

**I. Text: Acts 8:9-25** <sup>9</sup> Now there was a man named Simon, who formerly was practicing magic in the city and astonishing the people of Samaria, claiming to be someone great; <sup>10</sup> and they all, from smallest to greatest, were giving attention to him, saying, "This man is what is called the Great Power of God." <sup>11</sup> And they were giving him attention because he had for a long time astonished them with his magic arts. <sup>12</sup> But when they believed Philip preaching the good news about the kingdom of God and the name of Jesus Christ, they were being baptized, men and women alike. <sup>13</sup> Even Simon himself believed; and after being baptized, he continued on with Philip, and as he observed signs and great miracles taking place, he was constantly amazed. <sup>14</sup> Now when the apostles in Jerusalem heard that Samaria had received the word of God, they sent them Peter and John, <sup>15</sup> who came down and prayed for them that they might receive the Holy Spirit. <sup>16</sup> For He had not yet fallen upon any of them; they had simply been baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus. <sup>17</sup> Then they *began* laying their hands on them, and they were receiving the Holy Spirit. <sup>18</sup> Now when Simon saw that the Spirit was bestowed through the laying on of the apostles' hands, he offered them money, <sup>19</sup> saying, "Give this authority to me as well, so that everyone on whom I lay my hands may receive the Holy Spirit." <sup>20</sup> But Peter said to him, "May your silver perish with you, because you thought you could obtain the gift of God with money! <sup>21</sup> "You have no part or portion in this matter, for your heart is not right before God. <sup>22</sup> "Therefore repent of this wickedness of yours, and pray the Lord that, if possible, the intention of your heart may be forgiven you. <sup>23</sup> "For I see that you are in the gall of bitterness and in the bondage of iniquity." <sup>24</sup> But Simon answered and said, "Pray to the Lord for me yourselves, so that nothing of what you have said may come upon me." <sup>25</sup> So, when they had solemnly testified and spoken the word of the Lord, they started back to Jerusalem, and were preaching the gospel to many villages of the Samaritans.

Why do you think God choose to send Peter and John to Samaria to give the Holy Spirit to the newly converted Samaritans by the laying on of their hands and NOT at the moment of their conversion/good confession?

## II. Introduction: The history of Baptism

1. Jewish Proselyte Baptism – conversion to Judaism (commitment to something new) (Dt. 21:10-14, Ruth 1:16, Esther 8:17)
2. Jewish Ceremonial Cleansing (Mikveh) – Acts 21:26 - preparation for worship (show a clean heart for God) (Ex. 19:10, Lev. 8:6, 16:4, Num. 19, 31:21-24, 1 Kings 7:23, 2 Chron. 4:2)
3. John the Baptist – Baptism of repentance (change of mind and action - I am a sinner / I need & by faith receive God's forgiveness) (Mark 1:4)
4. Jesus baptism by John the Baptist – obedience to God's mission of substitutionary atonement (to fulfill all righteousness- Mt 3:15) also inauguration of his public ministry (Mt. 3:13-17) (start of something new)
5. Jesus baptism into suffering at the cross (Luke 12:50), specifically His blood (Eph. 1:7, 1 John 1:7, Rev. 1:5) is what saves us from God's wrath (Romans 5:8-10), and the baptism that saves us (1 Peter 3:18-22)
6. Believer's Baptism (spiritual) indwelling of the Holy Spirit (Acts 10:44-47)
7. Believer's Baptism (physical) immersion in water - identification with Jesus and other believers ("I am a Christian" – I believe and belong to Jesus and His church) (10 examples of believer's baptism in Acts – Acts 2:41, 8:12, 8:13, 8:35-38, 9:18, 10:48, 16:14-15, 16:33, 18:8, 19:1-17)

Which of these baptisms are you trusting in to actually save you from God's coming wrath?

## III. Outline: Acts 8:1-40

1. The Contrast between Saul the Persecutor and Philip the Evangelist (Acts 8:1-8)
2. The Contrast between Simon the Sorcerer and the Ethiopian Eunuch (Acts 8:9-40)

Break into small groups (3-4 people) and come up with your own outline of Acts 8 and then share it with the whole group.

## IV: Main Points – was Simon the Sorcerer saved or an example of an Apostate/False Convert?

### A. The Contrast between Saul (mighty in persecution) and Philip (mighty in evangelism and signs/miracles)

#### 1. (Acts 8:1-3) Saul was a murderer/accomplice to murder before he was converted/born again to become the Apostle Paul

a. Saul was zealous and religious but not saved – he was a murderer who approved of Stephen's death - he was in hearty agreement with those killing Steven (suneudokeo – lit. together think good of - together/sun, good/ou, dokeo/think (dokos – opinion)

b. Saul was a persecutor who tried to destroy the early church - He was a part of a great persecution against the church in Jerusalem.

c. Saul was a violent man dragged men and women by force and put them in prison

- Verses that reference Paul's previous life as a blasphemer, persecutor and chief of sinners: 1 Tim. 1:12-16, Gal. 1:13-16, Acts 9:1-2, 22:3-5, 26:4-12 VS

a. **Philip was likely one of the Devout men who buried Stephen – and mourned greatly/loudly for him.** Philip the evangelist was not the Philip who was one of the 12 original disciples (Mt. 10:3, Mk. 3:18, Luke 6:14, John 1:43-46, 6:5-7, 12:21-22, 14:8-9, Acts 1:13), but was one of the prototype Deacons put in charge of the food distribution ministry (Acts 6:5) who proclaimed Christ in Samaria where Simon the sorcerer believed and was baptized (8:5-8), along the road from Jerusalem to Gaza where he explained the gospel to the Ethiopian Eunuch, 8:26-39, then in Azotus (modern day Ashdod) 8:40, and then the last time we here of Philip in the Bible is Acts 21:8 where he resides in Caesarea).

b. **Philip was one of the scattered men because of persecution who went about preaching the word (εὐαγγελίζω euaggelizo: to announce good news, and λόγος logos: a word - as embodying an idea, a statement, a speech)**

c. **Philip was one of the faithful men who evangelized even though he was displaced – he went to Samaria and was "proclaiming Christ to them" κηρύσσω kerusso: to be a herald, proclaim ...[Friberg] κηρύσσω (1) denoting the official activity of a herald announce, publicly proclaim (RV 5.2); (2) make known extensively, tell everywhere (MK 5.20); (3) in a religious sense, denoting proclamation of a sacred message proclaim, preach, publish (MT 4.23); (4) as proclaiming the necessity of a course of action preach (MK 1.4)**

When Paul (after his conversion) visited Philip in Acts 21:8-9 what do you think they talked about since Paul when he was Saul caused Philip to run for his life?

