

ACTS 8:18-40

Introduction:

We have seen Simon the sorcerer become a professing believer (not a heart salvation), desiring Philip's miracle working power. Then we saw Peter and John laying hands on the believing Samaritans for them to receive the Holy Spirit.

**This was done so that the Samaritans (who had apostatized and made Mt. Gerizim their place of worship) would yield to God's place of worship (Jerusalem), and be under the 12 apostles' authority and message (I Kings 12:25-ff).

Note: Two apostles were enough to accomplish this task with the Samaritans (10 N. Tribes). For them the

Bible says: [In the mouth of two or three witnesses shall every word be established.] (Deut. 17:6, 19:15; II Cor. 13:11). Peter and John, with Philip, made three witnesses.

*The Lord had said that any two of His apostles could act officially for Him in His absence:

Matthew 18:18-20 - Verily I say unto you, Whatsoever ye shall bind on earth shall be bound in heaven: and whatsoever ye shall loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven. Matt. 18:19 Again I say unto you, That if two of you shall agree on earth as touching any thing that they shall ask, it shall be done for them of my Father which is in heaven. Matt. 18:20 For where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them.

A. Simon's Sinful Request:

Acts 8:18-19 - And when Simon saw that through laying on of the apostles' hands the Holy Ghost was given, he offered them money, Acts 8:19 Saying, Give me also this power, that on whomsoever I lay hands, he may receive the Holy Ghost.

1. Simon is back and treats the two apostles as fellow practitioners of magic. Simon is ready to negotiate the price, in order to buy the supposed secret of their miraculous power. Simon sees the potential of making a lot of money if he had this power to give the Holy Spirit to people (no doubt for a price)!
2. This act of Simon's is where the word "simony" comes from. Simony means to deal in sacred things for financial gain. Simon wanted to buy and sell the gift of the Holy Spirit!
3. This shows Simon's true heart. He had made a profession of faith, but it was empty of anything spiritually life-changing. Simon had even been water baptized. Does that sound like what is happening within Christendom today?

*Simon wasn't concerned about the spiritual aspect of the Holy Spirit. He could only see the money that he could gain. Remember, nothing God has is for sale and certainly not the Holy Spirit!

Isaiah 55:1 - Ho, every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters, and he that hath no money; come ye, buy, and eat; yea, come, buy wine and milk without money and without price.

B. Peter's Bold Response:

Acts 8:20-23 - But Peter said unto him, Thy money perish with thee, because thou hast thought that the gift of God may be purchased with money. Acts 8:21 Thou hast neither part nor lot in this matter: for thy heart is not right in the sight of God. Acts 8:22 Repent therefore of this thy wickedness, and pray God, if perhaps the thought of thine heart may be forgiven thee. Acts 8:23 For I perceive that thou art in the gall of bitterness, and *in* the bond of iniquity.

1. Peter quickly sees and discerns Simon's sinful heart. Peter actually tells Simon that he could take his money and go to **hell** (literally).
2. These phrases like [hast neither part nor lot in this matter] and [thou art in the gall of bitterness and in the bond of iniquity] made it clear that Simon had no part in the life of a **true** believer. Simon is a fake, a counterfeit! Peter calls on Simon to repent and to have the correct view of his sin.

C. Simon's Worldly Sorrow:

Acts 8:24 - Then answered Simon, and said, Pray ye to the Lord for me, that none of these things which ye have spoken come upon me.

1. Simon, although shaken, again wasn't truly understanding nor persuaded in his heart (soul-inner man) spiritually. He refuses to ask for forgiveness, but he only asked for the **consequences** of his sin to be removed. *He is not sorry for his sin, but only sorry for the **hurt** his sin caused. Notice the following difference between **godly** and **worldly** sorrow:

Hebrews 12:16-17 - Lest there *be* any fornicator, or profane person, as Esau, who for one morsel of meat sold his birthright. Heb. 12:17 For ye know how that afterward, when he would have inherited the blessing, he was rejected: for he found no place of repentance, though he sought it carefully with tears.

II Corinthians 7:9-10 - Now I rejoice, not that ye were made sorry, but that ye sorrowed to repentance: for ye were made sorry after a godly manner, that ye might receive damage by us in nothing.
2Cor. 7:10 For **godly** sorrow worketh repentance to salvation not to be repented of: but the sorrow of the world worketh death.

2. The lesson of wicked Simon was that he sought to get and give the powers of Pentecost for **gain**. *Today, preachers have to be careful not to be in the ministry for mainly financial gain. We are to be saved and servicing.

Titus 1:7, 11 - For a bishop must be blameless, as the steward of God; not selfwilled, not soon angry, not given to wine, no striker, not given to filthy lucre; Titus 1:11 Whose mouths must be stopped, who subvert whole houses, teaching things which they ought not, for filthy lucre's sake.

