

Acts Week 23

Preaching and living the Word Chapter 8:4-8

4 Therefore those who were scattered went everywhere preaching the word. 5 Then Philip went down to the city of Samaria and preached Christ to them. 6 And the multitudes with one accord heeded the things spoken by Philip, hearing and seeing the miracles which he did. 7 For unclean spirits, crying with a loud voice, came out of many who were possessed; and many who were paralyzed and lame were healed. 8 And there was great joy in that city.

What is so important about Jesus meeting the woman at the well in John chapter four? What was the animosity between Israel and Samaria? We need to go back to the Old Testament to first and second Kings to better understand what happened with the northern tribes. ¹

“Samaria’s hilly geography matches the ups and downs of its history. As the Israelites were dividing the Promised Land, the region of Samaria was given to the tribes of Ephraim and Manasseh. King Omri, the sixth king of the northern kingdom of Israel, bought a hill in the Valley of Shechem in the region of Samaria and built the city of Samaria, which became his capital city (1 Kings 16:23–24). Eventually, the name of the capital was applied to the entire northern kingdom. Omri’s son, King Ahab, erected a temple to Baal in the city of Samaria (1 Kings 16:32).”²

“Shechem a city in Samaria (Gen 33:18), also called Sichem (12:6), Sychem (Act 7:16). It stood in the narrow sheltered valley between Ebal on the north and Gerizim on the south, these mountains at their base being only some 500 yards apart. Here Abraham pitched his tent and built his first altar in the Promised Land, and received the first divine promise (Gen 12:6,7). Here also Jacob "bought a parcel of a field at the hands of the children of Hamor" after his return from Mesopotamia, and settled with his household, which he purged from idolatry by burying the teraphim³ (Hosea 3:4) of his followers under an oak tree, which was afterwards called "the oak of the sorcerer" (Gen 33:19; 35:4; Jdg 9:37).”³

Playing with pagan gods would be to their detriment, bad kings, bad prophets, it was fairly simple to see God’s anger was aroused at the practices of His people. In the gospel of John we find that when Jesus chose to go through Samaria we actually find no other reason than to teach the people that the Messiah had come and in fact was with them now. In second kings we learn of Jehu, who seemed right in destroying the Temple of Baal and all the men who worshiped Baal, but was he going to follow God?

⁴<https://www.gotquestions.org/Samaria-in-the-Bible.html>

²Teraphim: Definition Of Household idols, Rachel stole her father’s gods as Jacob was escaping from Laban, Genesis 31:30-35, while the word teraphim is not used in this verse it was the word used for household idols in other verses.

³ Here also Jacob "bought a parcel of a field at the hands of the children of Hamor" after his return from Mesopotamia, and settled with his household, which he purged from idolatry by burying the teraphim of his followers under an oak tree, which was afterwards called "the oak of the sorcerer" (Gen 33:19; 35:4; Jdg 9:37).

<https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/Dictionary/viewTopic.cfm?topic=ET0003330,HT0002242,IT0007965,NT0004421,BT0003821>

Now we come to Jehu's cleansing of idol worship in Samaria.

2 Kings 10:25-31; Now it happened, as soon as he had made an end of offering the burnt offering, that Jehu said to the guard and to the captains, "Go in and kill them; let no one come out!" And they killed them with the edge of the sword; then the guards and the officers threw them out, and went into the inner room of the temple of Baal. 26 And they brought the sacred pillars out of the temple of Baal and burned them. 27 Then they broke down the sacred pillar of Baal, and tore down the temple of Baal and made it a refuse dump to this day. 28 Thus Jehu destroyed Baal from Israel.

29 However Jehu did not turn away from the sins of Jeroboam the son of Nebat, who had made Israel sin, that is, from the golden calves that were at Bethel and Dan. 30 And the LORD said to Jehu, "Because you have done well in doing what is right in My sight, and have done to the house of Ahab all that was in My heart, your sons shall sit on the throne of Israel to the fourth generation." 31 But Jehu took no heed to walk in the law of the LORD God of Israel with all his heart; for he did not depart from the sins of Jeroboam, who had made Israel sin."

