



C. G. Vos, "Philip and the Ethiopian"

## 5. Missions to Samaria and Judea (Acts 8:1b-12:23)

*"Then Peter opened his mouth, and said, Of a truth I perceive that God is no respecter of persons: But in every nation he that feareth him, and worketh righteousness, is accepted with him." (Acts 10:34-35)*

### "Come, We That Love the Lord" (hymn no. 119)

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| <p>1. Come, we that love the Lord,<br/>And let our joys be known.<br/>Join in a song with sweet accord,<br/>And worship at his throne.</p> | <p>3. The God who rules on high<br/>And all the earth surveys—<br/>Who rides upon the stormy sky<br/>And calms the roaring seas—</p> |
| <p>2. Let those refuse to sing<br/>Who never knew our God,<br/>But servants of the heav'nly King<br/>May speak their joys abroad.</p>      | <p>4. This mighty God is ours,<br/>Our Father and our Love.<br/>He will send down his heav'nly pow'rs<br/>To carry us above.</p>     |

## Preparing for the “Turn to the Gentiles” (Acts 8:1b–40)

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*PERSECUTION SCATTERS THE CHURCH; THE  
GOSPEL PREACHED IN SAMARIA; SIMON AND  
SIMONY; PHILIP AND THE ETHIOPIAN  
OFFICIAL*

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### Persecution Scatters the Church (8:1b–4)



5. Missions to Samaria and Judea (Acts 8:1b–12:23)

- “And at that time **there was a great persecution against the church** which was at Jerusalem; and they were all scattered abroad throughout the regions of Judaea and Samaria, except the apostles.” (8:1b)
  - **Scattering** turns out to be provident in that these disciples carry the word further abroad to Samaritans and Hellenistic Jews
  - “**Except the apostles**” probably does not mean that only the Twelve were spared persecution but that their immediate associates, local Aramaic-speaking Palestinian Christians were not harassed **while Greek-speaking Jews more closely associated with Stephen were**
- “And **devout men** carried Stephen *to his burial*, and made great lamentation over him.” (8:2)
  - **Devout/godly/righteous men** = Jews who recognized that Stephen was a godly man, righteous Christians, observant God-fearers?

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Philip  
goes  
from  
Jerusalem  
to  
Samaria

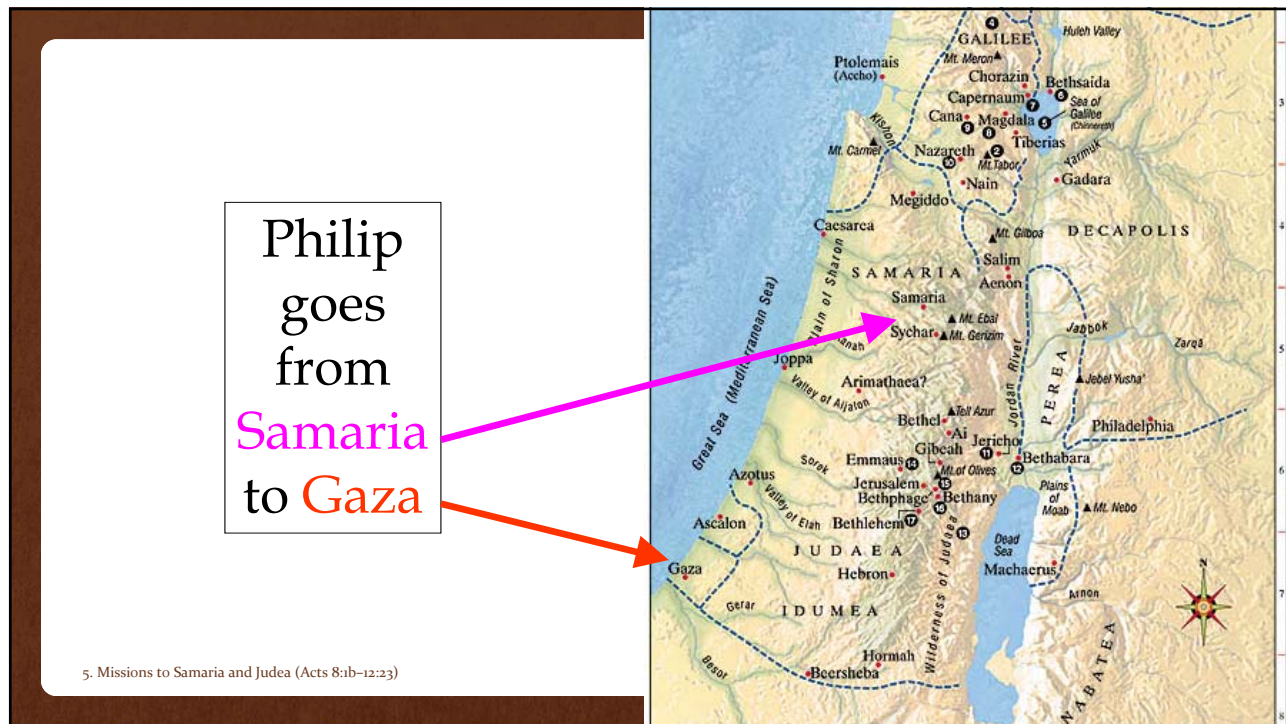
“Philip went down to the city of  
Samaria, and preached Christ  
unto them.”  
(Acts 8:5)