### B. The Contrast between the baptism of Simon the Sorcerer and the Ethiopian Eunuch.

#### 1. (Acts 8:9-11) Simon the Sorcerer

a. He formerly practicing magic (μαγεύω mageuo: to practice magic – origin: μάγος magos: a Magian, i.e. an (Oriental) astrologer, by impl. a magician

b. He astonished the people of Samaria

c. He claimed to be someone great

d. He likely quite enjoyed all the attention - the people of Samaria called him "the Great Power of God." (vs. 11 says they were giving him attention and that he had astonished them with his magic arts for some time)

What are you the most thankful as far as what God saved you from or out of in terms of your former life before you knew/followed Christ?

#### 2. (Acts 8:13-16) Reasons why Simon might be genuinely saved

a. The Text says Simon formerly practiced the magic arts

- b. The Text says Simon himself believed
- c. The Text says Simon was baptized
- d. The Text says after baptism Simon continued on with Philip
- e. The Text says Simon (after confronted by Peter) seemingly contritely asks for the Apostles to pray for Him so that nothing they said would come upon him... that he would perish (die) along with his money.

**Do you think Simon was genuinely saved or a false convert/pseudo believer?**

### **3. (Acts 8:18-24) Reasons why Simon might be a false convert:**

- a. He is fascinated/preoccupied with power - He was amazed by the signs and miracles Philip was doing - his amazement does not seem to be out of awe/reverence/or worship but a selfish desire to be powerful and have the attention back that now the people were giving to Philip.
- b. He offers a bribe to gain power for himself - When he sees Peter and John bestowing the Holy Spirit by the laying on of their hands – he offers them money (tries to buy the power they have)
- c. His focus is on himself not God, the Holy Spirit, or People- “Give this authority to ME as well, so that everyone on whom I lay my hands may receive the Holy Spirit
- d. Peter strongly rebukes him saying – may your silver perish with you – perish in the sense of physical death or spiritual death?
- e. Peter strongly says you have no part of this – hopefully referring narrowly to the bestowing of the Holy Spirit, hopefully not broadly saying you have no part of Christ/Christianity.
- f. Peter strongly says you heart is not right before God – does he mean at that moment or generally that Simon is not saved/born again/right with God in a redeemed/restored/reconciled personal relationship.
- g. Peter strongly admonishes him to repent of this WICKEDNESS of yours and to pray to God that He would forgive this sinful intention (to buy the power of the Holy Spirit)
- h. Peter strongly ends his rebuke by saying “I see you are IN the gall of bitterness and the bondage of iniquity – certainly believers can struggle with bitterness and for a time appear to be in bondage to various sins – but here the term σύνδεσμος *sundesmos*: that which binds together, i.e. a *bond* AND ἀδικία *adikia*: injustice, unrighteousness

**Do you think it's possible to be a carnal/fleshly Christian (1 Cor. 3:1-2)? What is the balance of guarding against performance/works based Christianity (you maintain your salvation by your deeds) and easy believism/cheap grace that produces false converts (no Lordship/obedience/change is required to be a Christian)**

- The text never says he (Simon) received the Holy Spirit – & the indwelling Spirit is God's mark that one truly belongs to Him as His own possession.
- A+B=C (no fruits or change by the Spirit = no indwelling of the Holy Spirit = no indwelling Spirit and thus no salvation (no genuine repentance and faith in Jesus as Lord)

**Read Eph. 1:13-14, Titus 3:5-7, and Rom. 8:9-17 and discuss how the indwelling Spirit is the ultimate proof of genuine conversion**

- The text indicates that Simon's heart is not right before God and the NEW COVENANT is all about regeneration, being born again with a new heart that loves, obeys, and follows/worships Jesus as Lord!

**Read Ezekiel 11:19-21, 36:23-29, and Jeremiah 31:31-34 and discuss how the New Covenant promises a New Heart**

- The text indicates that Simon is bound/enslaved to sin and Romans 6, 2 Cor 5, and 1 John are very clear that a Christian can't be a slave to sin (we can greatly struggle, we even grieve the Holy Spirit (Eph. 4:30) so we constantly are confessing our sins (1 John 1:9), but we can't be bound/enslaved to sin as before our conversion in habitual/continual pattern of sin (dead in sin/ dead spiritually – Eph. 2:1)

