ACTS 8

Joy in Samaria, Joy on the Road

a scattered church, a city set free, a sorcerer exposed, and a royal treasurer who went home rejoicing

> *"Therefore, those who had been scattered went about preaching the word."*
> ACTS 8:4

A SMITH FOR CHRIST STUDY · FOUR VOICES: GUZIK · SPROUL · SPURGEON · HENRY

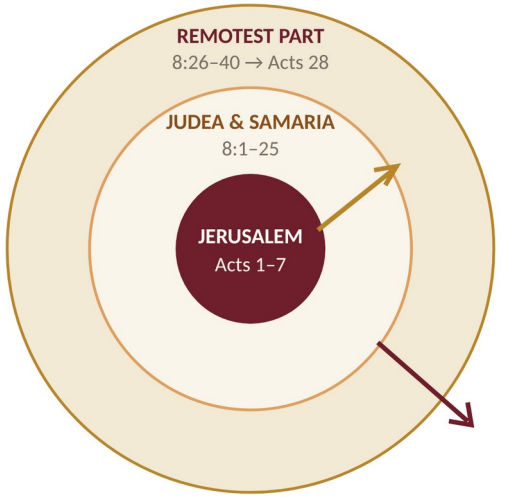
Where Luke has brought us

1. Jesus' last words before His ascension set the map for the whole book: "you shall be My witnesses both in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and even to the remotest part of the earth" (1:8).

2. Philip, like Stephen, was one of the seven chosen in Acts 6:5 to serve tables; later he is "Philip the evangelist" with a home in Caesarea and four prophesying daughters (21:8–9).

3. The chapter holds two very different converts side by side.

ACTS 1:8 IN MOTION · ACTS 8 CROSSES TWO LINES IN ONE CHAPTER



8:1	the church scattered from Jerusalem
8:4	the scattered preach the word everywhere
8:5–8	Philip: Christ proclaimed to Samaritans
8:14–17	Samaritans receive the Spirit
8:25	the apostles preach in Samaritan villages
8:27	an Ethiopian official, heading home
8:39	he goes on his way rejoicing

Scattered, They Preached the Word

Saul approves, devout men weep, the church is driven out — and the word goes with it

ACTS 8:1

Saul was in hearty agreement with putting him to death. And on that day a great persecution began against the church in Jerusalem, and they were all scattered throughout the regions of Judea and Samaria, except the apostles.

DAVID GUZIK

Floodgates open; accidental missionaries; Stephen's blood as seed.

R.C. SPROUL

Saul sure he was right and never more wrong; laymen preached.

C.H. SPURGEON

Persecution sent them abroad; a great trial can bless a church.

MATTHEW HENRY

Devout men mourned; the preachers were scattered and went everywhere.

διασπείρω
DIASPEIRŌ · "SCATTER"

From dia (throughout) and speirō (to sow seed) — the root of "diaspora."

Philip Proclaimed Christ

Unclean spirits leave, the lame walk, a city rejoices — and the magician believes

ACTS 8:12

But when they believed Philip preaching the good news about the kingdom of God and the name of Jesus Christ, they were being baptized, men and women alike.

DAVID GUZIK

No room for prejudice; nothing yet says Simon's faith was false.

R.C. SPROUL

Joy after demonic oppression; Simon knew his power was counterfeit.

C.H. SPURGEON

Jesus sowed, Philip reaped; he preached what Christ had done.