So we see from above in Easton's Bible Dictionary that the entire northern tribes lived in what was at one time called Samaria. Wars and other people's, strange beliefs, idol worship would see the purity of God's people wane. Later the Jews looked at all of Samaria as half breeds who worshiped at Jacob's place of worship which was on the mountain, **John 4:20; "Our fathers worshiped on this mountain, and you Jews say that in Jerusalem is the place where one ought to worship."** The people of Samaria were mixed with others who were pagan believers who were there before and intermingled throughout Samaria's history. So we find a division and separation between the practices of God's people and the disdain for their culture by orthodox Israel.⁴

Jesus however uses the Samaritans as examples in John chapter 4, crossing borders into Samaria meeting the woman at the well, and in Luke chapter 10:30 He teaches of the compassion the Good Samaritan extends to the man who was robbed. We learn an important teaching about caring for others, going outside of those prejudices we so often develop in our hearts and minds. Jesus did something that was taboo at the time, not just by passing through the land but in the culture of the time to be alone with a woman and especially one of ill repute was a sin.

John 10:30-36: thieves, who stripped him of his clothing, wounded him, and departed, leaving him half dead. 31 Now by chance a certain priest came down that road. And when he saw him, he passed by on the other side. 32 Likewise a Levite, when he arrived at the place, came and looked, and passed by on the other side. 33 But a certain Samaritan, as he journeyed, came where he was. And when he saw him, he had compassion. 34 So he went to him and bandaged his wounds, pouring on oil and wine; and he set him on his own animal, brought him to an inn, and took care of him. 35 On the next day, when he departed, he took out two denarii, gave them to the innkeeper, and said to him, 'Take care of him; and whatever more you spend, when I come again, I will repay you.' 36 So which of these three do you think was neighbor to him who fell among the thieves?"

⁴ "The strict Rabbis forbade a Rabbi to greet a woman in public. A Rabbi might not even speak to his own wife or daughter or sister in public. There were even Pharisees who were called 'the bruised and bleeding Pharisees' because they shut their eyes when they saw a woman on the street and so walked into walls and houses!" (Barclay) Cited David Guzik https://www.blueletterbible.org/comm/guzik_david/study-guide/john/john-4.cfm?a=1001009

We often set boundaries around ourselves as to who we make friends with or places we refuse to go, offerings of help, encouragement, lending a hand, but Jesus sets examples for us and shows us the hidden blessing that may be found in serving all and not just who we feel like serving. God will put people in our lives we normally would have nothing to do with and then ask us to help them and teach them of His Glory and Grace. In Ephesians 5:1-2, Paul instructs the church in being more Christ-like, **“1 Therefore be imitators of God as dear children. 2 And walk in love, as Christ also has loved us and given Himself for us, an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweet-smelling aroma. Proverbs 2:1-5; My son, if you receive my words, And treasure my commands within you, 2 So that you incline your ear to wisdom, And apply your heart to understanding; 3 Yes, if you cry out for discernment, And lift up your voice for understanding, 4 If you seek her as silver, And search for her as for hidden treasures; 5 Then you will understand the fear of the LORD, And find the knowledge of God.** There are many lessons we are to learn, how to love with a Godly love, to show compassion even when it cost us both in time and money, but even more than these, when it runs against everything we know and practice, letting go of our own understanding and surrendering ourselves to God’s way for us, then we will surely live for His glory.

Heart is used 832 times in the New King James in 771 verses. As we now go back to Acts chapter 8 and Philip... What kind of heart do we see? His passion saw him cross the same borders Jesus crossed when He went into Samaria. **Ezekiel 36:26; “I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit within you; I will take the heart of stone out of your flesh and give you a heart of flesh.** Can we have a new spirit within us if God does not give us a new heart. What is it when we receive a new heart, how do we know He is doing a work in us. Our best example is the Apostle Paul, we are now seeing his transformation from a persecutor of the Christian movement to a promoter and protector of them.