**Read Romans 6:1-18 and discuss the difference between slavery to sin and slavery to righteousness**

**The Rest of the Story (Simon the Sorcerer is traditionally known as Simon Magus)** John MacArthur in his book “The Truth War” (2007 Thomas Nelson) writes concerning Simon the Sorcerer... “Apostasy is someone who has received the light but not the life, the seed but not the fruit, the written Word but not the living Word, the truth but not a love for the truth... Acts 8:9-25 gives a classic biblical example of how apostasy can occur. There we meet Simon, a magician who, according to Luke, had made his reputation by astonishing the people of Samaria with “sorcery” (most likely by sleight of hand), claiming he was someone great and powerful. In other words, Simon was a professional con artist. According to Luke, the people of Samaria believed Simon's tricks were wrought by “the great power of God (v.10). But when the gospel came to Samaria, everything changed. Verses 12-13 say, “When the Samaritans believed Philip as he preached the things concerning the kingdom of God and the name of Jesus Christ, both men and women were baptized. Then Simon himself also believed, and when he was baptized he continued with Philip, and was amazed, seeing the miracles and signs which were done.” We can be certain that Philip's message was a clear, complete, accurate, faithful presentation of the gospel of Jesus Christ. People – evidently lots of them – were being baptized. Philip was having a profound evangelistic impact among the Samaritans, and the gospel reverberated so deeply into the community that even Simon the magician “believed.” How authentic Simon's faith at first *appeared* is seen in the fact that he was baptized and “continued with Philip” and was amazed at what he saw. Signs and wonders (truly great miracles, not tricks) were taking place, and Simon was genuinely astonished...he saw plainly and understood immediately that Philip was no cheap grifter. He could see right away that Philip's message was truth and Simon's initial response was all positive. At least on the superficial level “he believed.” That is, when he saw the truth and understood it, he didn't reject it outright. But verses 18-19 tell us, “When Simon saw that through the laying of the apostle's hands the Holy Spirit was given, he offered them money, saying “Give me this power also, that anyone on whom I lay hands may receive the Holy Spirit.” Apparently, when the apostles laid hands on the new believers in Samaria, there was some visible manifestation of the Holy Spirit's coming to that person. In all likelihood, the Samaritan converts spoke in tongues miraculously (not with mere gibberish, but in known, recognizable languages) just as the first believers at Pentecost had. The outpouring of languages would have been a clear sign that the Samaritans were receiving the same Holy Spirit on the same terms as the original Jewish believers, lest there be a division in the church. When Simon witnessed such a wondrous sign, he desperately wanted the power to perform that miracle at will. Remember, Simon had believed, been baptized, continued with Philip, observed all the signs, and was constantly and positively amazed. By all outward appearances, his faith seemed authentic. But Peter said to him, “Your money perish with you, because you thought that the gift of God could be purchased with money!” (v.20). Peter clearly regard Simon's request as evidence that the magician was not a real believer at all. “You have neither part nor portion in this matter, for your heart is not right in the sight of God.” (v. 21). That, by the way, is known as the *direct* method of confronting an apostate. Notice that in Peter's subsequent call for Simon's repentance, the apostle speaks of forgiveness in almost hypothetical terms, suggesting that Simon's sin was so serious that it might not even be forgivable: Repent therefore of this your wickedness, and pray to God if perhaps the thought of your heart may be forgiven you. For I see that you are poisoned by bitterness and bound by iniquity” (vv. 22-23). Simon pleaded for Peter to pray for him, “that non of the things which you have spoken may come upon me” (v.24). He was obviously shaken and terrified by Peter's rebuke – for the moment, at least. Simon's sense of dread at the prospect of his own apostasy does not seem to have lasted long. Apparently, he fell away from Christ forever that very day. He is never again mentioned by Luke (or anywhere else in the Biblical record). But Justin Martyr, an apologist of the early church who was himself a Samaritan and who lived barely a generation after Simon's time, recorded some details about Simon, and there is no reason to doubt Justin's account. He says Simon was from the Samaritan village of Gitta. Justin and Irenaeus (close contemporary of Justin's and fellow apologist) both record that Simon began one of the very first quasi-Christian cults. According to Irenaeus, the magician borrowed biblical terminology and adapted them to various myths that he invented about himself – including the blasphemous claim that Simon himself was the true God incarnate. Simon is regarded by many early church historians as the founder of the first full-fledged gnostic sect. He is known in church history as Simon Magus, and from his name is derived the term *simony*, the practice of selling ecclesiastical offices for money. No one is more dangerous to the Christian faith than an aggressive apostate. The career of Simon gave early proof of that.

**V: Application: 1 John 2:3-6, 2 Cor. 13:5, 2 Tim. 2:19** What are some other verses you could share to someone who claims to be a Christian but has no fruit & may be a false convert/pseudo believer/apostate/wolf in sheep's clothing?



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Next

# TRUTH BIBLE CHURCH



## FOLLOWERS OF JESUS SEEKING TO...

### LOVE GOD SUPREMELY

**Matthew 22:37-38** <sup>37</sup> And He said to him, "YOU SHALL LOVE THE LORD YOUR GOD WITH ALL YOUR HEART, AND WITH ALL YOUR SOUL, AND WITH ALL YOUR MIND." <sup>38</sup> "This is the great and foremost commandment.

### SERVE PEOPLE SINCERELY

**Matthew 22:39** <sup>39</sup> "The second is like it, 'YOU SHALL LOVE YOUR NEIGHBOR AS YOURSELF.'

**John 13:34-35** <sup>34</sup> "A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another, even as I have loved you, that you also love one another. <sup>35</sup> "By this all men will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another."

### REACH THE LOST URGENTLY

**Matthew 28:19-20** <sup>19</sup> "Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, <sup>20</sup> teaching them to observe all that I commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age."

# Acts 8:9–25

9 Now there was a man named Simon, who formerly was practicing magic in the city and astonishing the people of Samaria, claiming to be someone great; 10 and they all, from smallest to greatest, were giving attention to him, saying, "This man is what is called the Great Power of God."



# Acts 8:1–40

11 And they were giving him attention because he had for a long time astonished them with his magic arts. 12 But when they believed Philip preaching the good news about the kingdom of God and the name of Jesus Christ, they were being baptized, men and women alike. 13 Even Simon himself believed; and after being baptized, he continued on with Philip, and as he observed signs and great miracles taking place, he was constantly amazed. 14 Now when the apostles in Jerusalem heard that Samaria had received the word of God, they sent them Peter and John, 15 who came down and prayed for them that they might receive the Holy Spirit.



# Acts 8:1–40

16 For He had not yet fallen upon any of them; they had simply been baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus. 17 Then they began laying their hands on them, and they were receiving the Holy Spirit. 18 Now when Simon saw that the Spirit was bestowed through the laying on of the apostles' hands, he offered them money, 19 saying, "Give this authority to me as well, so that everyone on whom I lay my hands may receive the Holy Spirit." 20 But Peter said to him, "May your silver perish with you, because you thought you could obtain the gift of God with money! 21 "You have no part or portion in this matter, for your heart is not right before God.