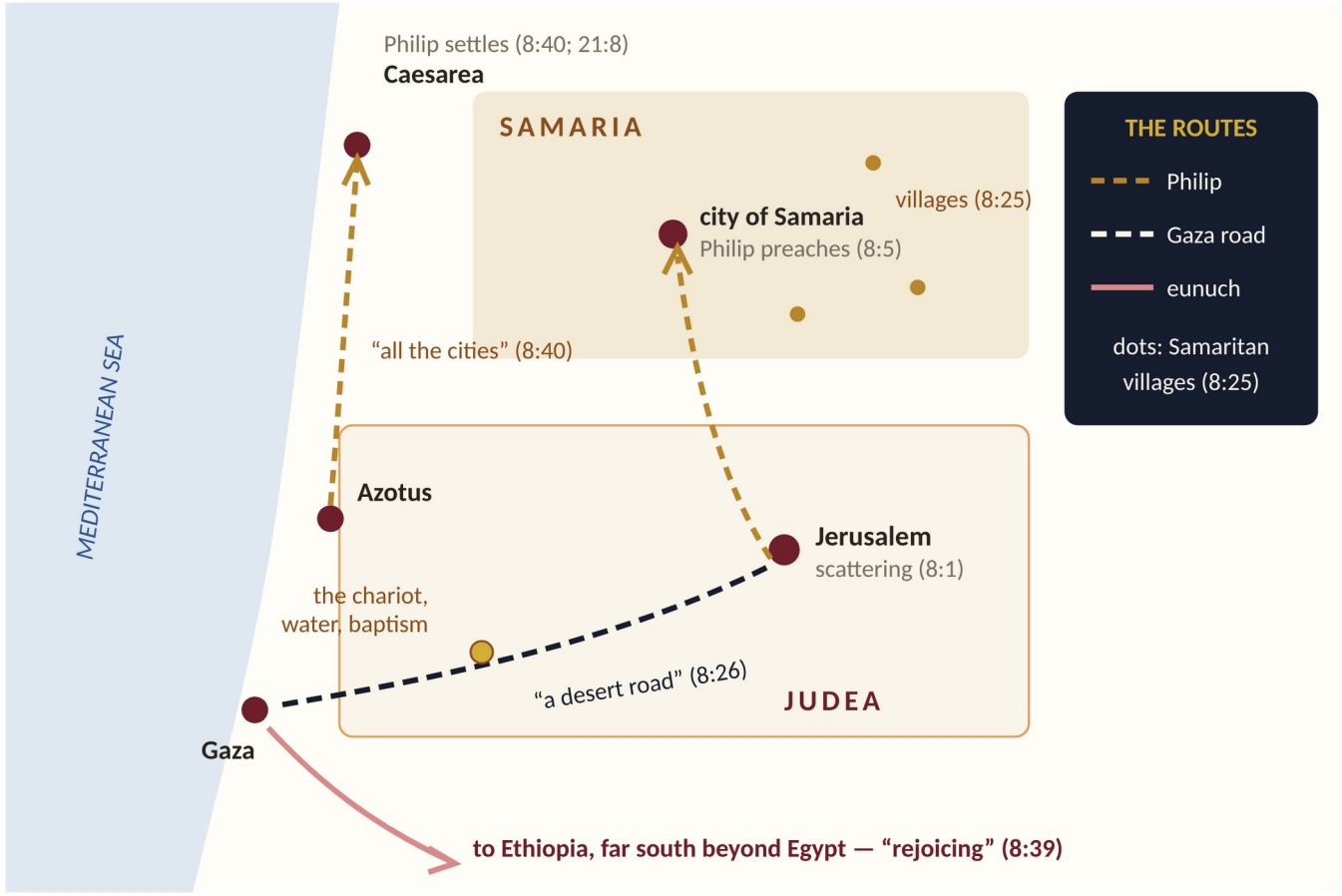
MATTHEW HENRY

Convinced by miracles; bad men may be in a good frame.

χαρά
CHARA · "JOY"

"So there was much rejoicing in that city" (v. 8) — literally "much joy."

Philip's roads



Philip goes north to Samaria, is sent south to the desert road toward Gaza, and finishes on the coast at Caesarea — while the Ethiopian heads on south toward home.

The Gift of God Is Not for Sale

Peter and John come down, the Samaritans receive the Spirit, and a magician offers money

ACTS 8:23

"For I see that you are in the gall of bitterness and in the bondage of iniquity."

DAVID GUZIK

Five views of the delayed Spirit; we don't know Simon's end.

R.C. SPROUL

His profession was spurious; God is simply not for sale.

MATTHEW HENRY

Hypocrites' disguises soon seen through; the gall of bitterness.

δωρεά
DŌREA · "GIFT"

A free gift — the word for the Holy Spirit as "the gift" in Acts 2:38 and for "the gift of God" in John 4:10.

