

**Acts 8:1- 25**



On that day a great persecution broke out against the church at Jerusalem, and all except the apostles were scattered throughout Judea and Samaria.

The persecution brought about the dispersion which Christ had foretold (Acts 1:8).

Jerusalem would be looked upon as the headquarters of the Christians. The twelve therefore had to remain, in spite of all the persecution.

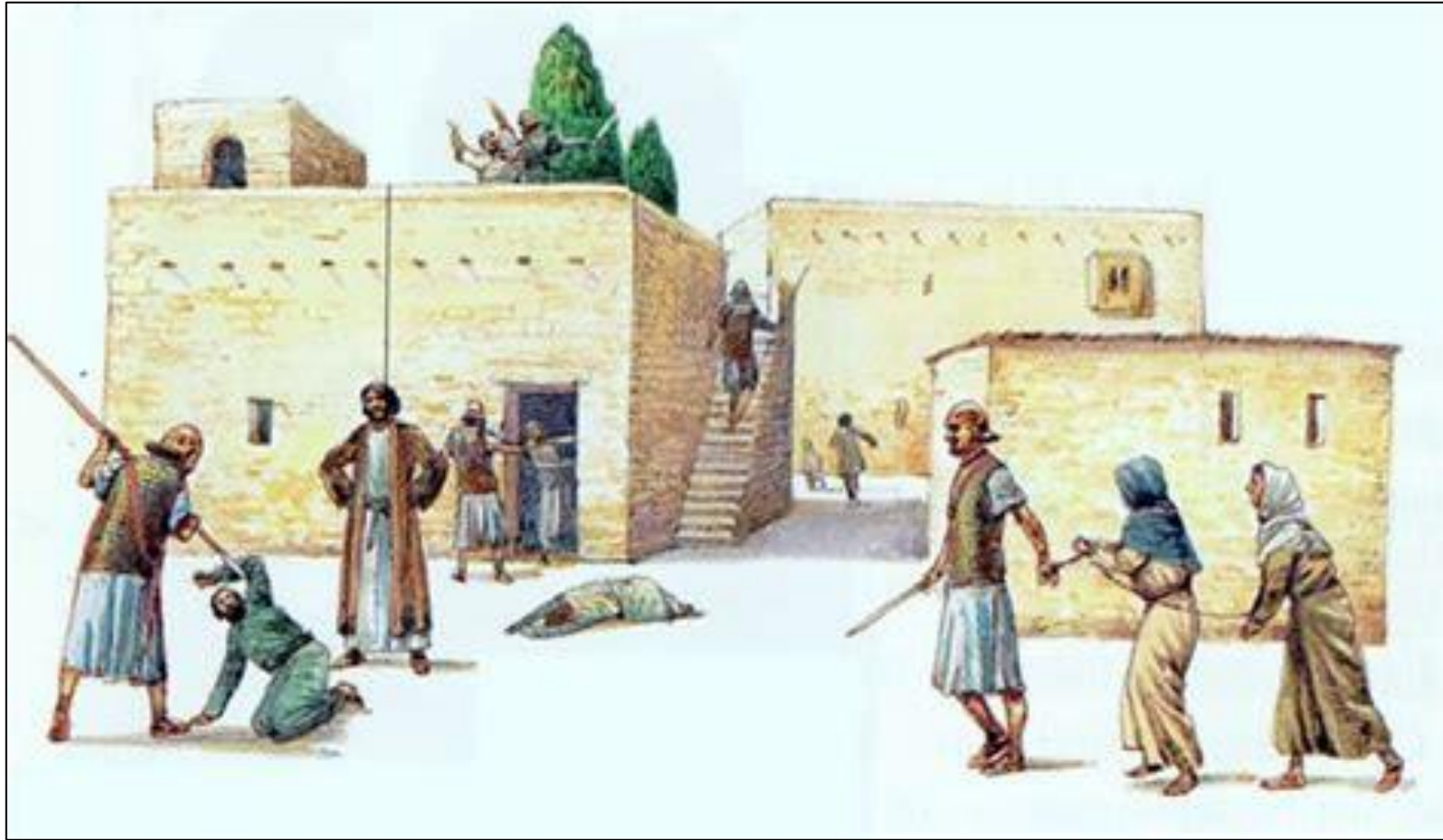


Godly men buried Stephen and mourned deeply for him.