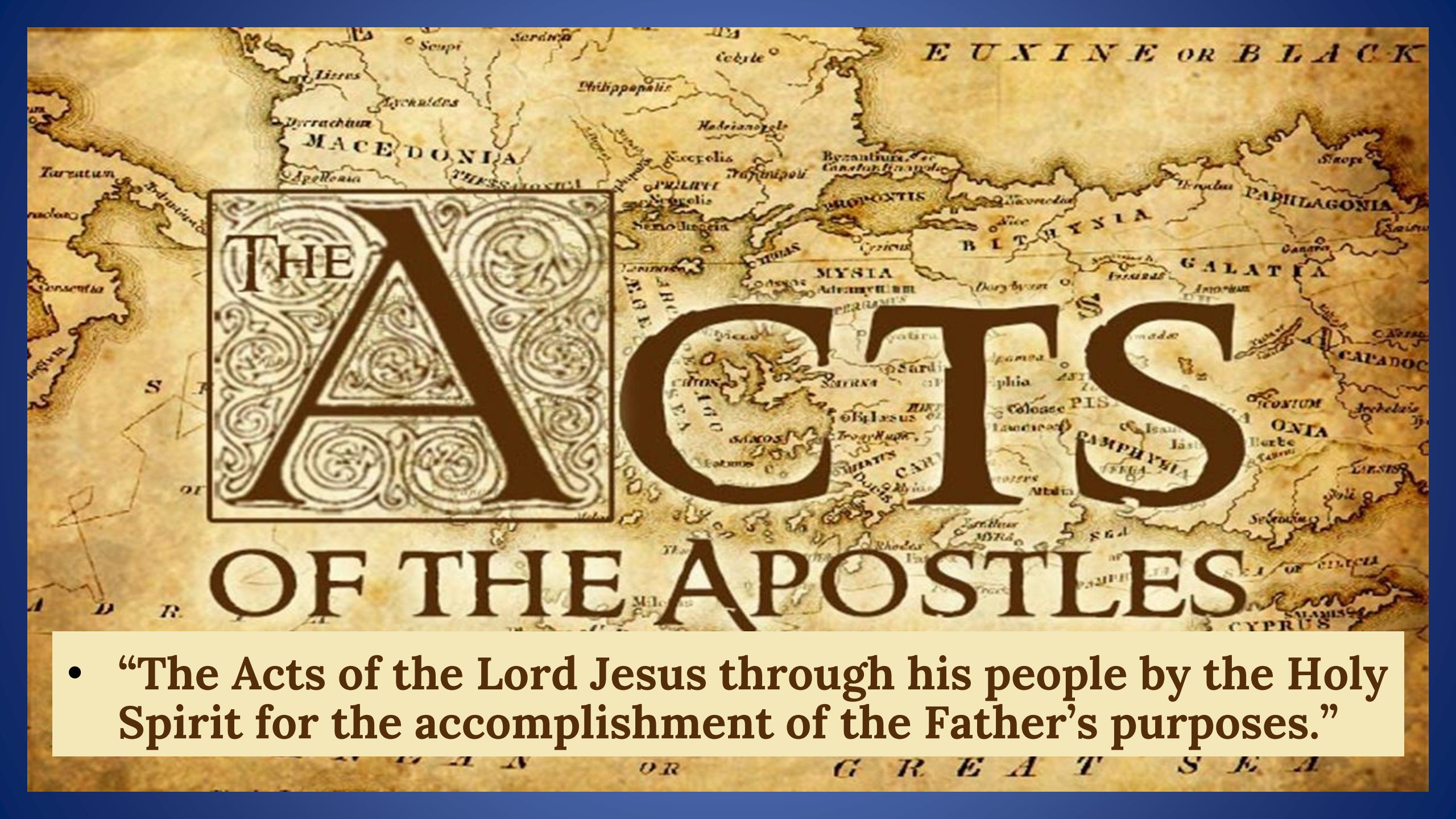


# Acts 8:1–40

22 "Therefore repent of this wickedness of yours, and pray the Lord that, if possible, the intention of your heart may be forgiven you. 23 "For I see that you are in the gall of bitterness and in the bondage of iniquity." 24 But Simon answered and said, "Pray to the Lord for me yourselves, so that nothing of what you have said may come upon me." 25 So, when they had solemnly testified and spoken the word of the Lord, they started back to Jerusalem, and were preaching the gospel to many villages of the Samaritans.







**THE ACTS**  
OF THE APOSTLES

- “The Acts of the Lord Jesus through his people by the Holy Spirit for the accomplishment of the Father’s purposes.”

# BOOK *of* ACTS

## Outline of Acts

### I. **Jerusalem (1:1–8:4)**

- A. The beginning of the church (1:1–2:47)
- B. The expansion of the church (3:1–8:4)

### II. **Judea and Samaria (8:5–12:25)**

- A. The witness to the Samaritans (8:5–25)
- B. The conversion of a Gentile (8:26–40)
- C. The conversion of the apostle to the Gentiles (9:1–31)
- D. The witness to the Gentiles (9:32–12:25)


### III. **The remotest part of the earth (13:1–28:31)**

- A. The first missionary journey (13:1–14:28)
- B. The Jerusalem council (15:1–35)
- C. The second missionary journey (15:36–18:22)
- D. The third missionary journey (18:23–21:16)
- E. The journey to Rome (21:17–28:31)

- MacArthur, J. F., Jr. (1994). (Vol. 1, p. 6). Moody Press.



Jesus is the Christ/the Messiah  
(Acts 9:22, 17:2-3, 18:5)

A photograph of two men in a desert landscape. The man on the left has a beard and is wearing a brown tunic. The man on the right is bald and wearing a light-colored tunic. They are both looking towards the right. The background is a hazy, golden-brown desert scene.

Today's  
Sermon Title:

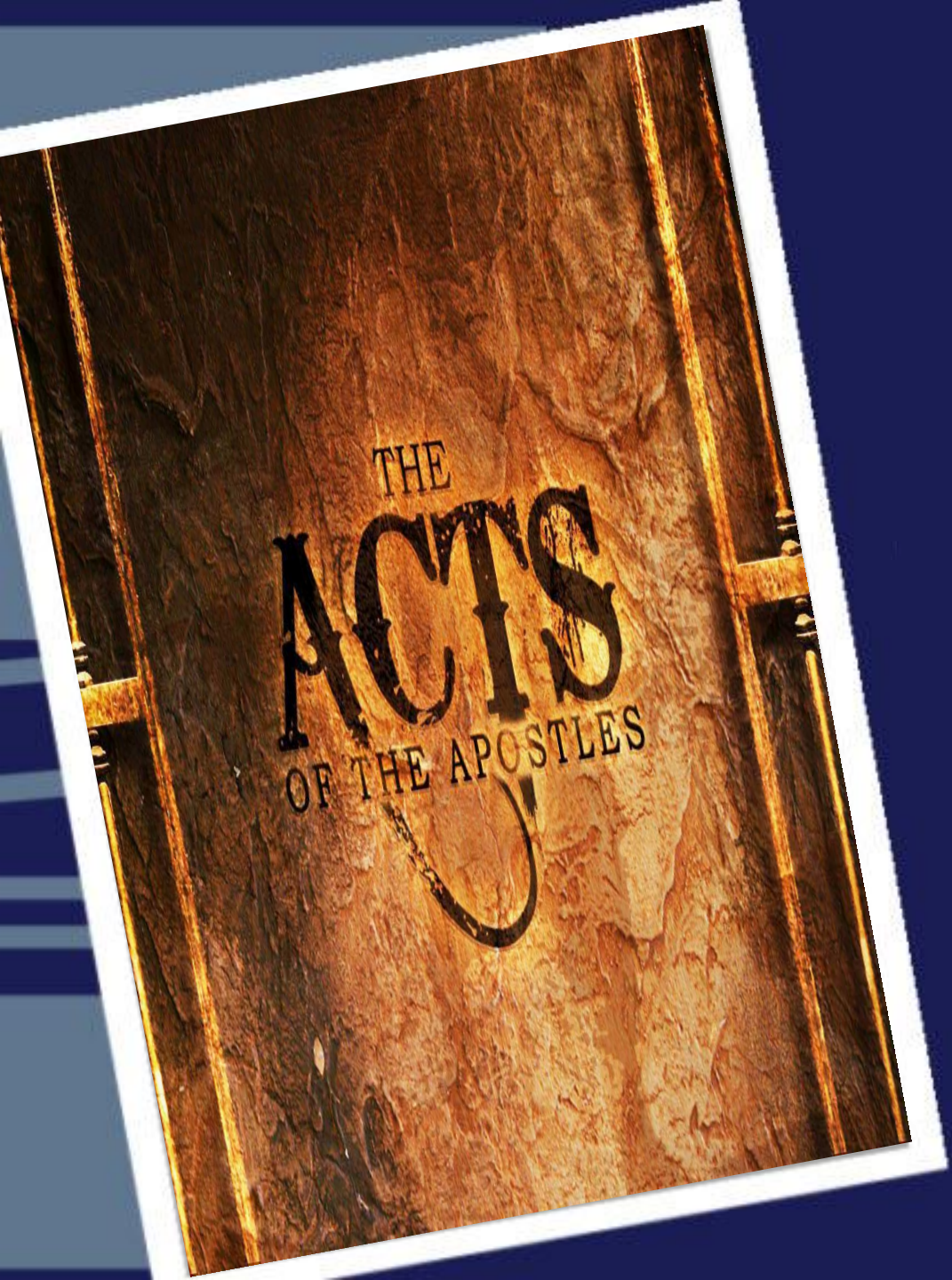
# “The Contrast of Two Men and Two Baptisms” Pt 2

