

CHURCHES BEGIN TO MULTIPLY

Lesson Aim: Trust God when bad things happen; He uses them to make good things happen.

Suggestion: Have the students read the Scriptures and answer the questions in the student lesson; then ask the following questions for class discussion.

What was the second step in Christ's plan to evangelize all the earth? Acts 1:8; 8:1

In Acts 1:8, Christ's plan to evangelize the earth began with Jerusalem. The stoning of Stephen set the stage for evangelizing of Judea and Samaria. This was done when Saul's intense persecution of believers in Jerusalem scattered them in all of Judea and Samaria where they were faithful witnesses for Christ. As a result many churches were started. When bad things happen we need to trust God and use it to be a witness for Him.

Where did five men witness for Christ in these two chapters?

Philip witnessed for Christ in the city of Samaria, on the road to Gaza and in several cities from Azotus to Ceasarea (8:5-40). Peter and John witnessed for Christ in Samaria and in several Samaritan villages (8:14, 25). Peter also was a witness in Lydda and in Joppa (9:32-42). Ananias was a witness in Damascus (9:10-18). Saul was a witness in Damascus and in Jerusalem (9:19-29). Of these five men who witnessed for Christ, Saul was the most unexpected witness: the powerful persecutor became the powerful preacher. Maybe God has allowed bad things to happen to you, so you can be a faithful witness for Christ.

How did the city of Samaria and the Ethiopian respond after they were saved? 8:8, 39

They were both joyful when they received Jesus as their Savior and were given eternal life. This is the response that true believers ought to have when they believe God used the bad things in their lives to draw them to Jesus who gives them good things throughout eternity.

Why did the bad things in Simon's life remain, even though he believed? 8:9-13, 17-23

Simon never repented of his desire to do miracles. It was his god. He wanted people to fear him as they did before. Bad things will remain in our lives, if we do not repent (Jn 2:23-25).

Why was Philip successful in leading the Ethiopian to receive Christ? 8:26-39

1. He obeyed the angel of the Lord and went to the road that went to Gaza – 8:26-27.
2. The Spirit told him to go to the Ethiopian in his chariot and he ran to the Ethiopian – 8:29-30.
3. He heard him reading aloud from Isaiah 53 and boldly asked "Do you understand what you are reading?" This opened the door for Philip to witness to him - 8:30. In most cases, a person who witnesses must start the conversation. This takes boldness; the Spirit gives it to those who ask.
4. Philip began his witness with the interest of the Ethiopian and presented Jesus to him –8:31-35. He began with the need of the Ethiopian and explained how Jesus was the answer to his need.

How did Saul get converted? 9:4-6 or 9:17-18

Saul repented when he addressed Jesus as Lord and asked what He wanted him to do. That is what Peter preached: Repent and be converted so your sins may be blotted out (3:19). The bright light that blinded him and the question from Christ terrified him, but it brought salvation to him. The terror of the Lord that a sinner experiences often precedes the blessings of his conversion.

How did Ananias prove that he was a faithful witness? 9:10-17

He trusted Christ and went to Saul that he might receive his sight and be filled with the Holy Spirit. We need to trust Christ in witnessing. Our fearfulness will turn to boldness when we obey Him.

How did Saul show that he was truly converted? 9:20-22; 28-29

He witnessed for Christ to the point that sinners tried to kill him, but God delivered him from them.