

**STUDYING THE BOOK OF ACTS**  
**IN SMALL GROUP DISCUSSIONS**

**Lesson 18 – The Church Persecuted and Scattered - [Acts 8:1-3](#)**

Read the following verses in the Last Days Bible or a translation of your choice. Then discuss the questions that follow. Questions should be studied by each individual before your discussion group meets.

Materials may be copied and used for Bible study purposes. Not to be sold.

***Saul Persecutes the Church***

**8** Saul gave hearty approval to his being put to death. At that time was the beginning of a great persecution that broke out against the church at Jerusalem, and all of Jesus' followers except the apostles scattered throughout Judea and Samaria.

**2**With great mourning, godly men buried Stephen.

**3**But Saul was determined to completely destroy the church. He went from house to house looking for followers of Jesus, dragging off both men and women, and jailing them.

**DISCUSSION QUESTIONS**

**Lesson 18 – The Church Persecuted and Scattered - [Acts 8:1-3](#)**

231. Who approved of Stephen's death? ([8:1](#))
232. What change in the church did Stephen's death bring about? ([8:1](#))
233. Who left and who stayed in Jerusalem? ([8:1](#))
234. Who buried Stephen? ([8:2](#))
235. How did the early believers react to Stephen's martyrdom? ([8:2](#))
236. How did Stephen's sympathizers show that they disapproved of the Sanhedrin's condemnation of him? ([8:2](#))
237. How did Stephen's mourners show courage at his burial? ([8:2](#))
238. How did the godly men mourn for Stephen? ([8:2](#))
239. What was happening to the church at this time? ([8:2-3](#))
240. Who began to attack the church? How? ([8:3](#))

241. During this period of opposition, what did Saul do? ([8:3](#))
242. How were Saul's actions cruel? ([8:3](#))
243. How did the martyrdom of Stephen and the persecution of the church show that Israel had rejected the Messiah? ([8:3](#))

### **Lesson 19 - Philip in Samaria - [Acts 8:4-8](#)**

#### ***Philip Preaches in Samaria***

<sup>4</sup>But as a result, the scattered followers told people the Great News wherever they went.

<sup>5</sup>*For example*, Philip went down to a city in Samaria and preached about Christ to the people there.

<sup>6</sup>Large crowds paid close attention to what Philip said when they heard about what he was doing, and then saw for themselves the miracles he performed.

<sup>7</sup>Because many who had evil spirits would scream loudly as the demons left them; and many others, paralyzed and lame, were healed.

<sup>8</sup>So there was great joy in that city.

### **DISCUSSION QUESTIONS**

#### **Lesson 19 - Philip in Samaria - [Acts 8:4-8](#)**

244. What were the Christians doing who had been scattered throughout Judea and Samaria? ([8:4](#))
245. What happened to the Word of God? ([8:4](#))
246. Why was the scattering of Christians a step forward for the church? ([8:4-8](#))
247. Who was Philip? ([8:5](#))
248. Where did Philip go? ([8:5](#))
249. What did Philip do in Samaria? ([8:5](#))
250. What did the crowds do in response to Philip's teaching and miracles? ([8:6](#))
251. What miraculous signs did Philip perform? ([8:7](#))
252. How did Philip's work draw attention to his message? ([8:6-7](#))
253. Why did the people rejoice? ([8:8](#))

## Lesson 20 - Simon the Sorcerer - [Acts 8:9-25](#)

<sup>9</sup>A man named Simon lived there, who for some time had astounded the Samaritans by his witchcraft. He claimed to be someone great.

<sup>10</sup>Everybody, both high and low, were fascinated by him, saying, “This man must get his great power from God!”

<sup>11</sup>They kept following him because he had amazed them with his witchcraft for a long time.

<sup>12</sup>But now there were baptisms continually, of both men and women, as they came to believe Philip as he preached the Great News about the Kingdom of God and told them about Jesus Christ.

<sup>13</sup>Even Simon himself came to believe. After he was baptized, he continually followed Philip, and was constantly amazed at the great signs and miracles he saw being performed.

<sup>14</sup>When the apostles at Jerusalem heard that the people of Samaria had accepted God’s message, they sent Peter and John to them.

<sup>15</sup>When they arrived, they prayed for the followers there that they might receive the Holy Spirit,

<sup>16</sup>because up to this time, He hadn’t yet come down upon any of them. They had only been baptized with reference to the name of the Lord Jesus.

<sup>17</sup>So Peter and John placed their hands on them one by one,\* and they received the Holy Spirit.\*

*\*Acts 8:17 – “placed their hands on them one by one.” Indicated by imperfect active (repeated action) of received.*

*“And they received the Holy Spirit.” – A Samaritan Pentecost!*

<sup>18</sup>When Simon saw that the Holy Spirit was given by the placing of the apostles’ hands on the followers, he offered them money, saying:

<sup>19</sup>“Give me this power too, so that whenever I place my hands on people they may receive the Holy Spirit.”\*

*\*Acts 8:19 – Simon saw something miraculous happen when Peter and John placed their hands on these people. It was likely similar to what happened on the day of Pentecost (Acts 2:1-18).*

<sup>20</sup>But Peter answered him, “May your money be condemned along with you because you have thought that God’s gifts can be bought with money!

