

ACTS

of the Holy Spirit

Session #12 – 8:1 - 25

I. Sauls Persecution (8:1 - 3)

Verse 1

And Saul (Jewish name = “desired”) approved (syneodokeo = pleasing agreement) of their killing him.

On that day

a great persecution (diogmos = suffering) broke out against the church (ekklesia) in Jerusalem, and all except the apostles (not just Apostles/everybody) were scattered (diaspeiro = like seed on the ground) throughout Judea (Southern part of Israel) and Samaria. (The center portion of Israel)

Paul later mourns his involvement in this persecution (I Cor. 15:9; Acts 26:11)



Just as Jesus had promised in Acts 1:8:

- What forced the believers to leave Jerusalem?
- Does God allow bad things to happen for a purpose?
- Would Jews willingly work in Samaria normally?

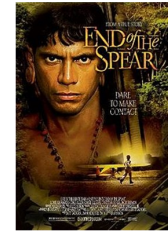
Verse 2

Godly men (eulabes) buried Stephen and mourned deeply for him.

Note: In the event of execution – mourning was not allowed by anyone including the family. However, this rule did not control the effect that Stephen had on people in the way he lived and the way he died!

The blood of the Martyrs is often the seeds of a movement!

I think about the Elliot family and the movie, “The End of the Spear” – Jan. 8, 1956 – jungles of Ecuador – five missionaries die a seeming senseless death – but the story is only brought to completion by Elisabeth Elliot and her forgiveness and the salvation of the tribe.



Verse 3

But Saul

began to destroy (lymaino = an army destroying a city/an animal tearing at its food continually)

the church. (ekklesia)

Going from house to house,

he dragged (syro = violently)

off both men

and women

and put them in prison.

The rage of Stephen took over Saul and others and they decided to end this false teaching NOW!

In fact the prophecy of Gamaliel – came true to the letter – If this is OF GOD – you cannot stop it for you will be “fighting against God”. (Acts 5:39)

II. Philip in Samaria (8:4 - 8)

Verse 4

[therefore] – logical connection – because of the previous

Those who had been scattered

preached (euaggelizo = proclaim/announce/evangelist)

the word (logos)

wherever they went.

The persecution did not deter the believers from speaking the truth – they spoke the truth wherever they went – therefore – the gospel is preached everywhere else.

Verse 5

Philip (Jewish name = “lover of horses”)

Which Philip?

- 1) The Apostle Philip – from Bethsaida (Acts 1:13)
- 2) Philip – one of the seven deacons (Acts 6:5)

From the evidence that is presented in verse 1 that all were scattered “except the Apostles” leads us to believe that this was Philip #2 – the deacon.

went down to a city (not sure) in Samaria
and proclaimed (kerysso = preach)
the Christ (Christos) there.

This seems like a simple thing – but it is profound!

Jews did not like Samaritans! Jesus dealt with the Samaritan Woman and spoke of the “Good Samaritan” to prove his lack of prejudice. **Instead of prejudice – The Gospel!**

Verse 6

When the crowds heard Philip
and saw the signs (semeion) he performed,
they all paid close attention
to what he said.

Now, we not only have Stephen manifesting signs but also Philip manifesting signs which validate his ministry.

Verse 7

For with shrieks,
impure (akathartos) spirits came out of many,
and many who were paralyzed
or lame were healed.

A secondary sign – **exballism** – the casting out of demons.

Another secondary sign – **healings** – those paralyzed and lame were healed.

Verse 8

So there was great joy (chara = gladness of heart)
in that city.

One of the “fruit of the Spirit” that comes with true faith.

People in Samaria knew of Jesus because of his ministry there – so possibly Philip is reaping the benefits of the seeds planted by Jesus himself.

III. Simon the Sorcerer (8:9 - 25)

Verse 9

Now for some time (scene change)

a man named Simon (Hebrew name = “small stone/reed”)
had practiced sorcery (mageuo = magi = magical arts)
in the city
and amazed all the people
of Samaria.

