

**Acts Ch 1 v.8** - is an absolute **KEY Vs**  
to the **ENTIRE** book of **Acts** (& to our lives)

**Acts 1:8 (ESV)**

***8 But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you, and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth.***

& today - In ***Acts CH 8*** - we see **ALL of this** begin to come to pass

**We'll see** (again) the **Critical Need** for Believer's  
to **RECEIVE the POWER** of the Holy Spirit

& **We'll see** the believers **SCATTERED** - - & **thereby**  
**becoming** Christ's Witnesses - In **SAMARIA** (*outside Judea*)

& **THEN** - in the **2nd half** of Ch 8 (*Nxt week*)

**we'll see** the Gospel **Reach** ALL the way to **Ethiopia**  
**which** at **that time** - was considered **the End of the Earth**

& what **I really want us to know** today is -  
**the message** of Acts has **NOT** Changed !!

God **STILL** wants to give us  
the **POWER** of the **Holy Spirit** to be His Witnesses

& He **STILL** wants us to be **HIS WITNESSES**

Right where we **Live**

**Just outside** where we Live

**And** - to the **End of the earth**

The **Message** hasn't changed  
The **Purpose** hasn't changed

& **The People** who need to **Hear** the Gospel & **Receive** Christ  
**HAVE NOT CHANGED**

**Today** we see the church **SCATTERED & GROWING**

& **Today** we have the Opportunity - to be **PART** of the **SAME**  
**SCATTERED & GROWING** church - that **began** in ACTS

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We **ended** our **Msg** last week - Referring to the **Significant Impact**  
**Stephen** (in his Martyrdom) had on **Paul** the Apostle

As we **left Stephen** last week  
he was being **Illegally Killed** by an Angry **Religious MOB**

& as we **open our text today** - we read in . . .

**Acts 8:1 (esv)**

***1 And Saul approved of his (Stephen's) execution . . .***

**Pretty much** all scholars agree  
**The death** of Stephen **HAUNTED** Paul the Apostle

**If it's true** that Paul was part of the **SET-UP**  
at **Stephen's Synagogue** (*which we looked at last week*)

Then **WATCHING** Stephen **Live** for Christ  
**WATCHING** His **Face** shine - in front of the Sanhedrin  
**WATCHING** him **Gaze** into Heaven when he died

These things would have really **GNAWED** at PAUL

& they were (very likely) **a big part** of what made Paul ready to **meet Christ** on the Road to Damascus

But **at this point** - he is still in a **Religious Rage**  
**Violently Persecuting** the church

**Which** made the **Devil** very **HAPPY**

But **ONE** of the **Devil's** many problems is - - -

He **CAN'T** see the future !  
& so he **keeps** on **making mistakes** like this one

**Like w**hen he thought he **won** by having **Jesus** killed on the **cross**  
when **instead** - he actually **SEALED** his own **DEFEAT**

Well - **this mistake** is Sorta like that one - on the **Devil's** part

& we begin to **see that unfold** - in **2nd Half** of Verse 1

**Acts 8:1(b) (esv)**

*1 . . . And there arose on that day a great persecution against the church in Jerusalem, and they were all scattered throughout the regions of Judea and Samaria, except the apostles.*

**Stephens** death sparked a **Wide-Spread Persecution**  
that **SCATTERED** the believers **WHERE** . . . ?

Thru-Out **JUDEA & SAMARIA**

**Just like** Jesus said would happen - back in **Acts 1:8**

But the Apostles did **NOT SCATTER**

They **seemed obligated** to **STAY** under the Persecution  
as **part** of the **Foundation** - - So the church **Could SCATTER**

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& then - **in V.2** - we see a neat "**Comment**" on **Stephen's** death

**Acts 8:2 (esv)**

***2 Devout men buried Stephen and made great lamentation over him.***

You see - when **someone** was **stoned** to death,  
**Mourning & Lamentation** were **NOT ALLOWED** by the **Sanhedrin**

So this is **Luke's way** of saying that the "**Devout Jewish Men**"  
**Disagreed** with the **Lynch Mob death** of Stephen  
& gave him - a **PROPER** burial

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Unfortunately - **Stephen's death** was just the **beginning** - as **Vs.3** says