It took courage at such a time to perform the funeral rites for Stephen.

But Saul began to destroy the church. Going from house to house, he dragged off men and women and put them in prison.



Those who had been scattered preached the word wherever they went.

They shared the good news with their Jewish friends



Philip went down to a city in Samaria and proclaimed the Christ there.

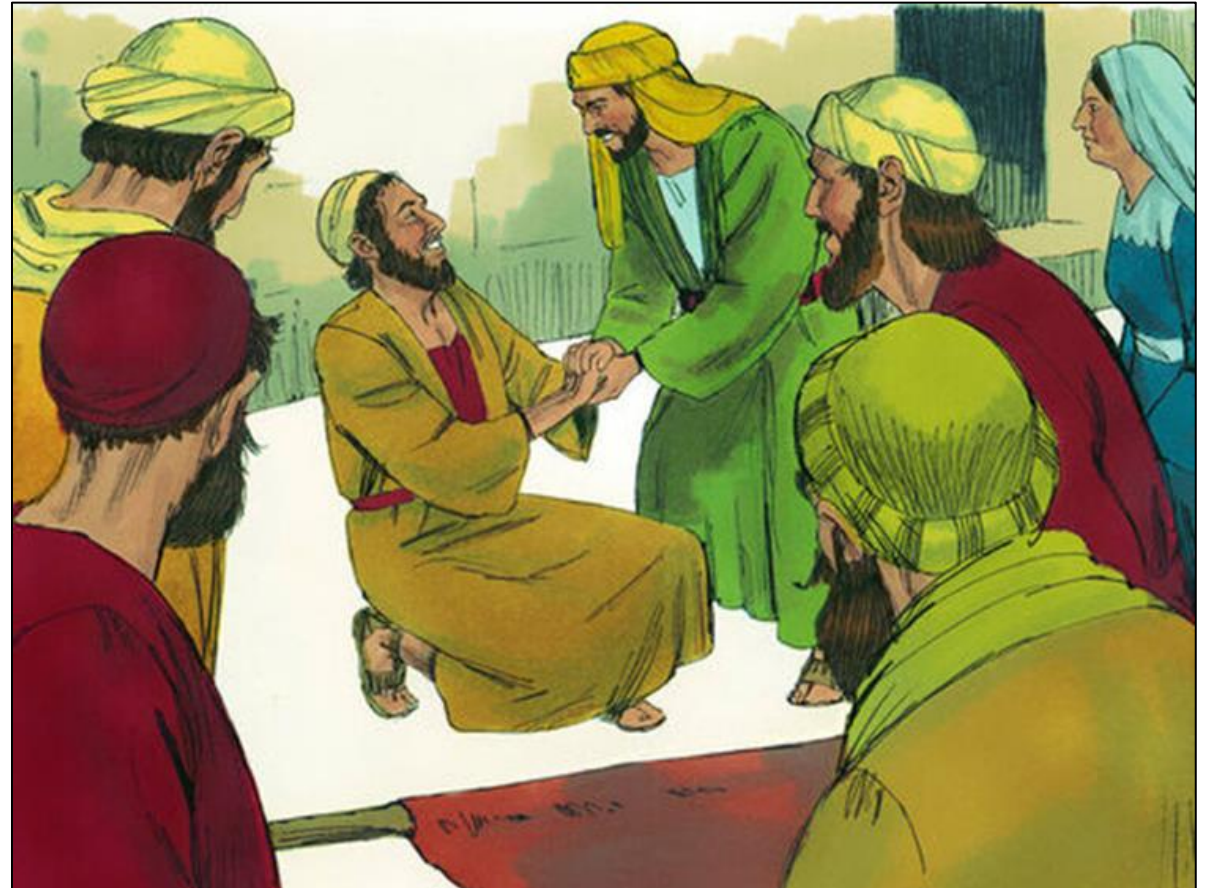
They too were expecting the promised Messiah.



