

Acts of the Apostles

En Español



Chapter 8



INTRODUCTION 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16 17
18 19 20 21 22 23 24 25 26 27 28

1 Now Saul was consenting to his execution.^a

Persecution of the Church.^{*}

On that day, there broke out a severe persecution of the church in Jerusalem, and all were scattered throughout the countryside of Judea and Samaria, except the apostles.^{*}

2 Devout men buried Stephen and made a loud lament over him.

3 Saul, meanwhile, was trying to destroy the church;^{*} entering house after house and dragging out men and women, he handed them over for imprisonment.^b

III. The Mission in Judea and Samaria

Philip in Samaria.

4 Now those who had been scattered went about preaching the word.^c

5 Thus Philip went down to [the] city of Samaria and proclaimed the

Messiah to them.^d

- 6 With one accord, the crowds paid attention to what was said by Philip when they heard it and saw the signs he was doing.
- 7 For unclean spirits, crying out in a loud voice, came out of many possessed people, and many paralyzed and crippled people were cured.^e
- 8 There was great joy in that city.

Simon the Magician.

- 9 A man named Simon used to practice magic^{*} in the city and astounded the people of Samaria, claiming to be someone great.
- 10 All of them, from the least to the greatest, paid attention to him, saying, "This man is the 'Power of God' that is called 'Great.'"
- 11 They paid attention to him because he had astounded them by his magic for a long time,
- 12 but once they began to believe Philip as he preached the good news about the kingdom of God and the name of Jesus Christ, men and women alike were baptized.^f
- 13 Even Simon himself believed and, after being baptized, became devoted to Philip; and when he saw the signs and mighty deeds that were occurring, he was astounded.
- 14 Now when the apostles in Jerusalem heard that Samaria had accepted the word of God, they sent them Peter and John,

- 15 who went down and prayed for them, that they might receive the holy Spirit,
- 16 for it had not yet fallen upon any of them; they had only been baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus.*
- 17 Then they laid hands on them and they received the holy Spirit.^g
- 18 * When Simon saw that the Spirit was conferred by the laying on of the apostles' hands, he offered them money
- 19 and said, "Give me this power too, so that anyone upon whom I lay my hands may receive the holy Spirit."
- 20 But Peter said to him, "May your money perish with you, because you thought that you could buy the gift of God with money.
- 21 You have no share or lot in this matter, for your heart is not upright before God.
- 22 Repent of this wickedness of yours and pray to the Lord that, if possible, your intention may be forgiven.
- 23 For I see that you are filled with bitter gall and are in the bonds of iniquity."
- 24 Simon said in reply, "Pray for me to the Lord, that nothing of what you have said may come upon me."
- 25 So when they had testified and proclaimed the word of the Lord, they returned to Jerusalem and preached the good news to many Samaritan villages.

Philip and the Ethiopian.*

26 Then the angel of the Lord spoke to Philip, “Get up and head south on the road that goes down from Jerusalem to Gaza, the desert route.”

27 So he got up and set out. Now there was an Ethiopian eunuch, a court official of the Candace,* that is, the queen of the Ethiopians, in charge of her entire treasury, who had come to Jerusalem to worship,^h

28 and was returning home. Seated in his chariot, he was reading the prophet Isaiah.

29 The Spirit said to Philip, “Go and join up with that chariot.”

30 * Philip ran up and heard him reading Isaiah the prophet and said, “Do you understand what you are reading?”

31 He replied, “How can I, unless someone instructs me?” So he invited Philip to get in and sit with him.ⁱ

32 This was the scripture passage he was reading:^j

“Like a sheep he was led to the slaughter,
and as a lamb before its shearer is silent,
so he opened not his mouth.

33 In (his) humiliation justice was denied him.

Who will tell of his posterity?

For his life is taken from the earth.”

- 34 Then the eunuch said to Philip in reply, “I beg you, about whom is the prophet saying this? About himself, or about someone else?”
- 35 Then Philip opened his mouth and, beginning with this scripture passage, he proclaimed Jesus to him.
- 36 ^k As they traveled along the road they came to some water, and the eunuch said, “Look, there is water. What is to prevent my being baptized?”
- 37 ^{*}
- 38 Then he ordered the chariot to stop, and Philip and the eunuch both went down into the water, and he baptized him.
- 39 When they came out of the water, the Spirit of the Lord snatched Philip away, and the eunuch saw him no more, but continued on his way rejoicing.^l
- 40 Philip came to Azotus, and went about proclaiming the good news to all the towns until he reached Caesarea.^m

* [8:1–40] Some idea of the severity of the persecution that now breaks out against the Jerusalem community can be gathered from [Acts 22:4](#) and [Acts 26:9–11](#). Luke, however, concentrates on the fortunes of the word of God among people, indicating how the dispersal of the Jewish community resulted in the conversion of the Samaritans ([Acts 8:4–17, 25](#)). His narrative is further expanded to include the account of Philip’s acceptance of an Ethiopian ([Acts 8:26–39](#)).