**Acts 8:3 (esv)**

***3 But Saul was ravaging the church,***

This word **RAVAGING** is a very Aggressive word

It means; with **ZEAL & INTENSITY** Saul was trying  
to Absolutely **DESTROY** the church

**& so - V.3 continues**

***3 . . . and entering house after house, he dragged off men and women and committed them to prison.***

**Saul** was doing **house-to-house** Raids  
& attacking Men - **AND** Women - **in the name of God**

**The Devil** was **USING SAUL** - to **try** to **DESTROY** the church

But **Later** - this **SAME Saul**, **turned Paul** - would become  
The **Greatest Apostle** - & write **Two Thirds** of the N.T.

**Is it possible** for the Enemy to **USE** someone at one point  
& then - **after** a **Radical Meeting** with Jesus Christ  
that **SAME** person be **used Mightily by God** ??

**YES** !! - it absolutely **IS** possible  
& **the life** of Paul **PROVES IT !!** - - **AMEN** !

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But Now - Our **REAL FOCUS** for today - starts in **V.4**

**Acts 8:4 (esv)**

***4 Now those who were scattered went about preaching the word.***

They were **FORCED** to **SCATTER** by **Persecution**,  
but it was **ACCORDING** to the **Perfect Plan of God**

The **Persecutors** meant to **put out** this fire  
by **scattering** the disciples

**But God intended** the exact **same event**  
to **Spread** the Gospel - Like **Wildfire**

When the **Wind of Persecution** rises up against the church  
The Church **ALWAYS** spreads like Wildfire - - - **ALWAYS** !

& one of those **SPARKS** - Sent out by the **Wind of Persecution**  
Was a man named **PHILLIP**

Phillip was **NAMED NEXT** to Stephen in the Role Call of the **DEACONS** back in **Ch 6** - His name came right after Stephen's

& now he **takes Stephen's place** - as our **FOCUS**

**Acts 8:5 (esv)**

**5 Philip went down to the city of Samaria and proclaimed to them the Christ.**

Samaria was actually a **Entire REGION** to the North of Jerusalem

& **THIS** was certainly one of the **HUGE** miracles of the **NT church** that the **JEWISH** Christians took the Gospel - to the **SAMARITANS**

Because there was **REAL, ACTUAL, Racial HATE** between the **Jews** & the **Samaritans**

It started **WAY BACK** in **700 BC**

when the Israelites of the **Northern Kingdom** (*after taken captive*) began **INTERMARRYING** with the Assyrians

& now - to the **Hebrew Jews**  
The **Samaritans** were **HALF-BREEDS**

**The writings of the Jewish Rabbi's said**

***"Let no man eat the bread of the Samaritans for he who eats their bread is as he who eats swine's flesh."***

& It was normal in **Jewish Prayers** to Pray  
***"& thank you God, that I was not born a Samaritan"***

So it was a **HUGE DEAL**  
that the Gospel went **FIRST** from **Jerusalem** - to **Samaria**

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**& So Again - V. 5 (esv)**

***5 Philip went down to the city of Samaria and proclaimed to them the Christ.***

He **PROCLAIMED** to them **THE CHRIST, THE MESSIAH**

He **gave** them the **GOOD NEWS**  
that **Jesus of Nazareth** is **the MESSIAH - the SAVIOR**

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& then in **V.6** we see what they **DID**  
in **RESPONSE** to Phillip **Proclaiming Christ** to them

**Acts 8:6 (esv)**

***6 And the crowds with one accord paid attention to what was being said by Philip when they heard him and saw the signs that he did.***

**The NKJV says - . . . with one accord [they] heeded the things spoken by Philip . . .**

They **IDEA** here really is  
***They HELD ONTO the things Phillip was teaching them***

They did not **CASUALLY** Receive the Gospel Message  
they **CLUNG TIGHTLY** to it . . .

