

Philip

Judea and Samaria

Foundation

Bible passage : Acts 8

Jesus had told the disciples to spread the message about him in Jerusalem, Judea (which was the area around Jerusalem), Samaria just to the North (where the Samaritans lived), and to the end of the earth (Acts 1:8). The disciples don't seem to have been very quick to do this. But, when persecution arose most of the followers of Jesus were scattered. One of them, Philip (not the Apostle of that name) ended up in Samaria. He was one of the seven men earlier appointed to help the Apostles in caring for the needy.

Philip had to flee from his home and friends in Jerusalem and he might have refused to tell the Samaritans the good news because they were the enemies of the Jews. But that no longer mattered to Philip, even though he was now a bit of a refugee he wanted everyone to know about Jesus and so took the opportunity to spread the light of Jesus wherever he went.

Some Samaritans had already believed in Jesus (eg. John 4), but most did not know Him. We are told that God did some amazing miracles through Philip (8.6-7 & 13). He also "proclaimed to them the Christ" - explaining why Jesus was the one God had promised centuries before in the Old Testament. The Samaritans already knew about the Christ, and shared some of the same scriptures as the Jews, but were not Jews. As a result of Philip's preaching many believed and were baptized (8.12).



From a Woodcut

Acts 8.26-32 also tells us how an Angel led Philip so that he met with an official from Ethiopia, who was probably in Israel on official business for his Queen. It was a long way from Israel to Ethiopia, probably a month or more even in a chariot. The Ethiopian was reading from the prophet Isaiah - he had probably bought a scroll of the book most likely in Greek. Philip

was able to explain to him that the prophecy given seven centuries before was about Jesus. From this Philip explained the "good news about Jesus". As a

result the Ethiopian believed and was baptized. We don't know for certain what happened to the official after that but the Christian faith spread quickly to Ethiopia in the years that followed.

Philip ended up at Azotus (Ashdod) on the coast and made his way north along the coast to Caesarea, which was about 50 miles north. Along the way he preached the gospel in all the towns he passed through. Later we meet Philip, now known as "the evangelist", in Caesarea with his four daughters (Acts 21.8)

"I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God." Acts 8.37



Though they were slow to get started God gave the followers of Jesus a push and they started to tell non-Jews about Him.