

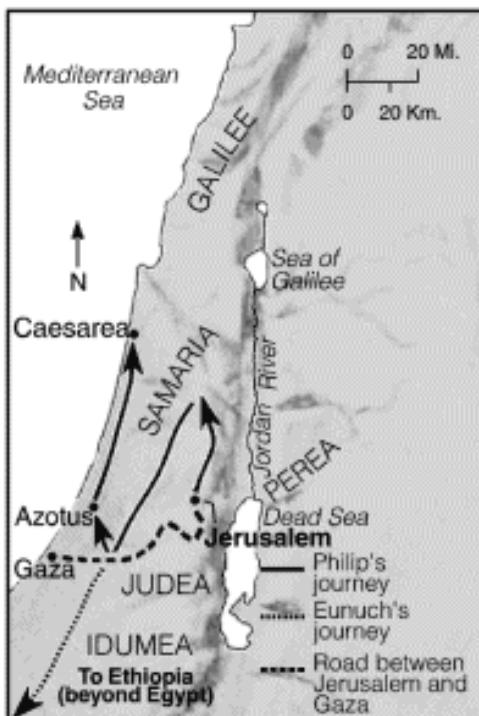
Samaria

Excerpt from the Life Application Bible Commentary

Israel had been divided into three main regions—Galilee in the north, Samaria in the middle, and Judea in the south. The city of Samaria (in the region of Samaria) had been the capital of the northern kingdom of Israel in the days of the divided kingdom, before it was conquered by Sargon of Assyria in 722 B.C. During that war, Sargon had taken many captives, leaving only the poorest people in the land and resettling it with foreigners.

These foreigners had intermarried with the Jews who were left, and the mixed race became known as Samaritans. The Samaritans opposed the rebuilding of Jerusalem in the sixth century B.C.

([Nehemiah 2:10–6:14](#)). During the time of Alexander the Great, the Samaritans built their own temple on Mount Gerazim. The Samaritans were considered half-breeds and religious apostates by the "pure" Jews in the southern kingdom of Judah, and the two groups hated each other. But Jesus went into Samaria ([John 4](#)), and he commanded his followers to spread the gospel there ([1:8](#)).



Philip's Ministry

To escape persecution in Jerusalem, Philip fled to Samaria, where he continued preaching the gospel. While he was there, an angel commanded him to meet an Ethiopian official on the road between Jerusalem and Gaza. The man became a believer before continuing on to Ethiopia. Philip then went from Azotus to Caesarea.