

# Lesson 10

## The Gospel on the Move

News travels fast today. From radio broadcasts to 24-hour television news channels to the internet, the news is always available to us. You can learn about your friends through a cell phone call, a text, a facebook post, or a tweet. Technology will continue to invent new ways to communicate. Have you ever thought about how the good news of the Gospel traveled at the time of the Early Church?

### The Message on the Move

Review the following chain of events:

- Jesus promised in Acts 1:8: “But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth.”
- The Early Church exploded in Jerusalem after Pentecost, increasing by thousands.
- Jewish leaders persecuted the Early Church including stoning Stephen.
- The persecution led to the scattering of the Christians out of Jerusalem.

This chain of events led to the spreading of the Gospel as Jesus promised through the work of the Holy Spirit.

### Into the Word: Acts 7:54-8:40

God used persecution to continue to spread the Gospel. As the first Christians were proclaiming Jesus in Jerusalem, the Council arrested them.

Stephen, a deacon, was accused of blasphemy. As Stephen defended himself using Scripture, he accused the Council of sinning against God. When the Sanhedrin members heard this, they were furious and gnashed their teeth. They rushed at him, drove him out of the city, and began stoning him. Just before he died, Stephen prayed, “Lord, do not hold this sin against them.”

The stoning of Stephen intensified the persecution upon the church in Jerusalem. The hatred toward the church caused believers to scatter throughout the regions of Judea and Samaria.

One of the original deacons, Philip, who was chosen at the same time as Stephen, went to the city of Samaria about 35 miles north of Jerusalem. Samaria was a city where a Jew would not go because of a longstanding and deep-seated hostility between Samaritans and Jews. Philip was now bringing the Gospel to that region, fulfilling the command of Christ.

1. What came as a result of Philip’s preaching?

v.6 - *crowds were paying attention*

v.7 - *casting out of demons and healing the sick*

v.8 - *much rejoicing in that city*

2. One of the people that Philip encountered was a man named Simon, who was a popular *magician* (v.11). People called him the “Great Power of God.” Simon heard Philip’s preaching, believed in Jesus, and was baptized. Simon continued to spend time with Philip, who was now joined by Peter and John who had come from Jerusalem.

3. Witnessing the miracles that were being performed in Jesus’ name, Simon wanted to possess this power. He offered *them money* (v.18). He failed to understand that God’s power could not be purchased with money. Peter condemned Simon’s wicked attempt to purchase God’s gracious gift.

As the apostles were returning from Samaria to Jerusalem, the angel of the Lord spoke to Philip (vv.26-27). Notice how quickly Philip heard and responded to God’s command. If he had hesitated or been reluctant to intrude on a stranger, the chariot may have proceeded on its way and the opportunity may

have been lost.

4. Why had the Ethiopian eunuch, the queen's treasurer, traveled so far to come to Jerusalem? v.27  
*The eunuch came to worship in the temple in Jerusalem.*
5. List two characteristics of the Ethiopian you can infer from verses 27-28.  
*He was a person in a position of authority. He was in charge of the treasury for the nation. He was wealthy as he was traveling in a chariot. He was educated.*
6. The Holy Spirit told Philip to (v.29) *go over and talk to the eunuch in his chariot.*

**Circle the correct responses from verses 30-40: (answer is bolded)**

7. Rather than being irritated that Philip interrupted him, the eunuch was (*uncommonly gracious* /*typically arrogant*) when he asked Philip to sit down with him (vv.30-31).
8. The eunuch was reading from Isaiah 52-53 and wanted to know whom the prophet was describing. Philip explained the events leading up to Jesus' death. The metaphors and allusions Isaiah used are characteristics of Jesus, which include (vv.32-33):
  - a. "sheep/lamb"  
meaning (*ignorance/innocence*)
  - b. "as a lamb before its shearer is silent"  
meaning (*stubborn/submissive*)
9. As Philip explained God's Word, the Holy Spirit was working in the eunuch's heart. The road passed near water, and the Ethiopian asked the chariot's driver to stop so Philip could (*bless/baptize*) him (vv.36-38).
10. The eunuch went on his way (*rejoicing/despairing*) in his salvation, for the eunuch was now reconciled to God.

The Spirit of the Lord snatched Philip away, and he found himself in Azotus, where he continued to preach the Gospel.

