

# Conversions In Acts

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## The Samaritans Conversion

(Ac 8:1-25)

### INTRODUCTION

1. Good Morning,
  - a. Greeting...
2. We have been looking at a series of lessons on the “Conversions In Acts.”
  - a. Last week we looked at the conversions from “Solomon’s Portico.”
    - i. **Ac 4:4** “But many of those who had heard the word believed, and the number of the men came to about five thousand.”<sup>1</sup>
  - b. This week we are going to look at “The Samaritans Conversion.”
    - i. **Ac 8:12** “But when they believed Philip as he preached good news about the kingdom of God and the name of Jesus Christ, they were baptized, both men and women.”
3. As we have each week in this series we will be asking four questions pertaining to the events we read about specific to each conversion.
  - a. What led to the conversions?
  - b. What was said to the non-Christians?
  - c. What was the mentality of the new converts?
  - d. How does knowing this help us help others?
4. With this in mind let us now start examining our lesson.

### I. What Led To The Conversions?

- A. Saul/Paul was heavily persecuting the church (**1-4**)
  1. After consenting to the death of Stephen Saul started that day a great persecution against the church on the Jews behalf.
  2. Because of this persecution the Christians that were in Judea started scattering all over the regions of Judea and Samaria.
    - i. Those that were scattered did not hide but rather went preaching the gospel.
- B. Philip goes to preach to Samaria (**5-13**)
  1. Background of Philip.
    - i. Philip is one of the “seven” chosen by the people to help with the widows.
      - a. **Ac 6:5** “And what they said pleased the whole gathering, and they chose Stephen, a man full of faith and of the Holy Spirit, and Philip...”
    - ii. Philip as part of that seven was the first to receive the ability to perform miracles other than the apostles.
      - a. **Ac 6:6** “These they set before the apostles, and they prayed and laid their hands on them.”
      - b. **Ac 8:6** “And the crowds with one accord paid attention to what was being said by Philip when they heard him and saw the signs that he did.”

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<sup>1</sup> All Scriptures are taken from the ESV unless otherwise noted. If other translations are used this is not necessarily an endorsement of the translation.

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2. Background on the Samaritans.
    - i. These were the mixed group of Jew & Gentile.
      - a. When Babylon destroyed Jerusalem there were some Jews left behind.
        1. These Jews married the local Gentiles.
      - b. 70 years later after the Babylonian captivity and the Jews came back and these “Samaritans” wanted to help the Jews rebuild.
        1. God had just sent back the Gentile wives and children of the Jews (**Ezra 10**) so the Jews knew this was not going to work.
      - c. The Samaritans upset tried to stop the Jews from rebuilding the temple and Jerusalem.
        1. This to a hatred of each other.
  3. Philip did perform miracles that amazed the people.
    - i. He cast out unclean spirits.
    - ii. He healed the paralyzed.
    - iii. He healed the lame.
  4. The Samaritans were used to being amazed by magic.
    - i. There was a man in Samaria that had been amazing the people with his magic tricks for a long time.
      - a. This man, Simon, proclaimed himself as someone great.
      - b. He accepted the title “Great Power of God.”
  5. Philip, however, did something more to get the people’s attention away from Simon than miracles he preached to them.
    - i. The people were used to amazing signs but not the preaching.
- C. Thus...
1. What led to the conversions...was there anything that got the conversions going...yes it was Philip’s preaching.

### II. What Was Said To The Non-Christians?

- A. Philip preached the Christ
  1. This wouldn’t be the last time this is said of Philip’s preaching.
    - i. **Ac 8:35**
  2. The definite article “the” in front of Christ is important as it signifies the title of Jesus and thus idea behind the teaching.
    - i. Philip here is stressing that Jesus is the Messiah, what the word Christ means.
  3. Preaching Jesus as the Messiah means...
    - i. Teaching Jesus is Savior.
    - ii. Teaching Jesus is He whom we are to listen to.
    - iii. Teaching Jesus is He whom we are to obey.
- B. Philip preached the good news about the kingdom of God
  1. The kingdom of God was no longer “to come” but was now “present.”
    - i. **Co 1:13** “He has delivered us from the domain of darkness and transferred us to the kingdom of his beloved Son”
    - ii. **He 12:28** “Therefore let us be grateful for receiving a kingdom that cannot be shaken, and thus let us offer to God acceptable worship, with reverence and awe”

