



The Triumph of the Gospel

Acts 8:1-40

Tamene Menna, Pastoral Assistant

Overview: In his historical narrative, Luke takes us to the time the early believers were persecuted; displaced from their homes, and scattered to the neighboring cities and towns, and the result indeed was the proclamation of the gospel throughout the regions of Judea, Samaria and to the ends of the earth. The two major conversion movements, that of the Samaritans and the Ethiopian Eunuch, took place through the ministry of Philip the evangelist. With a purpose of providing certainty and assurance to Theophilus on what he was taught, Luke shows that the proclamation of God's salvation through Jesus Christ to all people progresses by the power of the Spirit through faithful witnesses in spite of all forms of resistance and oppositions.

01. God is in control of history and uses adverse circumstance to advance his kingdom.

02. The proclamation of the gospel to all people triumphs in spite of all forms of opposition.

03. The proclamation of the gospel to all people progresses by the power of the Spirit through faithful witnesses.

THIS PROMISE IS FOR YOU AND FOR ALL

1. What was the cause of the persecution of the early Christians (8:1-3)? In what ways do you think Christians face resistance and opposition today because of their identification with the gospel message?

2. What happened as a result of the persecution of the followers of Jesus Christ who scattered to the neighboring cities and towns (8:4)? What are some of the ways the gospel continues to advance despite the resistance and opposition Christians face today?

3. The Samaritans were a mixed Jew-Gentile race; hence, they were hated and despised by the Jews. Why do you think their acceptance of the gospel was significant (8:5-8)? How does this inform our understanding of God's plan of salvation and our evangelistic endeavor?

4. Luke tells us that Simon the magician believed and was baptized (8:13) through the ministry of Philip. However, when he saw the Spirit was given through laying on of the apostles' hands, he offered money attempting to purchase the power to bestow the gift of the Spirit (8:18-24). In what way is Simon's understanding of God different from what the Bible teaches about God?

5. Philip obeyed God's command to go down a desert road in the hot Middle East, a barren place at noon, and his obedience resulted in the conversion of the Ethiopian official. What are some of the ways we can be faithful witnesses in our community?

For Further Reading: Gregory C. Cochran, *Christians in the Crosshairs: Persecution in the Bible and around the World Today* (Weaver Book Company, 2016)

THIS PROMISE IS FOR YOU AND FOR ALL