5. Missions to Samaria and Judea (Acts 8:1b-12:23)

## The Gospel Preached in Samaria (8:5-25)

- **Philip and the Samaritans (8:5-8)**
  - Non-Jewish Israelites (of somewhat mixed lineage)
- **The “Conversion” of Simon Magus (8:9-13)**
  - *Magus* = magician, sorcerer (but also same word as the Magi!)
  - “Even Simon himself believed. After being baptized, he stayed constantly with Philip and **was amazed when he saw the signs and great miracles that took place.**” (8:13 NRSV)
- **Peter and John Bestow the Gift of the Holy Ghost (8:14-17)**
  - “Then laid they *their* hands on them, and they received the Holy Ghost.” (8:17)
  - This does not necessarily imply that Philip did not hold the Melchizedek Priesthood, but that he had not been authorized to confirm non-Jews
- **Peter Rebukes Simon (8:18-25)**
  - “Peter answered: “May your money perish with you, because you thought you could buy the gift of God with money!” (8:20)
  - Medieval sin of “**simony**”





## Philip and the Ethiopian Official (8:26-40)

- **The Spirit directs Philip to Meet the Ethiopian (8:26-29)**
  - “Ethiopian” used broadly in Greek for any with a dark complexion, usually from the regions south of Egypt
  - As a eunuch, the official could be neither a Jew nor a proselyte—*represents extension of the gospel to a non-Israelite God-fearer*
  - Candace (Kandake) traditional title of the queen of Meroe (in modern Sudan)
- **Philip Interprets Isaiah 53:7-8 LXX (8:30-35)**
  - “And the eunuch answered Philip, and said, I pray thee, of whom speaketh the prophet this? of himself, or of some other man? Then Philip opened his mouth, and began at the same scripture, and preached unto him Jesus.” (8:34-35)
- **The Ethiopian Confesses Christ and Is Baptized (8:36-38)**
  - “. . . and the eunuch said, See, here is water; what doth hinder me to be baptized? And Philip said, *If thou believest with all thine heart, thou mayest.* And he answered and said, *I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God.*” (8:36-37)
- **The Spirit Carries Philip Away (8:39-40)**
  - Cf. Helaman 10:16-17

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Caravaggio, "The Conversion of St. Paul"

# The Preparation of Saul (9:1-30)

*SAUL'S VISION ON THE ROAD TO DAMASCUS; ANANIAS HEALS SAUL, SAUL PREACHES AT DAMASCUS, SAUL AT JERUSALEM*

Paul goes from Jerusalem to Damascus



5. Missions to Samaria and Judea (Acts 8:1b-12:23)

## Saul's Vision on the Road to Damascus

(9:1-9, **call story**, *first conversion account*)

