

Persecution Led to Powerful Preaching

International Bible Lesson

Acts 8:9-24 (25)

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“Now when the apostles which were at Jerusalem heard that Samaria had received the word of God, they sent unto them Peter and John” (Acts 8:14—KJV).

“The apostles in Jerusalem heard that the people of Samaria had received the word of God, so they sent Peter and John to them” (Acts 8:14—GNB).

“Now when the apostles at Jerusalem heard that Samaria had accepted the word of God, they sent Peter and John to them” (Acts 8:14—NRSV).

When Jesus and His apostles passed through Samaria, they preached the good news of the kingdom of God. Jesus even revealed to the Samaritan woman at the well and to her townspeople that He was the Messiah (see John 4:4-42). Perhaps some of the Samaritans who had believed in Jesus ceased to accept Him as the Messiah when they learned that He had been crucified outside the city gates of Jerusalem.

After the murder of Stephen and the persecution of the church began, the deacon Philip fled to Samaria where he proclaimed “the good news about the kingdom of God and the name of Jesus Christ” (Acts 8:12). When the apostles in Jerusalem learned that many Samaritans were believing in Jesus and being baptized, they sent two witnesses and church leaders, Peter and John, to verify the reports. The apostles confirmed the reports and the effective preaching of Philip. Because Philip had only baptized “in the name of the Lord Jesus,” the apostles laid hands on the believers and they received the Holy Spirit (Acts 8:15-17). The gift of the Holy Spirit confirmed that the Samaritans had believed in their hearts the truth about Jesus. The apostles also discovered that they needed to teach all who preached the word of God to baptize as Jesus’ commanded them, “in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit” (Matthew 28:19). As they returned to Jerusalem, the apostles preached in many Samaritan villages; thus, they fulfilled the prophecy of Jesus that His followers would be “witnesses in Jerusalem, in all Judea and Samaria” (Acts 1:8).

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