

ONE message. people. mission.



Gospel Advancement

Acts 8

Main Idea

The Spread of the Gospel advances the Mission of God

Overview

- **Through persecution God's glory advances (Acts 8.1-4)**
 - Day of persecution of Stephen church flees Jerusalem & advances to Judea, & eventually Samaria
 - As they are going they are preaching the Gospel (vs. 4)
 - Not just professional ministers of Gospel, all people are wrapped up in this Mission
 - Just as Christ was persecuted, so, He promised, will we be persecuted
 - He sends us out as Lambs amidst wolves
 - Persecution breeds the spreading of the Gospel

- **Philip brings the Gospel to Samaria: A new missionary front (answering Acts 1.8)**
 - Samaritans are racially mixed peoples (part Jewish, part Assyrian)
 - Historically warred with Jews (cf. John 4:9)
 - For the first time, people outside Jewish Jerusalem believe the Gospel (Acts 8.14)
 - Apostles are sent to verify new believers as it crosses into new territory
 - The Lord likely stays the coming of the Holy Spirit for this purpose in order to communicate two things
 - Samaritans were true believers, not any different than former Jews
 - Therefore, they were not second class citizens & were united as one people, one church
 - This would answer the abnormal activity of a two stage salvation
 - This activity is not normal: but is a special instance due to the Gospel entering new phase
 - Therefore, we should not seek to build entire doctrines on this passage as the clear testimony of Scripture is repentance & faith which then brings the Holy Spirit (cf. Acts 2.38, Ephesians 1.13, etc.)
 - Simon the Magician: Known to have power of God, Great...had attn of the people
 - Seemingly wanted to use God in order to get more power for Himself
 - God & His Gospel were more powerful than Simon's magic

- **Gospel advances to Ethiopian Eunuch**
 - Angel of the Lord, later called Spirit (vs. 29) points Philip to Ethiopian
 - Ethiopian likely a convert to Judaism since he is coming to Jerusalem to worship (vs. 27)
 - Also because the author gives no fanfare to it crossing over border to Gentiles

- As he will do in Chapter 10
- Philip shows how Scriptures points to Christ, explains the Gospel
 - Ethiopian, believes and is baptized
 - Philip continues to preach the Gospel

Questions

Discussion Starter: Why is it people want to be part of something larger than themselves? Why do people, by and large, enjoy being part of a cause?

1. How is this story touching into the larger story of the Mission of God to fill the world with the praise of His people?
2. What is it we fear in persecution?
3. Why is it, by and large, we don't experience persecution? If we do, what does that persecution look like?
4. Discuss why the peoples that are spreading are sharing the Gospel. Is it merely out of obedience? Why not just capitulate and not identify as a Christian and just stay in their homeland?
5. How does the example of the fleeing Christians encourage or challenge us to likewise spread the Gospel?
6. What is so significant about the Gospel advancing to Samaria?
7. What is it about the Mission of God that has Him to want to see all the nations full of worshipers?
8. Discuss how we can be more effective in our evangelism. Spend time in prayer asking for greater burden for the lost.
9. Simon wanted to use Christ to gain something else...how do we do the same?
10. What are some practical ways we can go about helping complete the task of Revelation 5.9, 7.9?

Accountability Question: What are you holding back in embracing God's plan to take the gospel to all peoples?