

Acts midweek study 2

Last week we looked at big theme number one, namely, crossing the line, taking the message further, to the Jews. Today we are going to look at that message going to the Samaritans. Pause the video, and read through together Acts **8:1-25**, making observations and asking questions as you go.

Stephen has been accused of blaspheming the name of Moses, and has responded by giving a blow by blow account of how the whole Moses narrative was leading to fulfilment in Jesus. Rather than respond “interesting, well thought out argument”, once Stephen put Jesus into the conversation the mob went wild and they killed him. As any blow by the enemy serves only to further complete God’s purpose for those who love Him and are called according to that purpose, the persecution drives these Jews out of the city, and into neighbouring areas. The message is going to go from Jerusalem, to Judea, to Samaria now.

So – Samaria. You might know the story of the good Samaritan. Samaritan is now synonymous with someone who does good deeds. We know of organisations like “Samaritans purse” who provide presents for the poorest of the poor children of the earth. This name is only coined because Jesus told a parable to disorientate His Jewish audience. It would be like going to a meeting of white supremacists and saying that a black guy helped the white guy out. It would be like going to a old boys of Knox Grammar meeting and saying that a good feminist helped the misogynist out. It was opposite ends of the spectrum being brought together to show the good will deficit in the hearers.

Pause the video and read through **Luke 10:25-37**, and **John 4:1-42**.

Discuss Jesus’ position on Samaritans.

The Samaritans were half Jew, half Gentile. When you consider just how much Jews would not associate with Gentiles, at all, how do you think they would have viewed Samaritans? As it says in Luke, (for Jews have no dealings with Samaritans). The Samaritans were the results of Israel’s invasion by Assyria, and then the Jews intermarrying with their oppressor. The people of Judah had stayed pure in their minds. They didn’t worship in Jerusalem like the Jews did. This is another part of why Stephen’s speech offended them so much. Consider the fact that the Jews considered it so vitally important to worship at the temple in Jerusalem, and read Stephen’s indictment of them in **Acts 7:46-50**.

Can you see why the Jews were so angry?

Reading through Acts 8, can you see how the signs and wonders made way for the message?

*How do you think Peter and John would have felt about the Samaritans receiving the good news?
What confirmed to them that it was acceptable?*

*Read **Acts 8:12** and **1 Corinthians 12:13**. How do we see this play out amongst the Samaritans?*