He boasted that he was someone great,

Simon was a legend in this area; a man of fame; crowd pleaser.
Sorcery is connected with

- 1) the occult (evil) – speaking with the dead
- 2) magic – deception and manipulation of people,
- 3) using mind altering drugs – deceiving ignorant people for money or power.
- 4) astrologist – superstitions in the heavens

Verse 10

and all the people,
both high and low,
gave him their attention
and exclaimed,
“This man is rightly called
the Great Power of God.”

Any power other than fakery was not the power of God but was from Satan and his cohorts.

We see the truth about ignorant people – they can be easily deceived by not knowing the root of one’s power.

People want to believe in God’s and His messengers so much that they will accept a fake to give them hope!

Verse 11

They followed him
because he had amazed them
for a long time
with his sorcery.

“If you tell a lie big enough and keep repeating it, people will eventually come to believe it. The lie can be maintained only for such time as the State can shield the people from the political, economic and/or military consequences of the lie. It thus becomes vitally important for the State to use all of its powers to repress dissent, for the truth is the mortal enemy of the lie, and thus by extension, the truth is the greatest enemy of the State.”

Joseph Goebbels – propaganda minister for Adolf Hitler (1897 – 1945)

Verse 12

But

when they believed (pisteuo) Philip
as he proclaimed 1) the good news (euangelizo)
of the 2) kingdom of God (basileia theos)
and the 3) name of Jesus Christ,
(onoma Iesous Christos)

they were baptized, (baptizo)
both men and women.

The whole package: 1) the Gospel – the good news of what Christ has done in the past, 2) the Kingdom – What Christ calls us to do in the future, and 3) the Name – the authority to do it!

The truth proclaimed – the Holy Spirit responds in them with 1) Belief – heart change, and 2) Baptism – expression of faith.

Verse 13

[even] – adding emphasis

Simon himself 1) believed (Visible fruit of faith)
and was 2) baptized. (Identification with death of Christ)
And he 3) followed (proskartereo = to be devoted to)
(Faithfulness)

Philip everywhere,
4) astonished (Holy awe of God's power)
by the great signs
and miracles he saw.

Four signs of genuine faith: Belief/Baptism/Faithfulness/Awe

Philip obviously felt like Simon's faith was genuine because he baptized him and allowed him to be one of his disciples. The man whose fame had grown of a long period of time, was astonished at the signs and miracles that Philip could do.

Verse 14

When the apostles in Jerusalem
heard that Samaria had accepted (dechomai = receive/give ear/accept the idea)
the word of God,
they sent Peter
and John to Samaria.

This becomes the function of the leadership of the church to validate and discipline the movement to ensure that all is according to the Word of God.

Peter and John are the main leaders of the Church.

Some suggest that the idea of the “Keys of the Kingdom of Heaven” (Matt.16:19) as being given to the Apostles, gives them authority to validate the work as to whether it is “of God”.

Verse 15

When they arrived,
they prayed
for the new believers there
that they might receive (lambano = to obtain – in experience)
the Holy Spirit,

Verse 16

because [for] - argument
the Holy Spirit had not yet come (epipipto = to seize or take possession of someone)
on any of them;
they had simply (monon = without a companion)
been baptized
in the name of the Lord Jesus.

How did Peter and John know this? What was lacking?

Throughout the book of Acts, the “filling of the Holy Spirit” is an experiential event rather than an inferential event.

Experiential = known by the senses – known by eye-witnesses

Inferential = known by fact – not necessarily accompanied by
3 experience or feelings.

Luke's Seven Works of the Holy Spirit

John Piper - desiringgod.org

1. The Holy Spirit being **given** to people (as a gift)—8:18; 5:32; 15:8 (as we); 11:17 (gift: 2:38; 8:20; 10:45; 11:17);
2. The Holy Spirit **falling upon** people—8:16; 10:44; 11:15 (as we, pointing back to Pentecost);
3. The Holy Spirit **coming upon** people—1:8; 19:6;
4. The Holy Spirit being **poured out** on people—2:17f.; 10:45;
5. People **receiving** the Holy Spirit—2:38; 8:15,17; 10:47 (as we, pointing back to Pentecost);
6. Being **baptized in** the Holy Spirit—1:5; 11:16 (as we);
7. Being **filled with** the Holy Spirit—2:4; 9:17.