- “And Saul, yet **breathing out threatenings and slaughter against the disciples of the Lord**, went unto the high priest, And desired of him letters to Damascus to the synagogues, that if he found any **of this way**, whether they were men or women, he might bring them bound unto Jerusalem.” (9:1-2)
  - Letters from the high priest to the synagogues in Damascus—unclear what influence or authority the high priest would actually have had outside Judea
  - “**The Way**” (9:2), **common Lucan term for the Church**
- “. . . suddenly there shined round about him a light from heaven: And he fell to the earth, and heard a voice saying unto him, ‘Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me?’ And he said, ‘Who art thou, Lord?’” (9:3-5a)
  - Divine appearances and commissions often accompanied by light (4 Macc 4:10), falling to the ground (Ezek 1:28; Dan 10:9); double vocative (Gen 22:11; 4:2; Ex 3:4; 1 Sam 3:4)
- And the Lord said, **‘I am Jesus whom thou persecutest: <it is hard for thee to kick against the pricks.>’**” (9:5b-6)
  - “It is hard for you to kick against the goads.” (9:5 NKJV)
    - **This clause is missing in many Greek mss.**, but it is present in Acts 26:14

## Paul at Damascus (9:10-25)

- **Ananias<sup>2</sup> Heals Saul** (9:10-19a)
  - “But the Lord said unto him, Go thy way: for **he is a chosen vessel unto me, to bear my name before the Gentiles, and kings, and the children of Israel**: For I will shew him how great things he must suffer for my name’s sake.” (9:15-16)
  - “And immediately **something like scales fell from his eyes**, and his sight was restored.” (9:18 NRSV)
    - Symbolic of what was impeding his sight?
    - Cf. Tobit 3:17; 11:13. Harper Collins note: “acid on the cornea can discolor the epithelium, which sometimes can be peeled off like a film.”
- **Saul Preaches in Damascus** (9:19b-25)
  - “Then was Saul certain days with the disciples which were at Damascus. And **straightway he preached Christ in the synagogues, that he is the Son of God**. But all that heard him were amazed, and said; Is not this he that destroyed them which called on this name in Jerusalem, and came hither for that intent, that he might bring them bound unto the chief priests? (9:19b-21)
  - Angers resident Jews, leading to an exciting night escape in a basket!

## Paul at Jerusalem (9:26–30)

- **Barnabas introduces him to the apostles**
  - Account diverges somewhat from Paul's own in Gal 1:18–24
- “And *he spake boldly in the name of the Lord Jesus*, and disputed against the Grecians: but they went about to slay him. *Which* when the brethren knew, they brought him down to Caesarea, and sent him forth to Tarsus.” (9:29–30)
- **Sixth Summary: Churches Have Rest** (9:31)
  - Then had the churches rest throughout all Judaea and Galilee and Samaria, and *were edified*; and *walking in the fear of the Lord*, and *in the comfort (paraklēsei) of the Holy Ghost*, were multiplied. (Act 9:31 KJV)
    - *paraklēsei* (NIV “encouraged by the Holy Spirit,” NRSV, “in the comfort of the Holy Spirit”); this echoes the Johannine Comforter (*Paraklētos*) in John 14–16, *not just comforter but helper, intercessor*

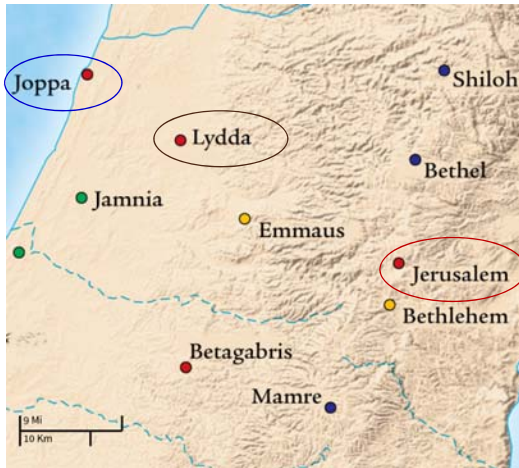
## Extension of the Gospel to the Gentiles (9:32–11:30)

• ————— •  
*PETER'S DEMONSTRATIONS OF THE POWER OF GOD;  
 CORNELIUS AND EXTENSION OF GOSPEL TO THE  
 GENTILES; THE CHURCH AT ANTIOCH*