I Timothy 6:10 - For the love of money is the root of all evil: which while some coveted after, they have erred from the faith, and pierced themselves through with many sorrows.

*There has to be a balance:

I Corinthians 9:14 - Even so hath the Lord ordained that they which preach the gospel should live of the gospel.

I Timothy 5:17-18 - Let the elders that rule well be counted worthy of double honour, especially they who labour in the word and doctrine. 1Tim. 5:18 For the scripture saith, Thou shalt not muzzle the ox that treadeth out the corn. And, The labourer *is* worthy of his reward.

D. The Apostles Return To Jerusalem:

Acts 8:25 - And they, when they had testified and preached the word of the Lord, returned to Jerusalem, and preached the gospel in many villages of the Samaritans.

1. After confirming Jerusalem's authority, the apostles' authority, the Samaritans' salvation and receiving of the Holy Spirit, and Satan's counterfeit in Simon, Peter and John return to Jerusalem's head-quarters. *As they return, they preach to other Samaritans along the way.
2. The reason for their return to Jerusalem was that they knew their commission of Acts 1:8 and Luke 24:47. They knew that before any Gentile ministry could happen, Jerusalem and the Jews first needed to believe Christ was Messiah.

*At this point in time, the 12 had no clue-information that God had temporarily set aside the kingdom offer to the nation of Israel. But remember that individual Jewish people could receive salvation if they would believe Jesus was the Christ.

E. The Evangelist and Ethiopian Jew:

Acts 8:26-40 - And the angel of the Lord spake unto Philip, saying, Arise, and go toward the south unto the way that goeth down from Jerusalem unto Gaza, which is desert. Acts 8:27 And he arose and went: and, behold, a man of Ethiopia, an eunuch of great authority under Candace queen of the Ethiopians, who had the charge of all her treasure, and had come to Jerusalem for to worship, Acts 8:28 Was returning, and sitting in his chariot read Esaias the prophet. Acts 8:29 Then the Spirit said unto Philip, Go near, and join thyself to this chariot. Acts 8:30 And Philip ran thither to *him*, and heard him read the prophet Esaias, and said, Understandest thou what thou readest? Acts 8:31 And he said, How can I, except some man should guide me? And he desired Philip that he would come up and sit with him. Acts 8:32 The place of the scripture which he read was this, He was led as a sheep to the slaughter; and like a lamb dumb before his shearer, so opened he not his mouth: Acts 8:33 In his humiliation his judgment was taken away: and who shall declare his generation? for his life is taken from the earth. Acts 8:34 And the eunuch answered Philip, and said, I pray thee, of whom speaketh the prophet this? of himself, or of some other man? Acts 8:35 Then Philip opened his mouth, and began at the same scripture, and preached unto him Jesus. Acts 8:36 And as they went on *their* way, they came unto a certain water: and the eunuch said, See, *here is* water; what doth hinder me to be baptized? Acts 8:37 And Philip said, If thou believest with all thine heart, thou mayest. And he answered and said, I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God. Acts 8:38 And he commanded the chariot to stand still: and they went down both into the water, both Philip and the eunuch; and he baptized him. Acts 8:39 And when they were come up out of the water, the Spirit of the Lord caught away Philip, that the eunuch saw him no more: and he went on his way rejoicing. Acts 8:40 But Philip was found at Azotus: and passing through he preached in all the cities, till he came to Caesarea.

1. Philip is told by "the angel of the Lord" (?) to go to Gaza, which was a desert. Gaza is 50 miles S.W. of Jerusalem, close to the Mediterranean Sea. At this time the Temple is still standing and it is about A.D. 36.
2. Philip is guided to a Jewish proselyte to Judaism. He was an Ethiopian. This Ethiopian eunuch had a position of power and had been to Jerusalem to worship. However, the religious leaders were spiritually bankrupt. Thus, this Ethiopian left Jerusalem with no help, still seeking for truth.
3. In verse 30, the eunuch is reading Isaiah 53. Philip asks him if he understood what he was reading? He did not, but his response showed he truly desired to understand who Isaiah 53 was talking about (vs. 34).
4. Philip, in vs. 35, tells him Isaiah 53 is talking about Jesus.

a. All scripture used at that time was the O.T. (copies). The N.T. had not been written yet.

b. Jesus said of Scripture:

John 5:39 - Search the scriptures; for in them ye think ye have eternal life: and they are they which testify of me.

Luke 24:27 - And beginning at Moses and all the prophets, he expounded unto them in all the scriptures the things concerning himself.

c. We know that Philip did **not** preach the same message to the lost as we do **today**. Philip's message was still a Jewish Kingdom message as a Jew under **Law**.

Isaiah 53:8 - He was taken from prison and from judgment: and who shall declare his generation? for he was cut off out of the land of the living: for the transgression of my people was he stricken.

*This shows a Hebrew prophet speaking of Messiah's death for **his** (Isaiah) people - Israel.