Six Specific Experiences

John Piper - desiringgod.org

1. At **Pentecost** there was speaking in tongues and praising the mighty works of God and power to witness (1:8; 2:4, 11);
2. In **Samaria** there is something so obvious in experience that Simon saw it and is amazed and wants to buy the power to make it happen (8:18);
3. In **Caesarea** at the house of Cornelius there was speaking in tongues and praising God (10:46);
4. In **Ephesus** where Paul found the disciples of John the Baptist there was speaking in tongues and prophesying (19:6);
5. At **Paul's conversion** there is extraordinary boldness and empowering to witness (9:17, 22);
6. And in **Acts 5:31-35** Luke says that were “all filled with the Holy Spirit”. So obedience to God is a mark of his presence.
Luke seems to report and expect an experiential event rather than an inferential event when the Holy Spirit comes.

Verse 17

Then Peter and John

placed their hands on them,
and they received (lambano) the Holy Spirit.

The options:

- Were **not converted** until Peter and John laid hands on them
- Were converted but now have a **2nd work** of the Holy Spirit
- God choose to do a “**unique**” **work** here to connect Jerusalem and Samaria together in the work of God
- Were converted and already had the Holy Spirit – this was a **special anointing** for spiritual gifts in addition to the first.
- Were converted and already had the Holy Spirit – this was a “**normal refilling**” of the Holy Spirit as all believers should desire.

Verse 18

When Simon saw
that the Spirit was given
at the laying on
of the apostles' hands,
he offered them money.

Something happened when the Spirit came. Simon was use to seeing the crowds reaction to what he did. Now he sees a reaction and a power he had never seen before.

NOTE: The word **SIMONY** means to buy or sell church offices or privileges – named after Simon the sorcerer.

Verse 19

and said,

“Give me also this ability (exousia = authority)
so that everyone
on whom I lay my hands
may receive (lambano) the Holy Spirit.”

I can understand his desire to have this power!

What we don't know: 1) is this to further the kingdom? Or 2) to have power for personal gain and selfish ambition?

Verse 20

[but] - contrast

and Peter answered:

“May your money (argyrion = silver)
perish with you, (apoleia = destruction/hell)
because you thought
you could buy the gift of God
with money!

Peter's bold rebuke of a novice believer seems a bit overboard – but it the main risk of the new faith to be swept away in past glory seeking for Simon.

Verse 21

*You have no part
or share
in this ministry,
because your heart is not right
before God.*

Some say that Peter is claiming that Simon is NOT a Christian at all. The words “part” and “share” are both leadership terms - as those set apart and chosen for leadership. Therefore, in my opinion Peter is saying that Simon is not ready to have leadership authority because his heart is NOT YET mature in the ways of God.

Verse 22

1) Repent of this wickedness
and 2) pray to the Lord
*in the hope that he may forgive you
for having such a thought in your heart.*

Peter points out rightly that the problems expressed in Simon are a heart issue that needs to be repented of and prayed about in order for God to strengthen him before he falls away to the ways of the past.

Verse 23

*For I see (discernment)
that you are full of bitterness (chole pikria = lit. the
poison of hatred – the bitter gall of wickedness)
and captive to sin.” (syndesmos adikia = joined
together like the ligaments of the human body with acts of
unrighteousness)*

Simon had lived a life of the world – Peter had a sense of discernment that Simon still had some heart transformation to be done.

Verse 24

Then Simon answered,
“*Pray to the Lord for me
so that nothing you have said
may happen to me.*”

Some say this demonstrates that Simon would not humble his pride and would not take responsibility for his sin problem.

Others see Simon reaching out for the leader to pray with him and for him that he may have an opportunity

Verse 25

*After they had further proclaimed (laleo = spoken aloud)
the word of the Lord
and testified about Jesus, (diamartyromai = testify)
Peter and John returned to Jerusalem,
preaching the gospel (euaggelizo)
in many Samaritan villages.*

Peter and John return to Jerusalem.

They do make an effort to 1) talk, 2) testify, and 3) preach on their way home.

Question: What ever happen to Simon the sorcerer?