## Peter's Demonstrations of the Power of God (9:32-43)

*Movement of the gospel westward: Jerusalem > Lydda > Joppa*



- **Heals Aeneas (!) of Palsy** (9:44-36, healing or miracle story; cf. with many of Jesus' healings)
  - We have had Hellenistic Jews with Greek names, but this is a Roman name!
- **Raises Tabitha from the Dead** (9:37-43, healing story parallel to Jesus' raising of Jairus' daughter, etc.)
- Peter's demonstrations of priesthood power prepare the reader to accept his ability to be led by the spirit in the subsequent episode involving Cornelius and the baptism of Gentiles . . .

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"[An angel told Cornelius:] Now send men to Joppa, and call for one Simon, whose surname is Peter: He lodges with one Simon a tanner, whose house is by the sea side: he shall tell thee what thou ought to do." (Acts 10:5-6)

Caesarea

Joppa



5. Missions to Samaria and Judea (Acts 8:1b-12:23)



## Extension of the Gospel to the Gentiles (10:1-11:18)

- **Cornelius' Vision at Caesarea (10:1-8)**
  - Italian Band: although possibly anachronistic (not attested until A.D. 69 in Syria, this suggests that this cohort (military division) actually consisted of Roman citizens, unlike the locally raised auxiliary troops that usually garrisoned Judea
    - *No doubt that these are Gentiles!*
  - "A devout man and one who feared God," a God-fearer, one who accepted the God of Israel but did not become a proselyte by submitting to circumcision
- **Peter's Vision at Joppa (10:9-18):** ". . . What God hath cleansed, that call not thou common." (10:15)
  - Peter Summoned (10:19-24a)
- **Peter's Interview with Cornelius (10:24b-33)**
  - <http://www.lds.org/bible-videos/videos/peters-revelation-to-take-the-gospel-to-the-gentiles?lang=eng>
  - **Peter Preaches the Gospel to Gentiles (10:34-43)**
    - "Then Peter opened his mouth, and said, **Of a truth I perceive that God is no respecter of persons: But in every nation he that feareth him, and worketh righteousness, is accepted with him.**" (10:34-35)
    - Compare with Peter's earlier speeches to Israel

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## Spirit, Signs, and Baptism

- Gentiles Receive **the Holy Spirit** and **Baptism** (10:44-48)
  - "While Peter yet spake these words, **the Holy Ghost fell on all them** which heard the word...For *they heard them speak with tongues*, and magnify God . . ." (10:44, 46)
    - *No indication these are foreign languages that anyone knew > glossolalia!*
  - "Can any man forbid water, that these should not be baptized, which have received the Holy Ghost as well as we? **And he commanded them to be baptized in the name of the Lord.**" (10:47-48)
- **Peter's Report to the Church at Jerusalem (11:1-18)**
  - ". . . They that were of the circumcision contended with him," **first indication of a Judaizing party**
  - Recounted his interview with Cornelius: "And **the Spirit bade me go with them, nothing doubting** . . . And as I began to speak, **the Holy Ghost fell on them, as on us at the beginning**. Then remembered I the word of the Lord, how that he said, 'John indeed baptized with water; but ye shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost.' *Forasmuch then as God gave them the like gift as he did unto us, who believed on the Lord Jesus Christ; what was I, that I could withstand God?*" (11:12,15-17)
  - Acceptance: "When they heard these things, they held their peace, and glorified God, saying, 'Then hath God also to the Gentiles granted repentance unto life.'"

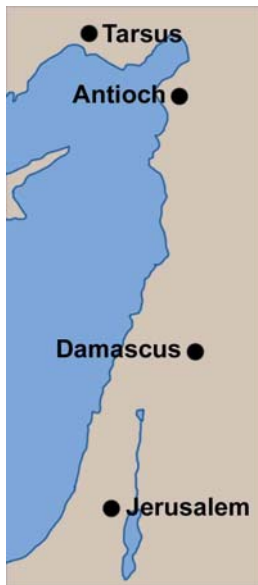
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## Gospel Spreads among the Jews of the Diaspora (seventh summary, 11:19–21)

