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Acts 1:8

“But you will receive **POWER**
when the Holy Spirit has come on you, and you will
be My witnesses in Jerusalem, in all Judea and
Samaria, and to the ends of the earth.”

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FEARLESS DISCIPLESHIP

Acts 8:1-4

¹ Saul agreed with putting him to death. On that day a severe persecution broke out against the church in Jerusalem, and all except the apostles were scattered throughout the land of Judea and Samaria. ² Devout men buried Stephen and mourned deeply over him. ³ Saul, however, was ravaging the church. He would enter house after house, drag off men and women, and put them in prison. ⁴ So those who were scattered went on their way preaching the word.

- Widespread persecution erupted after Stephen's death.
 - ❖ No one was more vigorous than Saul in persecuting Christians.
- Christians fled Jerusalem and returned to their homes.
- This is a perfect example of Romans 8:28 in action!

Instead of killing the church, the Gospel spread to Judea and Samaria, just as Jesus prophesied.

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MISSIONAL DISCIPLESHIP

ACTS 8:5-8, 12

⁵ Philip went down to a city in Samaria and **proclaimed the Messiah to them.** ⁶ The crowds were all paying attention to what Philip said, as they listened and saw the signs he was performing. ⁷ For unclean spirits, crying out with a loud voice, came out of many who were possessed, and many who were paralyzed and lame were healed. ⁸ So there was great joy in that city.

¹² But when they believed Philip, as he proclaimed the good news about the kingdom of God and the name of Jesus Christ, both men and women were baptized.

- Philip, one of the seven deacons, took the Gospel to Samaria, as Jesus had prophesied (Acts 1:8).
- Samaritans we despised by Jews because they had intermarried with Gentiles.

Jewish leadership rejected the Gospel. How did the Samaritans respond?

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MISSIONAL DISCIPLESHIP

ACTS 8:5-13

¹⁴ When the apostles who were at Jerusalem heard that **Samaria had received the word of God,** they sent Peter and John to them.

- **Luke says, "Samaria...received the word."**
 - ❖ What does that tell you about the magnitude of the response to Philip's preaching?
- **News spread quickly, all the way to Jerusalem.**

Why was this a newsworthy event?

How did the Apostles respond when they heard the news?

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MISSIONAL DISCIPLESHIP

ACTS 8:5-13

¹⁴ When the apostles who were at Jerusalem heard that Samaria had received the word of God, they sent Peter and John to them.

Why would they send Peter and John to Samaria?

- **The reason for their mission was threefold:**
1. They came to help Philip with the tremendous spiritual harvest, which was too great for any one man to handle.
 2. They came to sanction and bless Philip's work among the Samaritans to authenticate it and promote unity among the church.
 3. They came so the Samaritans would receive the Holy Spirit.

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MISSIONAL DISCIPLESHIP

ACTS 8:5-13

¹⁵ After they went down there, they prayed for them so that the Samaritans might receive the Holy Spirit because he had not yet come down on any of them.
¹⁶ (They had only been baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus.)
¹⁷ Then Peter and John laid their hands on them, and they received the Holy Spirit.

Does that mean the Samaritans didn't receive the Holy Spirit when they believed?

- **The text seems to suggest the Samaritans had a two-step divided experience:**
1. Faith in Jesus, followed by water baptism.
 2. Receipt of the Holy Spirit after the laying on of hands from Peter and John.
- **What are we to make of this situation?**

This is a problematic passage that has been hotly debated for centuries.

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DUAL STAGE INITIATION VIEWS

Roman Catholic View

- First stage is baptism.
- Second stage is confirmation by a bishop regarded as a successor of the apostles.

Charismatic View

- First stage consists of conversion and regeneration
- Second stage is baptism in or of the Spirit, which is often associated with the laying-on of hands by a Pentecostal leader.

Assemblies of God

Statement of Fundamental Truths
(Paragraph 7)

"All believers are entitled to, and should ardently expect, and earnestly seek, the Baptism in the Holy Ghost and fire, according to the command of our Lord Jesus Christ. This was the normal experience of all in the early Christian church..."