As Jewish rejection of the good news gets larger the gospel goes out to others

When the crowds heard Philip and saw the miraculous signs he did, they all paid close attention to what he said. With shrieks, evil spirits came out of many, and many paralytics and cripples were healed. So there was great joy in that city.

One reason there was such a response was that Jesus had sown the seed in Samaria during His ministry (John 4:1-26). Now Philip is reaping the harvest.



## Simon – a magician

Now for some time a man named Simon had practised sorcery in the city and amazed all the people of Samaria.





## A powerful deception

He boasted that he was someone great, and all the people, both high and low, gave him their attention and exclaimed, "This man is the divine power known as the Great Power." They followed him because he had amazed them for a long time with his magic.

The Samaritans assumed that because Simon had real spiritual power, it was from God; but it wasn't true.



# Jesus has the ultimate power

But when they believed Philip as he preached the good news of the kingdom of God and the name of Jesus Christ, they were baptized, both men and women.



## It looks like the real thing

Simon himself believed and was baptized.



Genuine conversions are possible in such extreme cases

And he followed Philip everywhere, astonished by the great signs and miracles he saw.

When others believed, it was the preaching and the good news that got their attention. But Simon was impressed by the sight of the miracles.



## An encouraging visit from headquarters

When the apostles in Jerusalem heard that Samaria had accepted the word of God, they sent Peter and John to them.

There were still some links with Jerusalem



Here they are officially welcoming the Samaritan believers into the church

When they arrived, they prayed for them that they might receive the Holy Spirit, because the Holy Spirit had not yet come upon any of them; they had simply been baptized into the name of the Lord Jesus.