- “Now they which were scattered abroad upon the persecution that arose about Stephen travelled *as far as Phenice, and Cyprus, and Antioch, preaching the word to none but unto the Jews only*. And some of them were men of Cyprus and Cyrene, which, **when they were come to Antioch, spake unto the Grecians (Hellēnistas), preaching the Lord Jesus**. And the hand of the Lord was with them: and a great number believed, and turned unto the Lord.”
- “Grecians” here again means Greek-speaking Jews: “on coming to Antioch, spoke to the Hellenists also, proclaiming the Lord Jesus. (Act 11:20 NRSV)



## The Church in Antioch (11:19–30)

- **Barnabas Sent to Antioch (11:22–26)**
  - He brings Saul from Tarsus
  - “*And the disciples were called Christians first in Antioch.*” (11:26; cf. Alma 46:15)
- **Agabus Prophesies Famine (11:27–30)**
  - A.D. 45–48 Judean famine (Joseph. AJ 20.51–53, 101); Claudius emperor A.D. 41–54
  - **Raises the issue of the poverty of the Jerusalem Church and the desire of the Diaspora Church to support it (seen repeatedly in the letters of Paul)**
    - Many of the converts at Pentecost had been pilgrims to the feast who had presumably stayed in Jerusalem – without homes or employment – after their conversion!
  - The mention of Claudius also provides a segue to chapter 12 (Claudius was the one who restored “independence” to Judea by restoring the full kingdom of Herod the Great to his grandson, Herod Agrippa I)



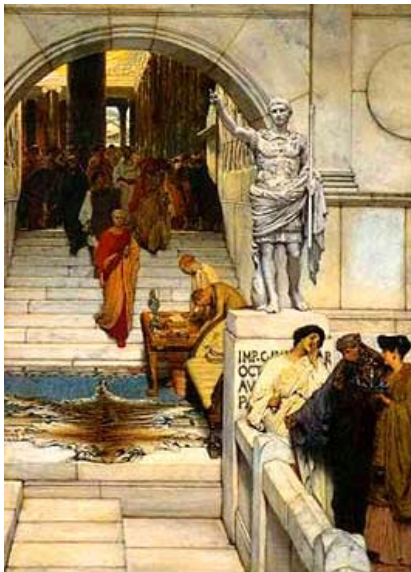
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## Herod Agrippa I Renews Persecution of the Jerusalem Church (12:1-23)

- **James Killed and Peter Imprisoned (12:1-5)**
  - Unlike Herod the Great, **Herod Agrippa I was actually popular with his subjects** and he was **eager to be seen as an observant, zealous Jew**
    - “And because he saw [that executing James] pleased the Jews, he proceeded further to take Peter also.” (12:3)
    - “Peter therefore was kept in prison: but prayer was made without ceasing of the church unto God for him.” (12:5)
- **Peter Delivered from Prison (12:6-19)**
  - Angel in prison
  - Rhoda at the door

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5. Missions to Samaria and Judea (Acts 8:1b-12:23)

## The Demise of Herod Agrippa I (12:20-23)

- “It is the voice of a god, and not of a man . . .”
- Death of Herod seen as a result of both his persecution of the apostles and also Classical *hybris*
  - According to Joseph. AJ 19:343-52, Agrippa wore robes woven completely of silver threads. He was acclaimed as a god by the gentile audience in Caesarea, did not reject the title, and immediately saw an owl, reminding him of a previous prediction of death. Like his grandfather, Herod the Great, the Roman dictator Sulla, and others, he died of a terrible abdominal illness

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## Exegetical Exercise

- A *short* writing assignment 4–5 paragraphs in length (2, no more than 3, pages) that analyzes a pericope, or self-contained passage, of scripture by addressing the basic historical, literary, and theological aspects of the pericope and then moving to a basic exposition of the passage.
  - **Introductory paragraph**
  - **Historical paragraph** (including authorship and audience)
  - **Literary paragraph** (focusing on type of writing and its effect, any literary devices or symbolism, and context—that is, where it fits into the larger structure of the book in which it is found)
  - **Theological paragraph(s)** (principle or teaching intended for the original audience and then its exposition or application today)