5. Isaiah 53 does speak of Christ's suffering. But, it is not good news that an innocent man has suffered

in our place. Rather, it was God calling upon Israel to **repent** of their crucifixion of their Messiah, be baptized, and in faith accept Messiah as theirs.

Acts 2:23, 36, 38 - Him, being delivered by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God, ye have taken, and by wicked hands have crucified and slain: Acts 2:36 Therefore let all the house of Israel know assuredly, that God hath made that same Jesus, whom ye have crucified, both Lord and Christ. Acts 2:38 Then Peter said unto them, Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost.

Acts 3:13-15, 18-20 - The God of Abraham, and of Isaac, and of Jacob, the God of our fathers, hath glorified his Son Jesus; whom ye delivered up, and denied him in the presence of Pilate, when he was determined to let *him* go. Acts 3:14 But ye denied the Holy One and the Just, and desired a murderer to be granted unto you; Acts 3:15 And killed the Prince of life, whom God hath raised from the dead; whereof we are witnesses. Acts 3:18 But those things, which God before had shewed by the mouth of all his prophets, that Christ should suffer, he hath so fulfilled. Acts 3:19 Repent ye therefore, and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out, when the times of refreshing shall come from the presence of the Lord; Acts 3:20 And he shall send Jesus Christ, which before was preached unto you:

Acts 4:10 - Be it known unto you all, and to all the people of Israel, that by the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, whom ye crucified, whom God raised from the dead, *even* by him doth this man stand here before you whole.

Acts 5:30-31 - The God of our fathers raised up Jesus, whom ye slew and hanged on a tree. Acts 5:31 Him hath God exalted with his right hand *to be* a Prince and a Saviour, for to give repentance to Israel, and forgiveness of sins.

Note: I Peter 1:11 - Searching what, or what manner of time the Spirit of Christ which was in them did signify, when it testified beforehand the sufferings of Christ, and the glory that should follow.

a. The Nation of Israel will be saved **only** when she acknowledges her sin against Christ. It is only when she is condemned by her guilt of this crime and in honest humility, brokenness, and faith acknowledges Jesus Christ as the Messiah that she will be ready to be saved in the **Jewish** sense.

Zechariah 12:10-11 - And I will pour upon the house of David, and upon the inhabitants of Jerusalem, the spirit of grace and of supplications: and they shall look upon me whom they have pierced, and they shall mourn for him, as one mourneth for *his* only son, and shall be in bitterness for him, as one that is in bitterness for *his* firstborn. Zech. 12:11 In that day shall there be a great mourning in Jerusalem, as the mourning of Hadadrimmon in the valley of Megiddon.

Zechariah 14:9 - And the LORD shall be king over all the earth: in that day shall there be one LORD, and his name one. (The Kingdom glory)

- b. **God's purpose in the cross, as revealed in the O.T. prophecy, must not be confused with the Body Mystery [hid from ages and generations], made known in due time only through **Paul**. It wasn't until Paul that the full meaning - full **accomplishments** of the cross came to be understood.

It wasn't until Paul that it was by grace to offer salvation through **faith** in Christ's death-shed blood and His resurrection.

Romans 4:25, 5:1 - Who was delivered for our offences, and was raised again for our justification. Rom. 5:1 Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ:

Ephesians 1:7 - In whom we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace;

I Corinthians 1:17-18 - For Christ sent me not to baptize, but to preach the gospel: not with wisdom of words, lest the cross of Christ should be made of none effect. 1Cor. 1:18 For the preaching of the cross is to them that perish foolishness; but unto us which are saved it is the power of God.

6. Feldick: "8:36 confirms what Philip had been preaching. Israel's responsibility, under Law and the Prophetic Program, was to repent, especially of crucifying their Messiah. To prove their repentance of heart, they were **required** to be baptized with **water**."

- a. The Ethiopian eunuch requests to be baptized in order to complete the **Jewish** salvation (Mark 16:16).

- b. Acts 8:37 - And Philip said, If thou believest with all thine heart, thou mayest. And he answered and said, I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God.

Remember Simon's situation. Simon had believed only with his **intellect**, but not with his heart. Here, this eunuch is wholeheartedly in faith that Jesus was the Son of God (John 11:23-27, John 20:30-31; Matthew 16:13-16).

*Jesus is the anointed One, the Messiah that had been promised by the prophets.

- c. * Acts 8:37 is **not** in most all of the new versions of the Bible. They go from vs. 36 to vs. 38, * with no vs. 37! If that verse (37) is left out, we **lose** one of the great confessions in the Word of God.

7. Up to this point in time, the Jews were to believe Who Jesus was and **that** was the Gospel of the Kingdom. *God had not **yet** revealed the awesomeness of the Gospel of Grace: that Christ died for our sins - the world's sins, that He was buried and He arose from the dead in order to wash sins **away**, and **justify** us who believe.