(Saul vs Philip and Simon the Sorcerer vs Ethiopian Eunuch)

**Acts 8:9–25**

# Introduction: The history of Baptism

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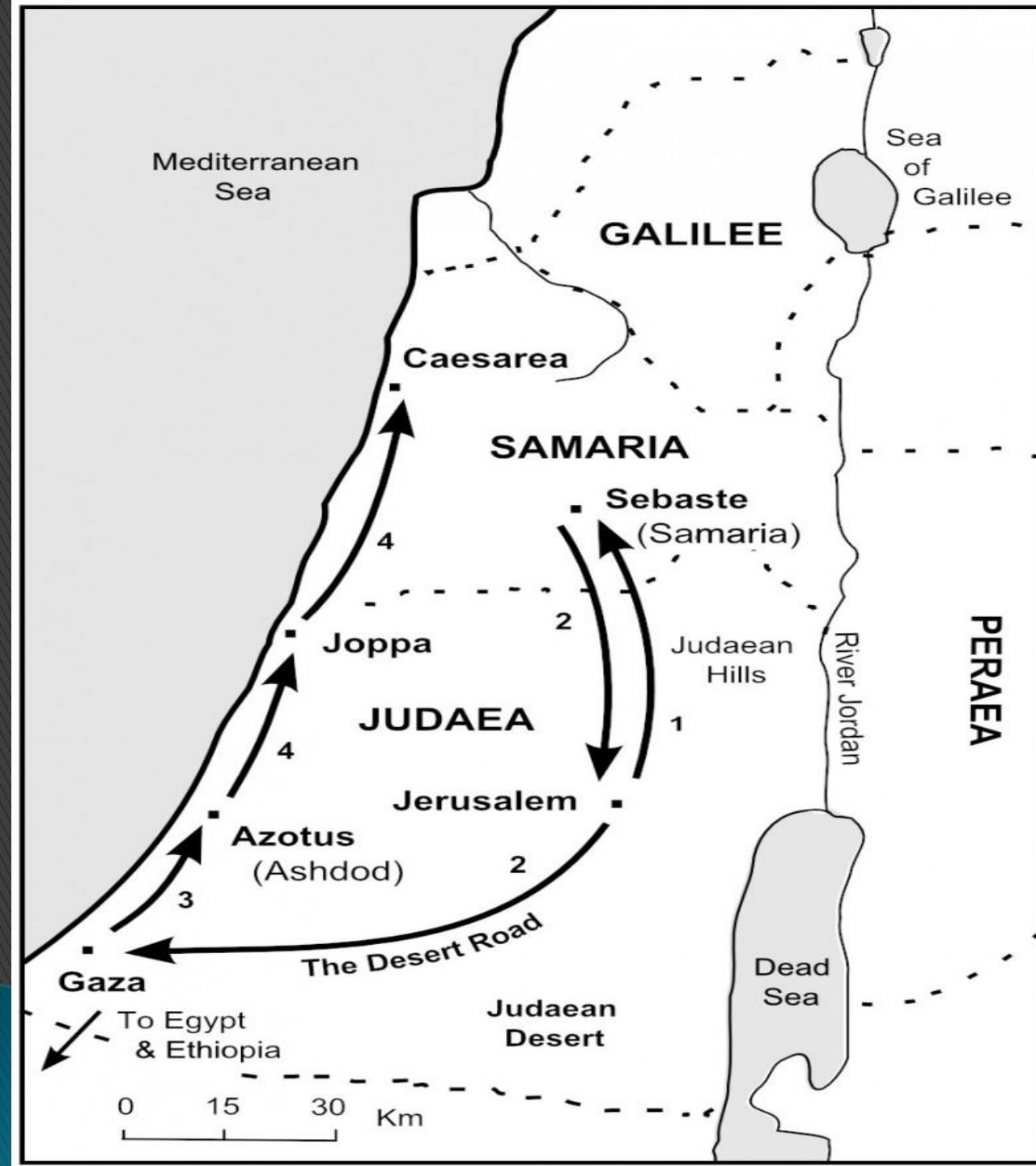


Review



# Acts 8 – Philip the Evangelist travels to proclaim Jesus

- ▶ Acts 21:8–9 <sup>8</sup> On the next day we left and came to Caesarea, and entering the house of Philip the evangelist, who was one of the seven, we stayed with him. <sup>9</sup> Now this man had four virgin daughters who were prophetesses.



# Acts 8

A Burial and a Baptism



## Ephraim in Samaria

*They were all scattered throughout the regions of Judea and Samaria (Acts 8:1).*

Believers who fled to the north could have found refuge in the village of Ephraim, a town where Jesus and his apostles once retreated ([John 11:54](#)). Pictured here is the modern village of Taybe, a possible location for Ephraim.



## Stephen's Burial

*Devout men buried Stephen (Acts 8:2).*

No information is given about Stephen's tomb, but this photo shows examples of typical burial caves in the first century. Bodies or bone boxes could be placed in the burial niches (known as *loculi* or *kokhim*). This tomb is located on the southern end of the [Mount of Olives](#), east of the [City of David](#).