**Especially** when they saw the **REAL Power of God**  
that **CAME WITH** the Message

## **Acts 8:7-8 (esv)**

***7 For unclean spirits, crying out with a loud voice, came out of many who had them, and many who were paralyzed or lame were healed.***

***8 So there was much joy in that city.***

This is a full-scale **REVIVAL** “Going Off” in **SAMARIA** of all places

## **People in mass**

**RECEIVING** Christ as Savior

**HEEDING** the teaching of His Lordship

& **MANY** Being **SET FREE** from their Spiritual Bondage

& Being **HEALED**

No wonder **V.8** says - ***So there was much joy in that city***

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**HOWEVER** - that doesn't mean there **WEREN'T** Serious Struggles as the Good News **PERMEATED** this new **REGION**

## **Acts 8:9-11 (esv)**

***9 But there was a man named Simon, who had previously practiced magic in the city (a Sorcerer) and amazed the people of Samaria, saying that he himself was somebody great.***

***10 They all paid attention to him, from the least to the greatest, saying, “This man is the power of God that is called Great.”***

***11 And they paid attention to him because for a long time he had amazed them with his magic.***

There's always **SOMEONE** - Isn't there ?

Some **ONE** or Some **THING** - that had **CONTROL** over the people **BEFORE** the **Good News** of Christ came along



There is always **SOMETHING VYING** for the attention of the People  
If it's not **Simon the Sorcerer** - it's **Oprah the Winfrey**

But **notice** closely - Phillip **never** even **addresses**  
**Simon the Sorcerer** - - *(although Peter IS going to)*

**Phillip** found himself in **Samaria** - - & so he **Proclaimed**  
the **Good News** of **Jesus Christ** - & the **Kingdom of God**

& He **STUCK** to **THAT** !! - - **THAT** is why he was there!  
& he saw People **SAVED** & Lives **TRANSFORMED**

### **Acts 8:12 (esv)**

***12 But when they believed Philip as he preached good news about the kingdom of God and the name of Jesus Christ, they were baptized, both men and women.***

- They **Believed** what they were taught about the **Kingdom of God**
- They **Believed** in the **Power** of the **Name of Jesus Christ**
- **AND SO** - They were **Baptized**

Guys - **THIS** is the **Right Way** to handle  
**False Teachers** - **Cults** - & **Spiritual Trouble Makers**

**PROCLAIM** the **Good News** of Jesus Christ

**TALK** about the **Kingdom of God**

& do it all in **The POWER** of the Name of **JESUS**

& **GOD** will **take care**

of the **False Teachers** & the **Spiritual Trouble Makers**

Which is **exactly** what's **going to happen** here

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& you **THINK** it **STARTS** - in **V.13**  
but please - - **hold your applause** . . . the story's not over

### **Acts 8:13 (esv)**

**13 Even Simon himself believed, and after being baptized he continued with** (stayed close to) **Philip. And seeing signs and great miracles performed, he was amazed.**

Simon the Sorcerer was **AMAZED**

He certainly acknowledged the **POWER** of God as **REAL**  
& he knew his was **FAKE**

& while he **SAID** he believed  
& even went thru the motion of Baptism

**HISTORY** - & the end of our text today -  
tell the **REAL STORY**

### **R. Kent Hughes**

***Subsequent history and legend portray Simon as the arch-villain of the early church. Irenaeus (a.d. 180) speaks of him as the father of Gnosticism*** (the 1st 'New Age' type false teaching). **What we have here is the devil joining the church.**

Kent Hughes says it much quicker than I can  
***What we have here is the devil joining the church.***

In other words - - ***If you can't BEAT 'EM - JOIN 'EM***

## **2 Corinthians 11:14–15 (esv)**

***14 . . . for even Satan disguises himself as an angel of light.***

***15 So it is no surprise if his servants, also, disguise themselves as servants of righteousness. Their end will correspond to their deeds.***

So - We're **not Done** with **Simon**  
we'll **see** him **again** - in a **Minute**

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But starting in **V. 14** - We See another **Incredibly IMPORTANT** Truth  
about **the Growth** of the church

The Samaritans had **RECEIVED** Jesus as "**The Messiah**"  
They were **HEEDING** the teaching of His Kingdom & Lordship

But there was **ONE THING** Phillip **HADN'T** Taught them

& when the **HOME CHURCH** in Jerusalem heard about it  
they dispatched the **BIG GUNS** right away

## **Acts 8:14-17 (esv)**

***14 Now when the apostles at Jerusalem heard that Samaria had received the word of God, they sent to them Peter and John, 15 who came down and prayed for them that they might receive the Holy Spirit,***

***16 for he (the Holy Spirit) had not yet fallen on any of them, but they had only been baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus.***

***17 Then they laid their hands on them and they received the Holy Spirit.***

For **SOME Reason** - Phillip had **NOT Taught** them about,  
**or Prayed** for them to **Receive** the **Power** of the **Holy Spirit**

We don't know why !