21“You have no part or share in this matter because, as God sees you, your heart is still not right with Him.

22“So repent of this evil plan of yours, and pray earnestly to God. It may be that He will indeed forgive you for what you had in mind.

23“Because I can see that you are still a captive of sin, and poisoned by bitterness.”

24“Oh please, both of you pray to the Lord for me that none of the things you said will happen to me!” Simon pleaded.

25After Peter and John had earnestly testified and preached the message of the Lord, they returned to Jerusalem. On the return trip, they preached the Great News in many other towns of Samaria.

## DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

### Lesson 20 - Simon the Sorcerer - [Acts 8:9-25](#)

254. What was Simon’s line of work? ([8:9](#))
255. What did Simon talk about? ([8:9](#))
256. How did the Samaritans react to Simon’s sorcery? ([8:9-11](#))
257. When Philip preached about Christ, what did the people do? ([8:12](#))
258. What did Simon do when he heard the gospel? ([8:13](#))
259. Why did Peter and John leave Jerusalem and go to Samaria? ([8:14](#))
260. What did Peter and John do when they arrived in Samaria? ([8:15-17](#))
261. What did Simon want to buy from Peter and John? ([8:18-19](#))
262. How did Peter answer Simon’s request? ([8:20-23](#))
263. Why did Peter use strong language with Simon? ([8:20](#))
264. What did Peter imply about Simon? ([8:21-23](#))
265. What was Simon’s attitude in response to Peter? ([8:24](#))
266. How did Peter and John’s trip to Samaria influence their trip to Jerusalem? ([8:25](#))

## Lesson 21 - Philip and the Ethiopian - [Acts 8:26-40](#)

### *Philip and the Ethiopian*

26As for Philip, however, an angel of the Lord told him, “Get up now and go down the road going south throughout the desert from Jerusalem to Gaza.”

27So he got up and went. And on that road he came upon an Ethiopian eunuch, an important official who was in charge of all the treasury of Candace, Queen of Ethiopia. He had just been to Jerusalem to worship.

28He was on his way home now, sitting in his chariot, reading aloud\* from the book of the prophet Isaiah.

\*Acts 8:28 – “Reading aloud.” Implied from verse 30.

29The Holy Spirit told Philip, “Go over and join that man in his chariot.”

30So Philip ran up alongside the chariot, and heard the man reading from the book of Isaiah the prophet. “Do you understand what you are reading?” Philip asked him.

31“*No,*” he replied. “How can I possibly understand this unless someone explains it to me?” So he invited Philip to climb up and sit with him.

32The verses of Scripture he was reading were these:

*He was led like a lamb to be slaughtered. And like a sheep that makes no sound when its wool is cut off, He didn't say a word.*

33*At the time He was humiliated, He wasn't even given a fair trial. And no one can speak about His descendants, because His life on earth was taken from Him. (Isaiah 53:7-8)*

34“Now tell me,” the eunuch asked Philip, “just who is the prophet talking about here, about himself, or someone else?”

35So Philip told him the Great News about Jesus, beginning with the very Scripture he had been reading.

36As they continued down the road they came to a body of water, and the eunuch said, “Look, here's water! Why can't I be baptized\* right now?”

\*Acts 8:36 – “Why can't I be baptized right now?” Baptized, from Greek *baupto* – meaning, to dip, dip in, immerse.

37“*If you believe with all your heart,\* you may,*” Philip answered. And the eunuch replied, “I believe that Jesus Christ is indeed the Son of God!”

**\*Acts 8:37 – “If you believe with all your heart.” Total heart-belief is the kind of belief acceptable by God (Rom. 10:9-10).**

**38**He then gave orders for the chariot to be stopped. And both Philip and the eunuch went down into the water, and Philip baptized him.

**39**But when they came up out of the water the Spirit of the Lord suddenly took Philip away, and the eunuch didn't see any more of him. But he was extremely happy and continued on his way, rejoicing.

**40**However, Philip found himself at Azotus. So he continued preaching the Great News in every town until he came to Caesarea.

## **DISCUSSION QUESTIONS**

### **Lesson 21 - Philip and the Ethiopian - [Acts 8:26-40](#)**

267. What did the angel tell Philip to do? ([8:26](#))
268. Whom did Philip meet on the desert road? ([8:27](#))
269. What was the eunuch's position? ([8:27](#))
270. Why was the eunuch on his way to Jerusalem to worship? ([8:27](#))
271. What was the eunuch doing while he sat in the chariot? ([8:28](#))
272. What was the eunuch's problem? ([8:28-34](#))
273. What did the Holy Spirit tell Philip to do? ([8:29](#))
274. What did Philip ask the eunuch? ([8:30](#))
275. How did the eunuch respond to Philip? ([8:31](#))
276. What was the eunuch reading? ([8:32-33](#))
277. How did Philip present the good news about Jesus? ([8:35](#))
278. What did the eunuch do after he believed in Jesus? ([8:36-38](#))
279. What happened to Philip after he baptized the eunuch? ([8:39](#))
280. How did believing in Christ affect the eunuch? ([8:39](#))
281. What was the eunuch's attitude as he went on his way? ([8:39](#))

