

## UNEXPECTED ENCOUNTER

Acts 8:26-9:43

**PREPARATION FOR THE COMING OF THE SPIRIT 1:1-26**

**TESTIMONY IN JERUSALEM 2-8:3**

Foundation of the Church 2-4:31

Administration of the Church 4:32-6:7

Persecution of the Church 6:8-8:3

Preaching of Stephen 6:8-10

Accusation against Stephen 6:11-7:1

Explanation by Stephen 7:2-53

Response from the council 7:54-60

Death of Stephen 7:60-8:1

Persecution of the church 8:2-3

Stephen's death marks the beginning of a period of persecution which spreads the church throughout all Judea and Samaria.

The ground is laid for next major movement of story: testimony in Judea and Samaria.

**TESTIMONY IN JUDEA AND SAMARIA 8:4-12:25**

*In Acts 6 we have the introduction of a new group of ministers in the church, the deacons—appointed to take over distribution of goods to needy members of the church.*

*This freed the apostles for the ministry of the Word.*

*These men were godly leaders also.*

*Two of them are described more carefully for us:*

**Stephen** preaches the gospel, is rejected by the rulers of Israel and is stoned to death.

*His death begins period of unprecedented persecution for the church.*

*Philip is another of these godly leaders.*

*Now the writer describes his successful evangelistic ministry in Samaria.*

### **Response of the Church to Persecution 8:4**

As a result of the persecution the church scattered.

Everywhere they went they preached the good news (8:4).

### **Ministry of Philip 8:5-40**

Philip was among those moving throughout Judea and Samaria.

He is another of the seven chosen to assist in the distribution of help for the widows.

### **Extension of the gospel to the Samaritans 8:5-25**

#### **Ministry of Philip to the Samaritans 8:5-13**

As a result of his preaching and miraculous signs the people paid careful attention to his message about Jesus (8:5-8).

Among those listening was Simon, a powerful sorcerer who had led the people because of his mighty acts.

Simon was among those who heard Philip's message and believed and was baptized (8:9-13).

#### **Ministry of the apostles to the Samaritans 8:14-25**

When the apostles heard what was happening in Samaria, they sent Peter and John to investigate.

The cause 8:14

The ministry 8:15-17

*The Samaritans received the H.S. by the laying on of hands.*

The previous reception was only by Jews (Acts 2)

Now the church is receiving a new group

This reception is attested by apostolic authority and by divine authentication!

Samaritan Judaism had been characterized by independence. (John. 4:20)

They had their own center of worship and Pentateuch.

They acknowledged no dependence on Israel.

To avoid this problem in the church and **to demonstrate the dependence of these new members on the church at Jerusalem, identification with the apostles was preliminary to reception of the Spirit.**

The apostles had to recognize the authenticity of their conversion and identify with them by laying their hands on them.

Thus God demonstrates the interdependence and unity of the body.

The response of Simon 8:18-24

As these events were taking place, Simon watched the powerful evidence of God's presence and offered to pay for this ability.

*The accusation—this doesn't sound like a saved person!*

*Peter's message => "repent"*

*Simon's request => "pray that I don't get punished"*

*This has more evidence of Matt. 13 condition than of genuine faith.*

While he may have genuinely turned to Christ, his interests have not changed.

Peter's accusation is stern.

Simon should repent and pray for forgiveness of his sin. Instead of obeying this warning, Simon asks Peter to pray for him.

The preaching in other cities 8:25

When their ministry in that city was finished, Peter and John preached in other Samaritan villages on their way to Jerusalem.

God had begun a new work among the Samaritans also. They too were now part of God's new people.

*Importance of being sure of your salvation*

*Danger of placing emphasis on that which is visible—on extraordinary signs.*

### **Evangelization of the eunuch 8:26-39**

Philip also continues his ministry in Samaria.

God sends an angel to instruct him to go find an Ethiopian eunuch.

His instructions 8:26

His obedience 8:27-30a

His witness 8:30b-35

The eunuch is a Jewish proselyte who is seeking the truth. The one seeking the truth is less than a fully accepted citizen of Israel.

When Philip explains the word of God concerning Jesus, the man readily trusts Him and identifies with Him by baptism.

The eunuch's response 8:36-38

Q.8. *What is significant about the eunuch's baptism (8:34-38)?*

*What does this teach us about baptism?*

*How should this be related to our practice today?*

Philip's departure 8:39

### **Evangelization in other cities 8:40**

When this mission is complete, Philip returns to preach the word in the area around Caesarea.

### **Conversion of the Persecutor 9:1-31**

As the time of persecution continues, God performs an unexpected miracle which catches the church by surprise.

**The persecutor of the church is confronted by a revelation of Jesus and trusts Him.**

Q.1. *What were the main characteristics of Saul's life prior to his conversion? Note especially 8:1; 9:1-2, 13-14, 26, 31; Gal. 1:13-14; Phil. 3:4-6.*

Q.2. *What changes took place in His life at his conversion? 9:15-16, 20-25, 28-30; Phil. 3:7-9*

Q.3. *How can such a radical change be explained? 9:3-12, 17-19*

Paul's mission 9:1-2

Mission interrupted 9:3-9

The Lord's messenger 9:10-19

Paul's new mission 9:20-22

Response from Jews 9:23-25

Entrance with brethren 9:26-28

Q.4. *Make a list of Paul's personal characteristics, contrasting positive and negative factors, both before and after his conversion.*

Results of new mission 9:29-31

Q.5. *How did Paul's conversion affect the early church?*

God reveals that He will use this man to develop His work among the Gentile nations.

The church doesn't want to receive Paul because *they can't believe it.* The Jews are amazed also.

As the reality of what God has done dawns on them, the church accepts him.

Many Jews turn to Christ.

**The other Jews try to stop Paul from telling his story.**

Most significantly, the persecution calms and God's work grows.

Q.6. *What lessons can we learn from Paul's example in this chapter?*

Continuation of Ministry 9:32-43

In the meantime, Peter's ministry continues.

Healing of Aeneas 9:32-35

His ministry was effective in the coastal region as he healed Aeneas in Lydda.

Raising of Dorcas 9:36-43

He also raised Dorcas at Joppa (9:36-43).