

ACTS

3. MINISTRY IN JUDEA & SAMARIA: Acts 8-12 STUDY AHEAD

In this section, we see how the gospel began to spread out into stage 2 of the mission – to Judea and Samaria (see Acts 1:8). Amazing things happened in this part of the story, as walls came down between Jew & Samaritan, and between Jew & Gentile.

Acts 8:3. What impact was Saul having on the early church?

Acts 8:4-25. The gospel spread into Samaria, through Philip the evangelist. Note the role of the *Holy Spirit* here.

Acts 8:25. Notice that Peter and John preached the gospel “in many Samaritan villages” on their way back to Jerusalem. Was the “Samaritan woman’s” village one of them (John 4)???

Act 8:26-40. Philip was next sent by the Spirit to a road *south-west* of Jerusalem. He spoke the gospel to a man returning to Ethiopia, in northern Africa. What was the Spirit accomplishing in terms of the geographical spread of the gospel?

Acts 9:1-31. Study the conversion of Saul. Look at 9:9. What do you suppose Saul was thinking about for those 3 days? Read 9:15,16. What was God’s specific mission for Saul?

Acts 9:32-43. Find Lydda and Joppa on a Bible map. Which direction was the gospel moving at this point in the story?

Acts 10. Find Caesarea on a Bible map. See the movement of the gospel?

Acts 10:9-23. Compare Peter’s vision with his explanation of what the vision meant (10:28,29; 10:34,35). What did it mean?

Acts 10:30-33. What do we learn about Cornelius here? What does this tell you about God’s care for all people? What is God looking for in the hearts of those who do not yet know Him?

Acts 11:1-18. Why did Peter have to explain his visit to Cornelius’ house to the church leaders in Jerusalem? Did you notice that Luke spends the better part of 2 chapters on this story? Why is it so pivotal in the narrative?

Acts 11:19-30. A new “center” for the Christian movement was

formed in Antioch in Syria. Here the disciples of Jesus were first called “Christians” (11:26). What role did Barnabas and Saul play here? What was Barnabas’ relationship to Saul at this time?

Acts 12:1-18. Persecution intensified greatly back in Jerusalem. James, the brother of John, was killed. God had a different plan for Peter. This is Peter’s last appearance in the story of Acts. How would you describe his role to this point?

Acts 12:19-25. Here we read of what happened to Herod Agrippa, the great opponent of the gospel (note 12:1). If you are interested, you can look up secular research on the death of this Herod. It confirms the biblical account in some amazing ways.