How does your heart operate from day today, do you feel the hurt of others God has placed in your path? Are you more concerned about the money you hand out, do we not understand the parable of the good Samaritan? God will put people and things on your heart and when you begin to do as He asks of you can you do it without complaint or restriction? I know we have many complaints and questions as we try to be faithful servants working with troubled people. Think about it, how did you end up here? Trying to get them back and going over their steps that brought them to where they are, so that they may see where they went wrong can be a task. Working with difficult people you may begin with a critical attitude that needs to change immediately, we must work with compassion. Do not ask, do you ever use your brain? Do you think only of today or what will be the ramifications of my decisions? And I suppose many have felt this way about me as they were sent to counsel me. We need to allow that new spirit to take place, compassion is that which comes with a changed heart. When we worry more about the time and cost are we truly trusting in the Lord’s provisions? Have you ever had a time when you find yourself, perhaps with a ten dollar bill in your pocket knowing you are looking forward to a good lunch and then feel the conviction to give to one who asks you if you could spare any money. You only have a ten and no change but you know God will be glorified as you reach into your pocket and hand it to him who is in need. This is the lesson of the woman who had two mites but Jesus said she gave all she had.... She put her trust in the Lord. Mark 12:41-44.

Philip became a giver, he received his abilities from Jesus and he used those as a gift, the best gift ever offered to man and the greatest gift man can offer to others. There are pastors who teach we have no

power to lead others to our Lord and yet over and over we find Christianity spreading like a wildfire because of the preaching and teaching of faithful and obedient believers such as Stephen. When we looked at the woman at the well after realizing she was talking to the Christ, she left her water and went to share the news of Jesus. John 4:29-30.⁵ The people believed her and came to see, now, suppose the woman would have never gone and told the people, who would be responsible for their death? Who's hands would their blood be on?

Matthew 27:24-25; "I am innocent of the blood of this just Person. You see to it." And all the people answered and said, "His blood be on us and on our children."

Acts 18:6; But when they opposed him (Paul) and blasphemed, he shook his garments and said to them, "Your blood be upon your own heads; I am clean. From now on I will go to the Gentiles."

Romans 10:14; How then shall they call on Him in whom they have not believed? And how shall they believe in Him of whom they have not heard? And how shall they hear without a preacher?

What is preaching to accomplish, are they merely words without power that are to fall on deaf ears, will you turn from these difficult people and say, "I tried God but they're yours now." Would this bring glory to God? Did not the disciples die for their faith and responsibility? Did Christ not die for His bride? **Matthew 28:19; "Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit,"** Paul in Romans 10:14 is saying, I warned you, I preached the truth to you but you would not listen, so I am not responsible for your deaths... your blood is upon you.

When Jesus gave the command to go and spread the Word and make disciples out of all tongues it was to multiply the number of believers that many more would come to believe. As we look at what we know of Philip we see the power of our mighty Lord working in and through him, are not his works the very work of our Lord? If Philip was to not teach nor heal and do other miracles God gave him the power to do he would not be a willing servant, in the military he would be convicted of dereliction of duty. Our duty to our Lord is something all of the disciples took seriously as should all believers. We are blessed by becoming God's eyes and hands on earth, many who God has drawn are drawn to those God uses to share the truth both through word and example. When we read of the **Parable of the Wedding Feast, Matthew 22:1-14** we find the King (God) sending out His servants to invite people, (those of Israel) to the wedding, but they rejected the offer, one came and was unprepared and sent out into the darkness. **Act 13:46-47; Then Paul and Barnabas grew bold and said, "It was necessary that the word of God should be spoken to you first; but since you reject it, and judge yourselves unworthy of everlasting life, behold, we turn to the Gentiles. "For so the Lord has commanded us: 'I have set you as a light to the Gentiles, That you should be for salvation to the ends of the earth.'**

We should never take our assignment lightly when God has commissioned all believers to be about His work. Ours is to invite, we are as the ambulance driver who is responsible to bring the patient to the doctor, do not think God has called you to sit back and relax, that He will do this without you. Philip and

⁵ And at this point His disciples came, and they marveled that He talked with a woman; yet no one said, "What do You seek?" or, "Why are You talking with her?" The woman then left her waterpot, went her way into the city, and said to the men, "Come, see a Man who told me all things that I ever did. Could this be the Christ?" Then they went out of the city and came to Him. https://www.blueletterbible.org/comm/guzik_david/study-guide/john/john-4.cfm?a=1001009

the others were not only called but also equipped to perform and lead others. Yes, once the invitation has been made and people respond, just as in the parable of the wedding feast, it is God who draws the believer to Christ, the Son. **John 6:44-45; “No one can come to Me unless the Father who sent Me draws him; and I will raise him up at the last day. “It is written in the prophets, ‘And they shall all be taught by God.’[Isaiah 54:13] Therefore everyone who has heard and learned[M-Text reads hears and has learned] from the Father comes to Me.** Let us pray.