It's NOT because ONLY the Apostles  
could pray for the Filling of the Holy Spirit

We DON'T see that in the rest of scripture

It's NOT because the Filling of the Holy Spirit  
HAS TO BE a Separate, Second Experience

That really can't be supported by the rest of Scripture

We don't know WHY Phillip didn't do it  
But we DO know there is a HUGE lesson here - - *& that is . . .*

Once you've RECEIVED Christ for Salvation  
Once you've SURRENDERED your life to Him as LORD  
Once the BONDAGE of your past has been broken

YOU NEED the POWER of the Holy Spirit  
to LIVE the Supernatural Christian Life

We know THAT - For Sure  
& that's Exactly what we see here

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Guys - Please - Don't DEBATE  
the Various Doctrines on the FILLING of the Holy Spirit

Just do ONE THING FOR ME - If you're a Christian  
Make Sure YOU are Filled with the Holy Spirit

Go to our teaching website at WORDBYMAIL.COM  
Click on RESOURCES - - & Get the TWO BOOKS listed

**“Forgotten God”** - Francis Chan- **“Under His Influence”** - Lloyd Pulley

& while you're there at **WORDBYMAIL.COM**  
just **TYPE** “Holy Spirit” in the search box

& you'll find the **22 messages** in the **Holy Spirit COLLECTION**  
**Ask** us for those & we'll **send** them all to you

**THEN** - **MAKE SURE** that **YOU Personally**  
are **Filled** with the Holy Spirit

The Holy Spirit **IS** the **Power of God** in your life

**WITHOUT** Him - the **BEST** you can do  
is **live for Christ** in **YOUR OWN STRENGTH** (*& that ain't much*)

**LEARN** about the **Holy Spirit**  
& **ASK HIM** to **FILL** you **EVERY SINGLE DAY !!**

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So - **Peter & John** come in from Jerusalem - & say  
the **only thing** missing here is the **Power of the Holy Spirit**

& **they take care** of that in a hurry  
they **lay hands** on the believers - & they **RECEIVE** the Holy Spirit

Now **THIS** . . . **REALLY** interests the Sorcerer Simon

**Remember** - **Simon the Sorcerer** had **ALL** the **POWER**  
**BEFORE** Phillip came into town with **the Gospel** of Christ

& now he **sees a way** to maybe **get some** of that Power **BACK**  
**Maybe** this could put him **“back on top”**

## **Acts 8:18-19 (esv)**

**18** Now when Simon saw that the Spirit was given through the laying on of the apostles' hands, he offered them money,  
**19** saying, "Give me this power also, so that anyone on whom I lay my hands may receive the Holy Spirit."

**Notice** - Simon didn't ask to receive *the Holy Spirit*  
He asked for the **POWER** to give it to others

**Because** what he wanted, was the power to impress,  
& to get people to look up to him, & to follow him - again

**& so** . . . he offered **MONEY** - to **GET** this Spiritual Power

**NOW** - In case you think I was being **TOO HARSH**  
when I quoted **R. Kent Hughes** - who said;

**What we have here** (in Simon) **is the devil joining the church.**

## **Just Listen to a little Church History**

By the **4th Century** -  
the practice of **SIMONY** was **prevalent** in the church

**SIMONY** (Named for *this Simon*, & *this act*) . . .

## **SIMONY was the act of BUYING positions & power in the church**

You could buy a **Bishop's** office for so much  
You could buy an **Archbishop's** office for so much  
You could even buy a **Cardinal's Hat** (not the baseball team)

**In fact it was the practice of SIMONY**  
that **LED** to **BUYING INDULGENCES**  
where you could **PURCHASE** forgiveness of your sins