* [8:1] All were scattered...except the apostles: this observation leads some

modern scholars to conclude that the persecution was limited to the Hellenist Christians and that the Hebrew Christians were not molested, perhaps because their attitude toward the law and temple was still more in line with that of their fellow Jews (see the charge leveled against the Hellenist Stephen in [Acts 6:13–14](#)). Whatever the facts, it appears that the Twelve took no public stand regarding Stephen's position, choosing, instead, to await the development of events.

* [\[8:3\]](#) Saul...was trying to destroy the church: like Stephen, Saul was able to perceive that the Christian movement contained the seeds of doctrinal divergence from Judaism. A pupil of Gamaliel, according to [Acts 22:3](#), and totally dedicated to the law as the way of salvation ([Gal 1:13–14](#)), Saul accepted the task of crushing the Christian movement, at least insofar as it detracted from the importance of the temple and the law. His vehement opposition to Christianity reveals how difficult it was for a Jew of his time to accept a messianism that differed so greatly from the general expectation.

* [\[8:9–13, 18–24\]](#) Sorcerers were well known in the ancient world. Probably the incident involving Simon and his altercation with Peter is introduced to show that the miraculous charisms possessed by members of the Christian community ([Acts 8:6–7](#)) were not to be confused with the magic of sorcerers.

* [\[8:16\]](#) Here and in [Acts 10:44–48](#) and [Acts 19:1–6](#), Luke distinguishes between baptism in the name of the Lord Jesus and the reception of the Spirit. In each case, the Spirit is conferred through members of the Twelve (Peter and John) or their representative (Paul). This may be Luke's way of describing the role of the church in the bestowal of the Spirit. Elsewhere in Acts, baptism and the Spirit are more closely related ([Acts 1:5](#); [11:16](#)).

* [\[8:18–20\]](#) Simon attempts to buy the gift of God ([Acts 8:20](#)) with money. Peter's cursing of Simon's attempt so to use his money expresses a typically Lucan attitude toward material wealth (cf. [Lk 6:24](#); [12:16–21](#); [16:13](#)).

* [\[8:26–40\]](#) In the account of the conversion of the Ethiopian eunuch, Luke adduces additional evidence to show that the spread of Christianity outside

the confines of Judaism itself was in accord with the plan of God. He does not make clear whether the Ethiopian was originally a convert to Judaism or, as is more probable, a “God-fearer” ([Acts 10:1](#)), i.e., one who accepted Jewish monotheism and ethic and attended the synagogue but did not consider himself bound by other regulations such as circumcision and observance of the dietary laws. The story of his conversion to Christianity is given a strong supernatural cast by the introduction of an angel ([Acts 8:26](#)), instruction from the holy Spirit ([Acts 8:29](#)), and the strange removal of Philip from the scene ([8:39](#)).

* [\[8:27\]](#) The Candace: Candace is not a proper name here but the title of a Nubian queen.

* [\[8:30–34\]](#) Philip is brought alongside the carriage at the very moment when the Ethiopian is pondering the meaning of [Is 53:7–8](#), a passage that Christianity, from its earliest origins, has applied to Jesus; cf. note on [Acts 3:13](#).

* [\[8:37\]](#) The oldest and best manuscripts of Acts omit this verse, which is a Western text reading: “And Philip said, ‘If you believe with all your heart, you may.’ And he said in reply, ‘I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God.’”

a. [\[8:1\]](#) [22:20](#).

b. [\[8:3\]](#) [9:1](#), [13](#); [22:4](#); [26:9–11](#); [1 Cor 5:9](#); [Gal 1:13](#).

c. [\[8:4\]](#) [11:19](#).

d. [\[8:5\]](#) [6:5](#); [21:8–9](#).

e. [\[8:7\]](#) [Mk 16:17](#).

f. [\[8:12\]](#) [1:3](#); [19:8](#); [28:23](#), [31](#).

g. [\[8:17\]](#) [2:4](#); [4:31](#); [10:44–47](#); [15:8–9](#); [19:2](#), [6](#).

h. [8:27] Is 56:3–5.

i. [8:31] Jn 16:13.

j. [8:32–33] Is 53:7–8 LXX.

k. [8:36] 10:47.

l. [8:39] 1 Kgs 18:12.

m. [8:40] 21:8.



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