## The Road to Gaza

*Rise and go toward the south to the road that goes down from Jerusalem to Gaza (Acts 8:26).*

This passage does not give us additional details about the road Philip took. However, the Roman road shown here, which travels down the Hushah (Husan) ridge from [Bethlehem](#) to the [Elah Valley](#), would probably have provided the most direct route.

## The Eunuch's Baptism

*And as they were going along the road, they came upon some water (Acts 8:36).*

Tradition identifies the spring of Haniyeh with the place where Philip baptized the Ethiopian eunuch. The spring is located on the southwest side of Jerusalem, that is, towards Gaza, but the Book of Acts does not provide specific information as to where along this route the meeting occurred.





## Philip in Azotus

*But Philip found himself at Azotus (Acts 8:40).*

Azotus was the first-century name of the city previously known as Ashdod. This view shows sand dunes south of the modern Israeli city of Ashdod. Depending on where Philip met the eunuch, the Spirit may have brought him to Azotus from a southward or an eastward direction.

# I. The Contrast between Saul (mighty in persecution) and Philip (mighty in evangelism and signs/miracles)

1. **(Acts 8:1–3)** Saul was a murderer/accomplice to murder before he was converted/born again to become the Apostle Paul

a. He approved of Stephen's death – he was in hearty agreement with those killing Steven (suneudokeo – lit. together think good of – together/sun, good/eu, dokeo/think (dokos – opinion)

b. He was a part of a great persecution against the church in Jerusalem.

c. He dragged men and women and put them in prison

- ▶ 1 Timothy 1:12–16
- ▶ Galatians 1:13–16
- ▶ Acts 9:1–2
- ▶ Acts 22:3–5
- ▶ Acts 26:4–12

God forgives and uses incredibly flawed, sinful, and undeserving people like Saul (and us) to accomplish His will

# I. The Contrast between Saul (mighty in persecution) and Philip (mighty in evangelism and signs/miracles)

## 2. (Acts 8:1–3) Great Persecution in Jerusalem broke out against Christians in the early church

- a. To show the extent – ALL were scattered (had to flee) throughout Judea and Samaria – except the Apostles (why were the Apostles not scattered?)
- b. Are we assured/guaranteed not to be persecuted like this in our time in our country?
- c. Is planning/prepping for tougher days ahead wrong or wise?
  - ▶ 1 Peter 4:12–19
  - ▶ 2 Timothy 3:12–4:5

# I. The Contrast between Saul (mighty in persecution) and Philip (mighty in evangelism and signs/miracles)

3. **(Acts 8:4–8)** Philip was an evangelist, who was scattered through the great persecution that started with Stephen (likely instigated by Saul) and hit Jerusalem. What do we know about Philip?

Smith Bible Dictionary says,

Philip the Evangelist is first mentioned in the account of the dispute between the Hebrew and Hellenistic disciples in Acts 6. He is one of the deacons appointed to superintend the daily distribution of food and alms, and so to remove all suspicion of partiality. The persecution of which Saul was the leader must have stopped the "daily ministrations" of the Church. The teachers who had been most prominent were compelled to take flight, and Philip was among them. It is noticeable that the city of Samaria, is the first scene of his activity. Acts 8. He is the precursor of St. Paul in his work, as Stephen had been in his teaching. The scene which brings Philip and Simon the sorcerer into contact with each other, ([Acts 8:9–13](#)) which the magician has to acknowledge a power over nature greater than his own, is interesting. This step is followed by another. On the road from Jerusalem to Gaza he meets the Ethiopian eunuch. ([Acts 8:26](#)) ff. The History that follows is interesting as one of the few records in the New Testament of the process of individual conversion. A brief sentence tells us that Philip continued his work as a preacher at Azotus (Ashdod) and among the other cities that had formerly belonged to the Philistines, and, following the coast-line, came to Caesarea. Then for a long period--not less than eighteen or nineteen years--we lose sight of him. The last glimpse of him in the New Testament is in the account of St. Paul's journey to Jerusalem. It is to his house as to one well known to them, that St. Paul and his companions turn for shelter. He has four daughters, who possess the gift of prophetic utterance and who apparently give themselves to the work of teaching instead of entering on the life of home. ([Acts 21:8,9](#)) He is visited by the prophets and elders of Jerusalem. One tradition places the scene of his death at Hierapolis in Phrygia. According to another, he died bishop of Tralles. The house in which he and his daughters had lived was pointed out to travellers in the time of Jerome.

# I. The Contrast between Saul (mighty in persecution) and Philip (mighty in evangelism and signs/miracles)

- a. Philip was likely one of the Devout men who buried Stephen – and mourned greatly/loudly for him. Philip the evangelist was not the Philip who was one of the 12 original disciples (Mt. 10:3, Mk. 3:18, Luke 6:14, John 1:43–46, 6:5–7, 12:21–22, 14:8–9, Acts 1:13), but was one of the prototype Deacons put in charge of the food distribution ministry (Acts 6:5) who proclaimed Christ in Samaria where Simon the sorcerer believed and was baptized (8:5–8), along the road from Jerusalem to Gaza where he explained the gospel to the Ethiopian Eunuch, 8:26–39, then in Azotus (modern day Ashdod) 8:40, and then the last time we here of Philip in the Bible is Acts 21:8 where he resides in Caesarea).
- b. Philip was one of the scattered men because of persecution who went about preaching the word (εὐαγγελίζω *euaggelizo*: to announce good news, and λόγος *logos*: a word – as embodying an idea, *a statement, a speech*)
- c. Philip was one of the faithful men who evangelized even though he was displaced – he went to Samaria and was “proclaiming Christ to them”
- ▶ κηρύσσω *kerusso*: to be a herald, proclaim
- [Friberg] κηρύσσω (1) denoting the official activity of a herald *announce, publicly proclaim* (RV 5.2); (2) *make known extensively, tell everywhere* (MK 5.20); (3) in a religious sense, denoting proclamation of a sacred message *proclaim, preach, publish* (MT 4.23); (4) as proclaiming the necessity of a course of action *preach* (MK 1.4)



## II. The Contrast between the baptism of Simon the Sorcerer and the Ethiopian Eunuch.

1. (Acts 8:6–8) The crowds in Samaria were with “one passion” hearing and receiving Philip’s Gospel (one accord – ὁμοθυμαδόν *homothumadon*: with one mind Acts 1:14; 2:46; 4:24; 5:12;; 8:6; 15:25; Romans 15:6)