& the practice of **BUYING INDULGENCES** was one of the **KEY CAUSES** of **the REFORMATION** in the **16th Century !!**

**SIMONY** - Named for **THIS** Simon, & **THIS** event was a **Black Eye** on the church for **over a thousand** years

**EVEN THO** the Apostle **PETER Dealt Severely** with this Simon **The church** seemed to **FORGET** this Vs

**Acts 8:20 (esv)**

***20 But Peter said to him, “May your silver perish with you, because you thought you could obtain the gift of God with money!”***

This is actually a **Very Strong Curse** - The GK is **LITERALLY** ***“May your silver together with you be sent into destruction”***

The **gifts & callings** of God can **NEVER** be Bought or Sold

**Altho** the church **did it** for many **hundreds** of years They did it **CLEARLY AGAINST** God’s Word

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& So **Now** - Peter **levels the TRUTH** at **Simon** the Sorcerer

**Acts 8:21 (esv)**

***21 You have neither part nor lot in this matter, for your heart is not right before God.***

**Please listen carefully - Peter says to Simon**

***You have neither part, not lot, in the growing Body of Christ because your heart is not right before God***

**How important** is it - that our **Hearts** are **RIGHT** before God?

It **determines** - whether we are **PART** of God's Family - or **NOT**

**NOT** whether we **Said** some certain **WORDS**

**NOT** whether we **Went Thru** some certain **CEREMONY**

**Is our Heart RIGHT with God ??**

Have we **Confessed** our sin

Have we Asked Jesus to **Forgive us** by His blood

Have we truly **Made Him Lord** of our Lives

We can **do that** - **TODAY**

We can **make** our **heart right** with God - **TODAY**

Even **Simon** the Sorcerer **COULD HAVE**

made **HIS** heart right with God - on **THAT very DAY**

**As Peter says to him - Acts 8:22-23 (esv)**

***22 Repent, therefore, of this wickedness of yours, and pray to the Lord that, if possible, the intent of your heart may be forgiven you.***

Simon **COULD HAVE** repented **THAT** Day

He **COULD HAVE** asked the Lord to **Forgive** him - & **Cleanse** Him

**As Peter says in V.23**

***23 For I see that you are in the gall of bitterness and in the bond of iniquity.***

**NLT says** - ***for I can see that you are full of bitter jealousy and are held captive by sin.***



Simon wasn't ANY MORE SAVED at THIS Point  
than he was BEFORE he went thru all the MOTIONS

There had been NO CHANGE in Simon's Heart,  
. . . & so there had been no true salvation

& Simon KNEW IT - - - But he STILL didn't REPENT

INSTEAD - He asked Peter to help him  
AVOID the consequences of his sin

### Acts 8:24 (esv)

*24 And Simon answered, "Pray for me to the Lord, that nothing of what you have said may come upon me."*

Many people ask to AVOID the consequences of their sin

They want to KEEP Sinning - But AVOID the Consequences  
& the Answer is . . . NO CAN DO

REPENTANCE means - "*To turn away from your sin*"  
& THAT is the Beginning of Salvation

As far as we know - Simon WOULDN'T - & Never DID

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### & so we close with Acts 8:25 (esv)

*25 Now when they (Peter & John) had testified and spoken the word of the Lord, they returned to Jerusalem, preaching the gospel to many villages of the Samaritans.*

Now it's NOT JUST Phillip - but Peter & John  
are also preaching in Samaria - & THAT is such a huge deal !!

& so - the church is **SCATTERED** by **Persecution**  
& **GROWING** by the **Proclamation** of Christ

& Guys - it **STILL IS TODAY**  
My prayer is that **YOU** will be **PART of it**

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SO - **What** have we **learned today** . . .

I'd like to **FOCUS** on **TWO MAIN THINGS**

1) If your **HEART** Isn't **RIGHT** with God  
You need to **REPENT** & Make it **RIGHT** - Quick

2) If you are a **Christian** today, **Desiring** to Live for Christ  
You **MUST** be **FILLED** with the **POWER** of the Holy Spirit

& **that's what** I'd like us to **focus on**  
as we **PREPARE** for **COMMUNION**

**Let's Pray**