### Memory Verse

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

*Extra Memory Challenge:*

*Romans 10:12-13*

*For there is no distinction between Jew and Greek; for the same Lord is Lord of all, abounding in riches for all who call on Him; for "WHOEVER WILL CALL ON THE NAME OF THE LORD WILL BE SAVED."*

### New Character:

Saul

Saul enters the Bible record in Acts 7:58. The people stoning Stephen laid their coats at the feet of Saul. Who was this man? Why was he important? Saul . . .

- was born in Tarsus (a Greek city) into a Jewish family, but was also a Roman citizen.
- went to school in Jerusalem, studying Jewish law under Gamaliel, a renowned teacher who

- was a Pharisee.
- became a Pharisee, well educated in Jewish law and tradition.
- Saul was completely convinced he was doing the right thing when he imprisoned the believers—he believed they were spreading false teachings about God!

Read Acts 8:1-3

In verse 1, Saul the Pharisee *was in agreement* with putting Stephen to death.

In verse 3, Saul began *ravaging* the Early Church, going house to house, dragging believers to prison.

Saul thought he was doing the right thing because he was convinced that the believers were spreading false teachings about God. Stay tuned—we will meet Saul again in Lesson 11.

### Discussion Questions

*Each teacher should encourage, as much as time permits, discussion and inquiry on the part of students. Not every aspect of the following questions is addressed here, and students may have thoughts related to but not mentioned in this guide. The obligation of the teacher, then, is to understand as deeply as possible the Scriptures that are being discussed, in order to answer as well as possible any questions a student might have.*

1. Read Acts 8:27. What job did this Ethiopian have? What does that tell us about how important he was in his home country (Acts 8:39)? God doesn't tell us exactly what happened to this man after Philip left him, but why might God have chosen this man with this job to be the one to hear Philip's teaching?

*He was in charge of the treasury for the Queen/country of Ethiopia. He was in a position of authority and was powerful.*

*God could use him because he in his position encountered many people daily, he was respected in the country so his words would have been listened to and believed.*

2. The story of Philip (8:4-40) illustrates what personal evangelism is—telling people about Jesus by personal witness. What unique opportunities do you have to make Christ known because of where God has put you?

*Answers will vary—**may include:** being on sports teams, belonging to clubs at school, having a good reputation among your friends will lead them to believe what you say, or babysitting may allow you to share Bible stories with children in your care.*

3. Though we may not be pastors or missionaries, how do Acts 1:8 and Matthew 28:19-20 set clear expectations about our responsibility to share Jesus with others?

*The verses do not single out just the disciples to go and teach or be witnesses, Acts 1:8 uses the word “you” will be my witnesses so therefore every reader is the “you”. Every believer has a testimony of what Jesus has done for them, how He has blessed them, the source of their joy, the reason they live their life the way they do, all these things will allow us to have conversations with those we meet.*

### Daily Devotions

Monday:	James 4:1-12
Tuesday:	James 4:13-17
Wednesday:	James 5:1-12
Thursday:	James 5:13-20
Friday:	Titus 1:5-11
Saturday:	Titus 2:1-11
Sunday:	Titus 2:15-3:8

THE LUTHERAN CHURCH AND ITS CONFESSIONS, CREED, AND CATECHISM

\* Lesson 10: Luther's Small Catechism – History, Background and Purpose

In the introduction to *Luther's Small Catechism and Explanation* (Ambassador Publications, 2007), Rev. Robert L. Lee writes: "Luther was a university professor, but he always remained a pastor at heart. He was deeply concerned about the lack of basic Christian teachings among the people. This concern led him to prepare *The Small Catechism* in 1529, . . . His catechism included questions and answers on the Ten Commandments, the Apostles' Creed, the Lord's Prayer, and the Sacraments, together with suggested prayers for morning, evening, and mealtimes. Luther's primary desire was to equip Christian parents to lay a foundation of faith for their children."

1. Why is it helpful to have learned the Catechism when talking to people about spiritual things? I Peter 3:15

*Having a simple explanation of the Christian faith gives us answers to questions people may ask.*

2. Who should be the primary teacher of the Catechism to children? Ephesians 6:4

*Fathers especially, but parents in general, have the responsibility to teach the Christian faith to their children.*