told him that if he believed with all



Lesson 2

his heart, he could be baptized. The Ethiopian confessed his faith in Jesus, the Son of God.

This account shows us that God uses individuals in bringing others to Himself. God, with His sovereign grace, took a man who had an honest, seeking heart and led him to saving knowledge of Jesus. He used Philip, a faithful minister of the Gospel, to share the truth of Jesus. God gave Philip wisdom to lead the eunuch from the Scriptures he was reading to a fuller understanding of God's plan. The eunuch also had a part to

play. Open to learning more of God's will, he believed Philip's message. When God showed the eunuch who Jesus is, he wanted to identify with Him by being baptized in His name.

This is still God's will today. He answers seeking hearts by sending faithful messengers who will put obedience ahead of **recognition**. All the grace and power is of God, but people must respond by yielding. There is no greater miracle in our lives than this: God seeking us out where we are and leading us to saving faith in Jesus!

UNDERSTANDING THE LESSON

Circle the letter of the answer.

9. Philip left Samaria ____ .
 - A. because he had shared the Gospel with everyone there
 - B. after the apostles took over his work of evangelism
 - C. after having an unpleasant encounter with Simon
 - D. when the Lord's angel told him to leave
10. *Think!* Philip's willingness to leave an important ministry in Samaria shows us ____ .
 - A. he was humble and submissive in his relationship to God
 - B. he was interested only in Jewish people
 - C. he wanted to be involved in new work in new places
 - D. he avoided working with the apostles
 - E. none of the above

Complete the exercises.

11. The eunuch was an important _____ from the country of Ethiopia.
12. Why did Philip start in Isaiah to begin explaining about Jesus?

13. Circle the letter of what Philip said was necessary for the eunuch to be ready for baptism.
 - A. reading the Bible
 - B. being interested in spiritual things
 - C. believing that Jesus is the Son of God
 - D. asking to be baptized

14. *Think!* Circle the letter of the following statement that is true about sharing the Gospel.
- A. We should begin with the truths that are most difficult to understand.
 - B. We should always begin with a question to find out whether the person believes anything at all.
 - C. We should begin at the person's level of understanding and explain more truths.

THE BIBLE FOR TODAY

Circle T if the statement is true or F if it is false. Correct any false statements.

- 15. **T F** Obedience to God is more important than *doing what seems to be logical*.
- 16. **T F** God is the one who gives *the grace* to be converted.
- 17. **T F** We should be more concerned about *recognition than about obedience*.
- 18. **T F** To be saved, man must *believe and yield his will*.

Circle the letters of the answers.

- ① God was preparing the eunuch for faith in Jesus.
19. What two important things was the eunuch already doing before Philip met him?
- A. He studied the Scripture.
 - B. He served the Ethiopian government.
 - C. He traveled to Jerusalem.
 - D. He believed in God.
20. *Think!* What were three important results of Philip's obedience in leaving Samaria?
- A. A man was led to Jesus who had no one else to show him the way.
 - B. The Samaritan Christians' faith faltered because they had no leadership.
 - C. The importance of obedience was confirmed in Philip's mind.
 - D. The Gospel was spread to Ethiopia.
 - E. The eunuch learned that Isaiah wrote "He was led as a sheep to the slaughter."

Answer the question.

- △ 21. What does Philip's story teach you about responding to God's call in your own life?

BIBLE MEMORY

Complete the memory verse.

22. "And _____ said, If thou _____ with all thine _____, thou _____ . And he _____ and said, I _____ that _____ Christ is the _____ of _____ ." Acts _____ : _____

REVIEW

Answer the questions.

23. What hard experience did God use to help the Gospel spread far and wide? _____
24. What did the Holy Spirit's presence in their hearts cause the Christians to do everywhere they went?

25. List three results of Philip's ministry in Samaria.
- A. _____
- B. _____
- C. _____
26. In what way did God confirm Philip's preaching?

27. When did the Holy Spirit come upon the Christians in Samaria?

28. In what way did God show that His promise was for all races of people?

29. What did Peter say is necessary for believers to receive the Holy Spirit?