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SINGLE STAGE INITIATION VIEWS

Disingenuous View

- Some argue that the Samaritans' "first stage" was not a genuine conversion at all, but a spurious one.

Intellectual Assent

- Notable British evangelist G. Campbell Morgan interprets their having "accepted the word of God" (v. 14) as a merely intellectual assent rather than true conversion.

Form vs. Substance

- James Dunn suggests the Samaritans got carried along by the herd-instinct of a popular mass-movement.
- He argues they only believed Philip, which he thinks does not mean that they believed in Jesus Christ.
- To him, their baptism was form without reality.

Proof of the Spirit

- Others argue that the Samaritans did truly believe in Jesus, and that they must therefore have received the Spirit at that point in accordance with New Testament teaching.
- To them, what the Samaritans' received through the laying-on of the apostles' hands was not the initial gift of the Spirit but rather some charismatic manifestation of the Spirit.

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WHAT DOES THE TEXT INDICATE?

- Luke gives no hint that he considers the Samaritans' original response inadequate.
 - The apostles gave no indication that they thought Philip's ministry or the Samaritans' faith were defective.
 - The alternative explanation is to regard the two-stage initiation as having been altogether unusual. Not normative as Charismatics would have us believe.
 - It is always wise to interpret Scripture by Scripture.
- According to Peter's first sermon, forgiveness and the gift of the Spirit are twin initial blessings which God bestows on everyone whom He calls, and who repents, believes and is baptized.
 - ³⁸Peter replied, "Repent and be baptized, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins. And you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. ³⁹The promise is for you and your children and for all who are far off—for all whom the Lord our God will call."

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MISSIONAL DISCIPLESHIP

ACTS 8:5-13

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¹⁶ (They had only been baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus.)

¹⁷ Then Peter and John laid their hands on them, and they received the Holy Spirit.

Does this passage teach a second blessing?

- **No, baptism with a later coming of the Spirit is exceptional, it is not normative in the New Testament.**
 - ❖ The special dispensing of the Spirit comes only as a new region or new group receives the Gospel.
 - ❖ The special circumstances mark a break in the pattern to underscore a fresh move of God.

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MISSIONAL DISCIPLESHIP

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¹⁶ (They had only been baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus.)

¹⁷ Then Peter and John laid their hands on them, and they received the Holy Spirit.

➤ **Apart from a special act of God like this, there is no such thing as a Christian who does not yet have the Holy Spirit.**

❖ Romans 8:9 – “If anyone does not have the Spirit of Christ, he does not belong to him.” (Rom 8:9)

❖ 1 Cor. 12:13 – “For we were all baptized by one Spirit into one body—whether Jews or Greeks, whether slaves or free—and we were all given one Spirit to drink.”

So, why did God do things this way in Samaria?

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MISSIONAL DISCIPLESHIP

ACTS 8:5-13

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¹⁶ (They had only been baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus.)

¹⁷ Then Peter and John laid their hands on them, and they received the Holy Spirit.

➤ **This event marks a MAJOR MILESTONE in the spread of the Gospel.**

❖ For centuries, the Samaritans and the Jews had been bitter rivals.

❖ If the Samaritans had received the Spirit independent of the Jerusalem church, it could have resulted in two separate churches, a Jewish church and a Samaritan church.

➤ But **God wants one church**, in which “*there is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free man, there is neither male nor female,*” but “*all [are] one in Christ Jesus*” (Gal. 3:28).

➤ God unified what the world had divided!

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INPOWERED DISCIPLESHIP

- Taking Scripture out of context is dangerous and can lead to false doctrine and false teaching.
- Problematic passages should be interpreted always in light of their historical context first before applying them to modern day. When issues arise, Scripture should interpret Scripture.
- But don't let the good news of this passage get lost in the controversy. The Gospel is advancing, and it is for all people, in all lands, from all cultures, speaking all languages.
- Jesus said, you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth. Too often we skip over Samaria and do directly to the ends of the earth.

Who are your Samaritans?

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INPOWERED DISCIPLESHIP

An Inductive Study of Acts

Opportunistic Discipleship

Acts 8:26-40

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