How was Samaria so different for Judea? What was the issue that was bringing them down. Here is some history or what was taking place. This map shows Samaria at the time Jesus Lived. Around 930 B.C. Israel is divided in two. Samaria was part of the northern kingdom of Israel with Judea as the southern kingdom. The kings of Israel were mostly wicked. To keep their people from going to Jerusalem to worship, they set up two altars with golden calves, one in Samaria and one way up north in Dan. I would encourage you to do a quick study on Dan.



In 732 B.C., the Assyrians swooped in and conquered the northern kingdom. The Assyrians killed a lot of people, but many they carried off to Assyria. In their place, Assyria planted pagan Gentiles from around their empire and these Gentiles intermarried with remaining Israelites. Many of their descendants considered themselves Jews.

The Jews in Judea did not agree. They considered the Samaritans to be a mongrel race and saw many problems with the way they practiced Judaism. This offended the Samaritans. Then in 585 B.C. Judea itself was conquered and many of its citizens were carried off to Babylon. After 70 years of captivity, when Babylon was conquered by the Medes and Persians, the Jews were encouraged to return to Jerusalem and rebuild their temple.

Many were enjoying their life in Persia and chose to stay there or to move to other locations, but some did go back to Judea. They tried in fits and starts to rebuild their temple, and the Samaritans wanted to help. The Jews turned them down. The Samaritans began to interfere with the project by petitioning the kings of Persia. Bad feelings deepened between the Samaritans and the Jews.

Around 332 B.C. Alexander the Great conquered the Holy Land and it became Greek. The Samaritans cooperated; the Jews rebelled. After Alexander died, his two generals divided his empire. The Greco-Syrian empire conquered the Holy Land in 175 B.C. The Samaritans denied they were Jews in order to fit in. In Judea, the Maccabees revolted and became the rulers of Judea. Their kingdom was smaller, but they forayed north into Samaria to expand it.

In 113 B.C. the Hasmoneans (kingly descendants of the Maccabee family) destroyed the Samaritans' temple on Mt. Gerazim. The hatred between the two groups grew even deeper. Jesus was born into a culture where the Jews deeply mistrusted the Samaritans and vice versa. Some points to remember:

Jesus was called by His Father to teach the Jews. Jesus explained this to the Samaritan woman at the well. He was willing to teach her and her village, and many converted. The parable of the Good Samaritan has many interesting things to say. One is that the Samaritan was on his way up to Jerusalem. Why, when his holy place was at Mt. Gerazim? Was he a believer willing to risk entering Jewish territory? If so, he was a special person in many ways. Jesus Himself mostly avoided Samaria. The town of Bethany where Mary, Martha, and Lazarus lived was a way-station for pilgrims coming down from Galilee to Jerusalem. Bethany was actually south of Jerusalem, but travelers would go east of the Jordan River and walk down through Perea to Bethany, then up to Jerusalem to avoid Samaria. (Notice that there are two towns called Bethany on the map. Look for the one south of Jerusalem.)

Kings of Israel	Good or Bad	Kings of Judah	Good or Bad
Jeroboam	Bad	Rehoboam	Bad
Nadab	Bad	Abijah	Bad
Baasha	Bad	Asa	Good
Elah	Bad	Jehoshaphat	Good

Kings of Israel	Good or Bad	Kings of Judah	Good or Bad
Zimri	Bad	Jehoram (Joram)	Bad
Omari	Bad	Ahaziah	Bad
Ahab	Bad	Queen Ataliah	Bad
Ahaziah	Bad	Joash	Good
Joram (Jehoram)	Bad	Amaziah	Good
Jehu	Bad	Uzziah (Azariah)	Good
Jehoahaz	Bad	Jotham	Good
Jehoash	Bad	Ahaz (Jehoahaz)	Bad
Jeroboam II	Bad	Hezekiah	Good
Zechariah	Bad	Manasseh	Bad
Shallum	Bad	Amon	Bad
Menahem	Bad	Josiah	Good
Pekahiah	Bad	Jehoahaz (Shallum)	Bad
Pekah	Bad	Jehoiachin (Jeconiah)	Bad
Hoshea	Bad	Zedekiah (Mattaniah)	Bad

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