

Comments About Acts 8

This article is from the "Among Friends" section of the Church of God Big Sandy's website, churchofgodbigandy.com. It was posted for the weekend of July 15, 2017.

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BIG SANDY, Texas—Recently, I began a series of brief articles to discuss chapters in the book of Acts. This week, we will talk about chapter 8.

May this project encourage you to review the valuable history found in the book of Acts.

Paul persecuted the church

As you recall in Acts 7:57-58, the people killed Stephen by stoning him. Verse 58 said that the accusers of Stephen laid down their coats at the feet of Saul.

As we begin in Acts 8, we see a few more comments about the death of Stephen.

- Saul was consenting to Stephen's death (verse 1).
- There was a great persecution against the congregation in Jerusalem—to the extent that the disciples (except for the apostles) scattered throughout the regions of Judea and Samaria (also, verse 1).
- Devout men carried Stephen to his burial (verse 2).
- Saul caused havoc for disciples—dragging people out of their homes and casting them into prison (verse 3).

Preached in Samaria

The disciples used their opportunities to preach.

- As the disciples were scattered, they preached wherever they went (verse 4).
- Philip went to Samaria to preach about Christ (verse 5) and to perform miracles (verses 6-8).

Philip met Simon

Philip met and dealt with a man named Simon.

- Simon, who previously practiced sorcery, astonished the people of Samaria (verse 9).
- The citizens claimed that Simon had great power from God (verses 10-11).
- The citizens (including Simon) responded to Philip's preaching by becoming baptized (verses 12-13).

- Peter and John traveled to Samaria to lay hands on the people who had been baptized in water (verses 14-17).
- Simon wanted power, so he offered money to the apostles for the ability to distribute the Holy Spirit (verses 18-19).
- Peter showed Simon the error of his thinking and corrected him (verses 20-23).
- Simon asked the apostles to pray for him (verse 24).
- The apostles returned to Jerusalem (verse 25).

Philip met an Ethiopian

Next, we read of Philip's dealings with a man who was interested in studying the Bible.

- Philip met a powerful Ethiopian man who had a high level of responsibility under Candace the queen of Ethiopia (verses 26-27).
- The eunuch was reading from a scroll of Isaiah while sitting in his chariot (verses 28-29).
- The Ethiopian man asked about a section of Isaiah (verses 30-34).
- Philip preached to the Ethiopian about the Son of God (verse 35).

Requested baptism

The Ethiopian asked Philip about baptism.

- The Ethiopian man asked what hindered him from being baptized (verse 36) and Philip answered in verse 37.

Acts 8:37—"Then Philip said, 'If you believe with all your heart, you may.' And he answered and said, 'I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God.' "

- Both Philip and the Ethiopian went down into the water for baptism (verse 38).
- Philip was carried away to Azotus (verses 39-40).