

## Bi134 Acts

### *Lesson Bi134-15 The Samaritan Outpouring*

Sometimes people achieve more than we expect. This was the case with Philip, one of the seven “deacons” who had been chosen to take care of widows in the Jerusalem church. As a result of an outbreak of violent persecution in the city, he and many other Christians fled for their lives into the surrounding regions. The apostles, however, remained in Jerusalem. Then one day a messenger arrived in Jerusalem from Samaria. He found the place where the apostles were staying and told them of a great revival, led by Philip, that had broken out in the city.

When Philip arrived in Samaria, he began to boldly proclaim Christ to the residents of the city. God confirmed his message by healing the sick and crippled and by setting people free from demonic bondage. As a result of Philip’s ministry, hundreds of Samaritans accepted the word of God and were baptized in water.

The apostles must have rejoiced as they listened to this wonderful report. However, as they inquired further, they realized that there was a crucial missing ingredient in the Samaritan revival. They were concerned because it seemed no one was being baptized in the Holy Spirit! Although all who belong to Christ also have the Holy Spirit (Rom 8:9), these new believers had not yet been baptized in the Holy Spirit and empowered as Christ’s witnesses. In the apostles’ minds, this was a grave omission. Had not Jesus commanded his disciples to stay in Jerusalem, and wait for the gift his Father had promised? And had he not promised them, “You will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth”?

The apostles knew that Jesus’ command and promise applied to the Samaritans every bit as much as it did to them. In fact, the Lord’s command to be empowered by the Spirit was for all of God’s people—until the gospel had been proclaimed to the ends of the earth and Jesus had returned from heaven.

Now, if the Samaritans were to fully participate in God’s mission, they too would need to be empowered by the Spirit. The gospel must not only go *to* Samaria, it must go *from* Samaria to the ends of the earth. Because of this, the apostles sent Peter and John to Samaria to pray for the new Christians there to receive the Holy Spirit.

When Peter and John arrived in the city, they called together all who had been saved. After instructing them, they began laying their hands on them. As they did, these new Samaritan believers were filled with the Holy Spirit, just as the Jewish believers had been on the Day of Pentecost.

You will remember from our last lesson that one of those whom Philip had baptized in water was Simon, who had been a powerful sorcerer and magician. This man was captivated by what happened as believers were being filled with the Spirit. While the Bible does not say what so intrigued him, he likely heard them speaking in tongues just as the 120 had done on the Day of Pentecost.

Simon offered to pay the apostles money if they would give him the power to lay hands on people, causing them to receive the Spirit. On hearing this, Peter became angry. He rebuked Simon saying, “May your money perish with you. Don’t you know that you cannot buy the gift of God with money?” He then looked Simon in the eye and said, “Repent of this wickedness and ask the Lord to forgive you and deliver you from your greediness. You are full of bitterness and captive to sin.”

On hearing this, Simon became frightened and begged Peter; “Pray for me that this will not happen to me” (Acts 8:14-24).

After these things, the apostles spent a few days in Samaria teaching and proclaiming the good news. They were so inspired that as they returned to Jerusalem, they preached the gospel in many Samaritan villages. This was the first time they had preached the gospel to anyone other than pure Jews. From the story of the Samaritan outpouring we can glean four important missionary insights:

The first missionary insight we gain from our story is that, in order to become effective witnesses for Christ, we must all be empowered by the Holy Spirit. We have already encountered this lesson in our study. And it is a lesson that we will encounter again as we proceed through Acts. We must not miss this all important lesson Luke is trying to teach us.

The Samaritan outpouring is the third key outpouring of the Spirit to occur in the book of Acts. As you may recall, the first outpouring occurred at Pentecost. The second also occurred in Jerusalem a few days later, and now a third outpouring occurs in Samaria. Each of these three outpourings resulted in powerful missional witness and demonstrates the empowering-results-in-witness pattern that is repeated throughout Acts. The Samaritan outpouring is yet another fulfillment of Jesus’ promise in Acts 1:8, “But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses.”

The second missionary insight we gain from this story is that everywhere the gospel goes *to*, it must go *from*. The apostles understood this truth. This is why they were so intent on praying with the Samaritans to receive the Holy Spirit. According to Jesus’ plan in Acts 1:8, the gospel was to go to Samaria, but it was not to stop there. And if the gospel was to go from Samaria, the new Samaritan church would need to be empowered by the Holy Spirit.

As a result of the Samaritans’ receiving the Spirit, a new center of missions advance was created. Luke tells us that “the church throughout Judea, Galilee and Samaria ... was strengthened; and encouraged by the Holy Spirit, it grew in numbers” (Acts 9:31). We must never be content knowing that the gospel has come to our place. We must commit ourselves to taking the gospel to other villages and towns.

A third important missionary insight we gain from the story of the Samaritan outpouring is that God can use anyone who will be filled with the Spirit and fully commit themselves to his mission. The Samaritans were a mixed-race people. They were part Jew and part Gentile.

Because of this, the Jews despised them. They accused the Samaritans of perverting the true religion of God.

However, by filling these new Samaritan believers with the Holy Spirit, God was showing that he had accepted them as full participants in his mission. God will save anybody from any tribe or religion that will repent of their sins and trust Christ. Further, he will also fill them with his Spirit and empower them to share the gospel with others. We must take the message of Christ to all. Then, we must mobilize them to take the gospel to others.

A final insight we gain from this story is that the power and blessings of God cannot be bought and sold. Simon made two serious mistakes. First he assumed that Peter and John were able to give Holy Spirit to the people they prayed for. However, no man has ever had that power, and no man ever will. Only God can give people the Holy Spirit. The second mistake Simon made was in thinking that the power and blessing of God can be bought and sold with money. He was wrong again. The power and blessings of God cannot be bought or sold. However, God will freely give both to those who will fully commit themselves to him and his mission.

This lesson is **important** because we learn about our responsibility to advance the gospel into new regions.

The big **truths** we learn are that wherever the gospel goes *to*, it must also go *from*. God can use anyone who will be empowered by the Spirit and fully commit themselves to him and his mission.

Let's now **review** some important truths we have learned from this lesson.

1. Why did Peter and John go to Samaria?
  - A. [PAUSE] If you answered, "They went to pray for the new Samaritan believers to receive the Holy Spirit, so that they could be empowered to spread gospel even farther," you are correct.
2. Who can God use to advance his kingdom in the earth?
  - A. [PAUSE] If you answered, "God can use anyone who will be filled with the Spirit and fully commit themselves to him and his mission," you are correct.
3. What does God think of those who try to sell his blessings to others?
  - A. [PAUSE] If you answered, "God is displeased with those who try to sell his blessing and will judge them," you are correct.

Your assignment is to listen to this lesson several times until you can accurately tell the story and teach its lessons to others. Discuss with your Christian friends about the difference between baptism in water and baptism in the Holy Spirit. Ask God to create a hunger in them to be baptized in the Spirit, so they will have power to witness. Lay hands on them and believe that God will pour out his Spirit once again.