

How Much Did They Know? Analyzing the response to the gospel in Acts 8

Something to think about before we begin:

Both the Samaritans (Acts 8:4-25) and the Ethiopian eunuch (Acts 8:26-40) were a part of the gospel's initial spread beyond the Jews, who we would expect to have a greater understanding historically of God's word and of His promises regarding the Christ. Even though the Samaritans and the Ethiopian eunuch would have likely had a more limited knowledge and understanding, what did Philip preach to both? [cp Acts 8:4-5, 12, 34-37]

Acts 8:4-13; Philip's work among the Samaritans

"Philip went down to the city of Samaria and proclaimed to them the Christ." [Acts 8:5]

- Considering the definition of the word "Christ" (from Greek, *Christos*, "anointed"; is the Greek form of the Hebrew word "Messiah"), what things might be necessary to include in order to "proclaim" Christ to those who do not necessarily know who He is or who He is meant to be?

"And the crowds with one accord paid attention to what was being said by Philip, when **they heard him and saw the signs that he did**. For unclean spirits, crying out with a loud voice, came out of many who had them, and many who were paralyzed or lame were healed." [Acts 8:6-7]

- Clearly, the signs that accompanied Philip's teaching were helpful in bringing the Samaritans to a fuller understanding of the nature and the power of the Christ. Though we are unable to perform the same miracles as we teach, in what way do we still have access to the signs, in order to share these same truths with those we are hoping to reach? [cp John 20:30-31; Hebrews 2:1-4; etc]

"...they believed Philip as he preached *good news about **the kingdom of God** and **the name of Jesus Christ***..." [Acts 8:12]

- In practical terms, what things might be necessary to include in teaching about **the kingdom of God** to those who do not necessarily know what it is or what it is meant to be?

- In practical terms, what things might be necessary to include in teaching about **the name of Jesus Christ** to those who do not necessarily know who He is or who He is meant to be? [cp Acts 3:13-16, 22-26; 4:5-12]

"...they were baptized, both men and women." [Acts 8:12]

- In practical terms, what might we reasonably deduce that Philip must have included as he "preached... about the kingdom of God and the name of Jesus Christ" to the Samaritans? [see Matthew 28:18-20; Mark 16:15-16; Acts 2:38; etc]

Based on what we see in **Acts 8:4-13**, what are the only things we can know *for certain* that the Samaritans knew, which led them to believe the gospel and be baptized?

Acts 8:26-40; Philip and the Ethiopian eunuch

Just as Philip was enjoying great “success” and reaching the people of the city of Samaria with the gospel, where did God have an angel (and later, the Spirit!) send him? [Acts 8:26-27]

Whom did he encounter there, and what was this man doing? [Acts 8:27-29]

Knowing that an angel and God’s Spirit had sent him to speak with this man, how did Philip first engage him? [Acts 8:30]

What did Philip do once the eunuch showed interest in learning more, and how does the text tell us he did it? [Acts 8:31-35]

- How might you tell someone “the good news about Jesus” *beginning with Isaiah 53:7-8*?

Because of the eunuch’s specific request, what might we reasonably deduce that Philip must have included as he “told him the good news about Jesus”? [Acts 8:36; see Matthew 28:18-20; Mark 16:15-16; Acts 2:38; etc]

What in the text might lead us to believe that **the eunuch** *thought baptism was an important part of what he had learned*? [Acts 8:36-39]

What in the text helps us to deduce that the eunuch understood baptism to be more than a mere “sprinkling” of water on him? [Acts 8:38]

What in the text helps us to deduce that Philip understood baptism to be more than a mere “pouring” of water over the eunuch? [Acts 8:38-39; cp Romans 6:1-4; etc]

Based on what we see in **Acts 8:26-40**, what are the only things we can know *for certain* that the Ethiopian eunuch knew, which led him to believe the gospel and be baptized?

May the Lord help us to PROCLAIM the KINGDOM of God and the NAME of JESUS!!