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2. The promised kingdom was a powerful point of preaching.
  - i. Remember the Samaritans were partially Jewish and as such they had the Old Law.
    - a. They had distorted it and combined it with some pagan ideas but never the less they understood a Messiah would come to establish his kingdom as was prophesied by Daniel and Jeremiah.
  - ii. There no long was a reason to “wait” for the kingdom the kingdom was now and the Christ was its King.
    - a. **Rv 17:14** “They will make war on the Lamb, and the Lamb will conquer them, for he is Lord of lords and King of kings, and those with him are called and chosen and faithful.”
- C. Philip preached the good news about the name of Jesus
  1. What is interesting here is that it doesn’t say Philip preached Christ here.
    - i. It says Philip preached the good news about the “name of Jesus.”
      - a. In other words Jesus’ authority.
    - ii. Remember the timeline here.
      - a. Jesus had less than six years prior been there and preached not only about the kingdom to come but about Himself.
        1. **Jn 4:1-42**
  2. What does it mean then that Philip preached the “name of Christ?”
    - i. It means Philip preached on the authority of Christ.
      - a. They knew who Jesus the person was from the encounter at the well.
      - b. They “now” knew Jesus was the Christ as just taught.
      - c. They “now” knew Jesus was king over His kingdom.
    - ii. What they were now being taught was that there was a reason for Jesus being called the Christ and there was a reason He was King over His kingdom.
      - a. He had the “all authority.”
        1. **Mt 28:18** “And Jesus came and said to them, “All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me.”
      - b. This is no slight or meniscal truth.
        1. If Jesus has all authority He is the authority and as such He has the power to “save” or “destroy.”
          - i. **Jn 12:48** “The one who rejects me and does not receive my words has a judge; the word that I have spoken will judge him on the last day.”
          - ii. **Mt 10:28** “And do not fear those who kill the body but cannot kill the soul. Rather fear him who can destroy both soul and body in hell.”
  - D. Thus...
    1. What was said to the non-Christian...was there any specific doctrine mentioned...yes Philip taught the doctrine of “the Christ,” “the kingdom of Christ,” and “the authority of the Christ.”

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### III. What Was The Mentality Of The New Converts?

- A. This conversion account is interesting as its “after effect” is limited to one man
  - 1. That man being Simon the Magician.
- B. After the conversion of the Samaritans Peter & John were sent
  - 1. They were sent so that some there might receive the ability to perform miracles through the Holy Spirit.
    - i. **Ac 8:14-17**
- C. What we learn from the “after effect” from Simon
  - 1. Remember Simon having been the “main attraction” wanted that title back.
    - i. He offered money for the ability to lay hands on others so they could receive the Holy Spirit
      - a. **Ac 8:18-19**
    - ii. Some will have a hard time letting go of the past.
      - a. It will not be because they were not “converted.”
        - 1. Simon was a Christian.
        - 2. He had properly obeyed the gospel.
          - i. **Ac 8:13**
      - b. It will be because they are immature in their thinking.
  - 2. Remember how Peter responded to Simon’s request.
    - i. Peter called it like it was.
      - a. He didn’t beat around the bush and didn’t try to cater to the feelings of Simon.
    - ii. Peter said...
      - a. Simon had sinned.
      - b. Simon heart was not in the right place.
      - c. Simon could not, like this, make it to heaven.
      - d. Simon needed to repent and ask God for forgiveness and help with a new righteous heart.
      - e. Simon was at that moment a slave of sin.
- D. Thus...
  - 1. What was the mentality of the new converts...was there anything surprising after their conversion in their attitude or actions...absolutely we see that people are not just going to always be “strong” Christians after their conversion. Some will need some help and encouragement but most importantly they will need to hear the truth of their situation if sinning.

### IV. How Does Knowing This Help Us Help Others?

- A. Knowing this helps us understand what will lead to people obeying the gospel
  - 1. It is here making opportunities.
    - i. We have now seen in this area...
      - a. Acts 2 the making of opportunities.
      - b. Acts 3 the taking of the opportunity that was presented.
      - c. Acts 8 the making of the opportunity.
    - ii. It is up to us more often than not to make the opportunity.

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- B. Knowing this helps us understand what needs to be said so others will obey the gospel
1. People need to understand Jesus is the Christ.
    - i. They need to know He is the Messiah the Savior of all man especially them.
      - a. **Jn 3:16** “For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life.” (NKJV)
  2. People need to understand Jesus is the King of His kingdom.
    - i. They need to realize that Jesus’ kingdom is here, not at some future time, and that they don’t want to miss out on being a part of it.
      - a. **Ro 14:17** “For the kingdom of God is not a matter of eating and drinking but of righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit.”
  3. People need to understand Jesus has all authority in heaven and on earth.
    - i. They need to comprehend that Jesus and Jesus alone has the authority to save their lives and He has the authority to destroy their lives.
      - a. **II Ti 4:1** “I charge you in the presence of God and of Christ Jesus, who is to judge the living and the dead...”

### CONCLUSION

1. Brethren once again we have seen there is more to being an evangelist, which we all are called to be, there is an understanding of what that calling means.
  - a. It means knowing the Word so as to present it to those that need to hear it so desperately.
2. Question: Are you striving to always get better at teaching the lost about Jesus?
  - a. If so continue therein and grow thereby.
  - b. If not why not?
3. Invitation
  - a. For those that are Christians but are not living for Christ repent by confessing your sins to God that He may forgive you and dedicate your life/time back to Him.
    - i. **I Jn 1:7, 9** "But if we walk in the light as He is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanses us from all sin...9 If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness."
  - b. For those that are not Christians or for those that think they are Christians and want to know for sure notice what is required to become a child of God or Christian according to God and God only.
    - i. Hear/Study **Rom 10:17; II Tim 2:15**
    - ii. Have Faith In Jesus **Jn 3:16; 8:24**
    - iii. Repent/Turn To God **Ac 17:30; Lk 24:47**
    - iv. Confess Jesus As Lord **Mt 10:32; Rom 10:9**
    - v. Immersed For The Forgiveness of Sins **Ac 2:38; 22:16; I Pt 3:21**
    - vi. Live A Faithful Life **I Jn 1:7; Eph 5:8**