- a. They gave careful attention (προσέχω *prosecho*: to hold to, turn to, attend to) to what Philip was saying/preaching.
- b. People were being saved/even freed from demonic possession (unclean spirits coming out with loud shouting)
- c. People were being healed (many paralyzed and lame were healed)
- d. People were rejoicing – much rejoicing in that city

## II. The Contrast between the baptism of Simon the Sorcerer and the Ethiopian Eunuch.

### 2. (Acts 8:9–11) Simon the Sorcerer

- a. He formerly practicing magic (*μαγεύω mageuo*: to practice magic – origin: *μάγος magos*: a Magian, i.e. an (Oriental) astrologer, by impl. a magician
- b. He astonished the people of Samaria
- c. He claimed to be someone great
- d. He likely quite enjoyed all the attention – the people of Samaria called him “the Great Power of God.”  
(vs. 11 says they were giving him attention and that he had astonished them with his magic arts for some time)

## II. The Contrast between the baptism of Simon the Sorcerer and the Ethiopian Eunuch.

3. (Acts 8:13–16) Reasons why Simon might have been genuinely saved
  - a. The Text says Simon *formerly* practiced the magic arts
  - b. The Text says Simon himself believed
  - c. The Text says Simon was baptized
  - d. The Text says after baptism Simon continued on with Philip
  - e. The Text says Simon (after confronted by Peter) seemingly contritely asks for the Apostles to pray for Him so that nothing they said would come upon him... that he would perish (die) along with his money.

## II. The Contrast between the baptism of Simon the Sorcerer & the Ethiopian Eunuch.

### 4. (Acts 8:18–24) Reasons why Simon might be a false convert:

- a. He is fascinated/preoccupied with power – He was amazed by the signs and miracles Philip was doing – his amazement does not seem to be out of awe/reverence/or worship but a selfish desire to be powerful and have the attention back that now the people were giving to Philip.
- b. He offers a bribe to gain power for himself – When he sees Peter and John bestowing the Holy Spirit by the laying on of their hands – he offers them money (tries to buy the power they have)
- c. His focus is on himself not God, the Holy Spirit, or People – “Give this authority to ME as well, so that everyone on whom I lay my hands may receive the Holy Spirit
- d. Peter strongly rebukes him saying – may your silver perish with you – perish in the sense of physical death or spiritual death?
- e. Peter strongly says you have no part of this – hopefully referring narrowly to the bestowing of the Holy Spirit, hopefully not broadly saying you have no part of Christ/Christianity.
- f. Peter strongly says your heart is not right before God – does he mean at that moment or generally that Simon is not saved/born again/right with God in a redeemed/restored/reconciled personal relationship.
- g. Peter strongly admonishes him to repent of this WICKEDNESS of yours and to pray to God that He would forgive this sinful intention (to buy the power of the Holy Spirit)
- h. Peter strongly ends his rebuke by saying “I see you are IN the gall of bitterness and the bondage of iniquity – certainly believers can struggle with bitterness and for a time appear to be in bondage to various sins – but here the term **σύνδεσμος** *sundesmos*: that which binds together, i.e. a bond AND **ἀδικία** *adikia*: injustice, unrighteousness

## II. The Contrast between the baptism of Simon the Sorcerer & the Ethiopian Eunuch.

### 4. (Acts 8:18–24) Reasons why Simon might be a false convert:

- ▶ a. The text never says he (Simon) received the Holy Spirit – and the indwelling Spirit is God’s mark that someone truly belongs to Him as His own possession.
- ▶ b.  $A+B=C$  (no fruits or change by the Spirit = no indwelling of the Holy Spirit = no indwelling Spirit and thus no salvation (no genuine repentance and faith in Jesus as Lord)
- ▶ Ephesians 1:13–14 <sup>13</sup>In Him, you also, after listening to the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation—having also believed, you were sealed in Him with the Holy Spirit of promise, <sup>14</sup>who is given as a pledge of our inheritance, unto the redemption of *God’s own* possession, to the praise of His glory.
- ▶ Titus 3:5–7 <sup>5</sup>He saved us, not by works which we did in righteousness, but according to His mercy, through the washing of regeneration and renewing by the Holy Spirit, <sup>6</sup>whom He poured out upon us richly through Jesus Christ our Savior, <sup>7</sup>so that having been justified by His grace, we would become heirs according to *the* hope of eternal life.
- ▶ Romans 8:9–17 <sup>9</sup>However, you are not in the flesh but in the Spirit, if indeed the Spirit of God dwells in you. But if anyone does not have the Spirit of Christ, he does not belong to Him. <sup>10</sup>But if Christ is in you, though the body is dead because of sin, yet the spirit is alive because of righteousness. <sup>11</sup>But if the Spirit of Him who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you, He who raised Christ Jesus from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies through His Spirit who dwells in you. <sup>12</sup>So then, brothers, we are under obligation, not to the flesh, to live according to the flesh— <sup>13</sup>for if you are living according to the flesh, you must die, but if by the Spirit you are putting to death the practices of the body, you will live. <sup>14</sup>For as many as are being led by the Spirit of God, these are sons of God. <sup>15</sup>For you have not received a spirit of slavery leading to fear again, but you have received *the* Spirit of adoption as sons by whom we cry out, “Abba! Father!” <sup>16</sup>The Spirit Himself testifies with our spirit that we are children of God, <sup>17</sup>and if children, also heirs, heirs of God and fellow heirs with Christ, if indeed we suffer with *Him* so that we may also be glorified with *Him*.