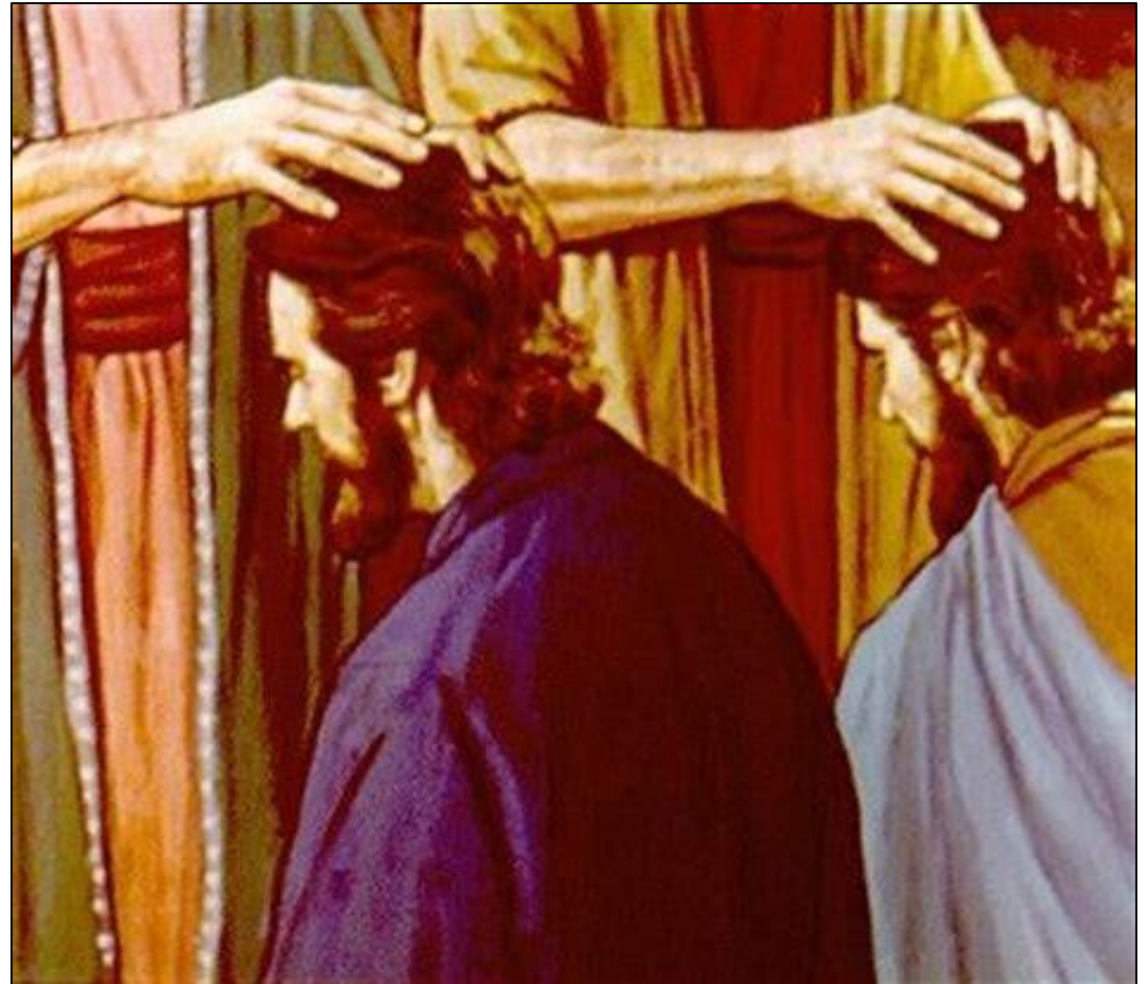


Here we see a subsequent experience of the Holy Spirit in the new believers

Then Peter and John placed their hands on them,  
and they received the Holy Spirit.

Whatever the Samaritans experienced, it seems to have been more than the “regular” bestowal of the Holy Spirit at salvation. This is a filling of the Holy Spirit we should always desire and seek.

Perhaps God did it this way here to show the link to the founding church in Jerusalem through the apostles.



## Oh dear !!

When Simon saw that the Spirit was given at the laying on of the apostles' hands, he offered them money and said, "Give **me also this ability** so that everyone on whom I lay my hands may receive the Holy Spirit."

His faith, such as it was, had only sprung from his amazement.

Simon wanted to be "in charge" of the Holy Spirit! He thought that the Holy Spirit was a "power" he could use as he wanted.





## Peter's discernment

Peter answered.. "May your money perish with you, because you thought you could buy the gift of God with money!"



Peter also made it clear that Simon was headed towards hell.

Simon really hadn't understood the work of the Holy Spirit.

This was a serious warning

# God reveals the state of Simon's heart to Peter

You have no part or share in this ministry,  
because your heart is not right before God.

“You’re not saved!”



## There is a way of escape

Repent of this wickedness and pray to the Lord.  
Perhaps he will forgive you for having such a thought in your heart.  
For I see that you are full of bitterness and captive to sin."



## Peter couldn't humble Simon's heart for him

Then Simon answered, "Pray to the Lord for me so that nothing you have said may happen to me."

He expresses no sorrow for the evil of his thought, but only asks that he may suffer no punishment.





## **There are 2 serious warnings in this:-**

1, Is my faith real or in other things

2 Corinthians 13:5 Examine yourselves, to see whether you are in the faith. Test yourselves. Or do you not realize this about yourselves, that Jesus Christ is in you?—unless indeed you fail to meet the test!

2, The danger of false 'brothers' in the church.

Matthew 7:15 "Watch out for false prophets. They come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ferocious wolves.

## What must we do to have our heart right in the sight of God?

We must trust in Jesus, in who He is and what He has done to save us, with our **heart**.

It is a private action, something no one can do for you, but you must do with God yourself.

When they had testified and proclaimed the word of the Lord,  
Peter and John returned to Jerusalem,  
preaching the gospel in many **Samaritan** villages.

**SPREAD  
THE  
WORD**

