

## New Testament Conversions – No. 3

### Conversions in Samaria

Dub McClish

After Stephen was stoned to death for his bold proclamation of the Gospel, a great persecution erupted in Jerusalem, scattering disciples in all directions (Acts 8:1–2). Among those thus scattered was an evangelist named Philip who began preaching in the city of Samaria (Acts 8:4–13). Luke does not supply a copy of his sermons, but he describes Philip's messages as "proclaiming the Christ" (v. 5) and "preaching good tidings concerning the kingdom of God and the name of Jesus Christ" (v. 12).

The Samaritans were very receptive, and they responded by believing and being baptized (v. 12). Among these converts was Simon the sorcerer who commanded great influence over the Samaritans by his slight-of-hand tricks (vs. 9–11, 13).

While there is not as much detail given in this account of conversions as of those on Pentecost (Acts 1:22–47), it is nonetheless complete enough for us to learn what the people were commanded to do to be saved. It needs to be emphasized that Jesus had told His disciples to "preach the Gospel to the whole creation. He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be condemned" Mark 16:15–16). Let it be noticed that Philip preached Christ and His kingdom (the same as preaching the Gospel) to the Samaritans, just as Jesus had commanded. Said preaching caused the people to believe the message and to believe in the Christ who was behind the message. Their faith in Christ and His Gospel caused them to be baptized. If we can trust what Jesus said and what the record of Acts 2 teaches, these Samaritans were both saved and added to the church upon being baptized **and not before**. If Philip taught them that they were saved as soon as they believed and they could later be baptized if they wanted to, then he contradicted both Christ and the apostles. However, he was confirming the truth of his message to the Samaritans by miracles, which power Christ would not have given him had he been preaching a conflicting message. Likewise, the apostles endorsed his work (v. 14), proving that he preached the same thing they preached in Jerusalem. Although repentance is not specifically mentioned, it is both logical and scriptural to assume that they did indeed repent of their sins, else they would not have been fit subjects for baptism. Indeed, these Samaritans did precisely what the Pentecostians did and what all must do to be saved.

[**Note:** I wrote this article for, and it was published in the "Bible Thoughts" Column for the *Hood County News*, Granbury, Texas, August 24, 1978.]

**Attribution:** From *thescripturecache.com*; Dub McClish, owner and administrator.