Simon and the Ethiopian

TWO MEN, BOTH BAPTIZED · TWO VERY DIFFERENT HEARTS

	SIMON OF SAMARIA	THE ETHIOPIAN
BAPTIZED	"after being baptized" (v13)	"he baptized him" (v38)
DRAWN BY	"signs and great miracles" (v13)	"reading the prophet Isaiah" (v28)
HE ASKS FOR	"Give this authority to me" (v19)	"unless someone guides me?" (v31)
HE OFFERS	"he offered them money" (v18)	"invited Philip to … sit with him" (v31)
HE HEARS	"your heart is not right" (v21)	"he preached Jesus to him" (v35)
HE ENDS	"Pray to the Lord for me" (v24)	"went on his way rejoicing" (v39)

One wanted Christ's power; the other wanted Christ. Water alone could not tell them apart.

Read across each row: both men were baptized, but what they wanted, asked for and went away with show two different hearts.

Do You Understand What You Are Reading?

An angel, a desert road, a royal treasurer, and the Lamb of Isaiah 53

ACTS 8:26

But an angel of the Lord spoke to Philip saying, "Get up and go south to the road that descends from Jerusalem to Gaza." (This is a desert road.)

DAVID GUZIK

A noble man on a noble search; Isaiah 53 answered.

R.C. SPROUL

A desert road, reading aloud, no New Testament yet.

C.H. SPURGEON

The Book was meant to be understood; read it until you do.

MATTHEW HENRY

Redeemed time by reading; humble enough to ask.

εὐνοῦχος · δυνάστης
EUNOUCHOS · DYNASTĒS

Eunouchos is used five times of this man (vv. 27, 34, 36, 38, 39) — Luke will not let us forget it.

What Prevents Me from Being Baptized?

Water by the road, a confession, an evangelist snatched away, and a man rejoicing

ACTS 8:39

When they came up out of the water, the Spirit of the Lord snatched Philip away; and the eunuch no longer saw him, but went on his way rejoicing.

DAVID GUZIK

Immersion; Philip caught away like the rapture picture.

R.C. SPROUL

A simple profession; not one word about the mode.

C.H. SPURGEON

I like this eunuch; the Spirit left the Bible.

MATTHEW HENRY

He went on rejoicing, never better pleased.

βαπτίζω
BAPTIZŌ · "BAPTIZE"

To dip or immerse; five times in this chapter (vv. 12, 13, 16, 36, 38).

What to carry from this chapter

1

Scattered like seed.

Diaspeirō carries the idea of sowing.

2

Ordinary men carried it.

The apostles stayed in Jerusalem (v1); the scattered believers preached (v4).

3

Philip preached Christ.

Not technique, not himself: “He did not preach up what they could do— he preached what Christ had done—” (Spurgeon).

4

Joy is the fruit.

“Much rejoicing in that city” (v8) and a man who “went on his way rejoicing” (v39).

More to carry

5

A believer who wasn't?

Simon "believed" and was baptized (v13), yet his heart was "not right before God" (v21).

6

God is not for sale.

Simon wanted the power without the Person.

7

One man matters.

The evangelist of a city is sent down a desert road for one reader.

8

Isaiah 53 has one answer.

"Of whom does the prophet say this?"

Talk it through

1. The church only left Jerusalem when persecution scattered it (8:1, 4). What hard thing in my life might God be using to send me to people I would never have reached?

2. Philip took Christ to Samaritans, the people his own background taught him to avoid. Who are the “Samaritans” in my world, and what keeps me from them?

3. Simon believed, was baptized and followed Philip, but his heart was not right. How can a man tell the difference between being impressed by Jesus and belonging to Him?

4. Where am I tempted to treat God’s power as something to get, use or earn — instead of a gift I receive?

5. The Ethiopian said, “How could I, unless someone guides me?” Who is guiding me in the Scriptures — and whom am I guiding?

CLOSING

Acts 8 begins at a grave and ends with a man singing his way home. In between, God turns persecution into seed, breaks down a centuries-old wall in Samaria, exposes a man who wanted to buy Him, and sends an evangelist down an empty road for one reader of Isaiah 53. The word cannot be stopped, and it always ends in joy.

Teaching the Word. Watching the Times. — Smith For Christ

Full Deep Dive, O·I·A study and reflection journal: see the Acts study page.