## II. The Contrast between the baptism of Simon the Sorcerer & the Ethiopian Eunuch.

### 4. (Acts 8:18–24) Reasons why Simon might be a false convert:

- ▶ a. The text indicates that Simon's heart is not right before God and the **NEW COVENANT** is all about regeneration, being born again with a new heart that loves, obeys, and follows/worships Jesus as Lord!
- ▶ Ezekiel 11:19–21 <sup>19</sup> And I will give them one heart and give within them a new spirit. And I will take the heart of stone out of their flesh and give them a heart of flesh, <sup>20</sup> that they may walk in My statutes and keep My judgments and do them. Then they will be My people, and I shall be their God. <sup>21</sup> But as for those whose hearts walk after their detestable things and abominations, I will give *what is due* for their way on their heads," declares Lord Yahweh.
- ▶ Ezekiel 36:23–29 "...the nations will know that I am Yahweh," declares Lord Yahweh, "when I prove Myself holy among you in their sight. <sup>24</sup> And I will take you from the nations, gather you from all the lands, and bring you into your own land. <sup>25</sup> Then I will sprinkle clean water on you, and you will be clean; I will cleanse you from all your uncleanness and from all your idols. <sup>26</sup> Moreover, I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit within you; and I will remove the heart of stone from your flesh and give you a heart of flesh. <sup>27</sup> I will put My Spirit within you and cause you to walk in My statutes, and you will be careful to do My judgments. <sup>28</sup> And you will inhabit the land that I gave to your fathers; so you will be My people, and I will be your God. <sup>29</sup> Moreover, I will save you from all your uncleanness;
- ▶ Jeremiah 31:31–34 <sup>31</sup> "Behold, days are coming," declares Yahweh, "when I will cut a new covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah, <sup>32</sup> not like the covenant which I cut with their fathers in the day I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt, My covenant which they broke, but I was a husband to them," declares Yahweh. <sup>33</sup> "But this is the covenant which I will cut with the house of Israel after those days," declares Yahweh: "I will put My law within them, and on their heart I will write it; and I will be their God, and they shall be My people. <sup>34</sup> And they will not teach again, each man his neighbor and each man his brother, saying, 'Know Yahweh,' for they will all know Me, from the least of them to the greatest of them," declares Yahweh, "for I will forgive their iniquity, and their sin I will remember no more."

## II. The Contrast between the baptism of Simon the Sorcerer & the Ethiopian Eunuch.

### 4. (Acts 8:18–24) Reasons why Simon might be a false convert:

- ▶ a. The text indicates that Simon is bound/enslaved to sin and Romans 6, 2 Cor 5, and 1 John are very clear that a Christian can't be a slave to sin (we can greatly struggle, we even grieve the Holy Spirit (Eph. 4:30) so we constantly are confessing our sins (1 John 1:9), but we can't be bound/enslaved to sin as before our conversion in habitual/continual pattern of sin (dead in sin/ dead spiritually – Eph. 2:1)
- ▶ **Romans 6** What shall we say then? Are we to continue in sin so that grace may increase? <sup>2</sup> May it never be! How shall we who died to sin still live in it? <sup>3</sup> Or do you not know that all of us who were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into His death? <sup>4</sup> Therefore we were buried with Him through baptism into death, so that as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, so we too might walk in newness of life. <sup>5</sup> For if we have become united with Him in the likeness of His death, certainly we shall also be *in the likeness* of His resurrection, <sup>6</sup> knowing this, that our old man was crucified with Him, in order that our body of sin might be done away with, so that we would **no longer be slaves to sin**; <sup>7</sup> for he who has died has been justified from sin.
- ▶ <sup>8</sup> Now if we died with Christ, we believe that we shall also live with Him, <sup>9</sup> knowing that Christ, having been raised from the dead, is never to die again; death no longer is master over Him. <sup>10</sup> For the death that He died, He died to sin once for all, but the life that He lives, He lives to God. <sup>11</sup> Even **so consider yourselves to be dead to sin, but alive to God in Christ Jesus.**
- ▶ <sup>12</sup> Therefore do not let sin reign in your mortal body so that you obey its lusts, <sup>13</sup> and do not go on presenting your members to sin *as* instruments of unrighteousness, but present yourselves to God as those alive from the dead, and your members *as* instruments of righteousness to God. <sup>14</sup> For **sin shall not be master over you**, for you are not under law but under grace.
- ▶ <sup>15</sup> What then? Shall we sin because we are not under law but under grace? May it never be! <sup>16</sup> Do you not know that when you go on presenting yourselves to someone *as* slaves for obedience, **you are slaves of the one whom you obey**, either of sin leading to death, or of obedience leading to righteousness? <sup>17</sup> But thanks be to God that *though you were slaves of sin, you obeyed from the heart that pattern of teaching to which you were given over*, <sup>18</sup> and **having been freed from sin, you became slaves of righteousness.**
- ▶ **1 John 1** God is Light, and in Him there is no darkness at all. <sup>6</sup> If we say that we have fellowship with Him and *yet* walk in the darkness, we lie and do not do the truth; <sup>7</sup> but if we walk in the Light as He Himself is in the Light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus His Son cleanses us from all sin. <sup>8</sup> If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves and the truth is not in us. <sup>9</sup> If we confess our sins, He is faithful and righteous to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.
- ▶ **1 John 2** <sup>3</sup> And by this **we know that we have come to know Him, if we keep His commandments.** <sup>4</sup> The one who says, "I have come to know Him," and does not keep His commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him; <sup>5</sup> but whoever keeps His word, truly in him the love of God has been perfected. By this **we know that we are in Him**: <sup>6</sup> **the one who says he abides in Him ought himself to walk in the same manner as He walked.** I am writing to you, young men, because you have overcome the evil one. I have written to you, children, because you have known the Father. <sup>14</sup> I have written to you, fathers, because you have known Him who has been from the beginning. I have written to you, young men, because you are strong, and the word of God abides in you, and you have overcome the evil one.
- ▶ <sup>15</sup> Do not love the world nor the things in the world. If *anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him.* <sup>16</sup> For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh and the lust of the eyes and the boastful pride of life, is not from the Father, but is from the world. <sup>17</sup> And the world is passing away, and *also* its lusts, but the one who does the will of God abides forever.
- ▶ **1 John 3** <sup>7</sup> Little children, let no one deceive you. The one who does righteousness is righteous, just as He is righteous. <sup>8</sup> The one who does sin is of the devil, because the devil sins from the beginning. **The Son of God was manifested for this purpose, to destroy the works of the devil.** <sup>9</sup> **Everyone who has been born of God does not sin, because His seed abides in him; and he cannot sin, because he has been born of God.** <sup>10</sup> By this the children of God and the children of the devil are manifested: everyone who does not do righteousness is not of God, as well as the one who does not love his brother.
- ▶ **1 John 4** <sup>15</sup> Whoever confesses that Jesus is the Son of God, **God abides in him, and he in God.** <sup>16</sup> And we have come to know and have believed the love which God has in us. God is love, and the one who abides in love **abides in God, and God abides in him.** <sup>17</sup> By this, love has been perfected with us, so that we may have confidence in the day of judgment, because as He is, so also are we in this world.
- ▶ **1 John 5** Everyone who believes that Jesus is the Christ has been born of God, and everyone who loves the One who gives *new* birth loves also the one who has been born of Him. <sup>2</sup> By this we know that we love the children of God, when **we love God and do His commandments.** <sup>3</sup> For this is the love of God, that we keep His commandments; and His commandments are not burdensome. <sup>4</sup> For everything that has been born of God overcomes the world; and this is the overcoming that has overcome the world—our faith.
- ▶ <sup>18</sup> We know that *no one who has been born of God sins*; but He who was begotten of God keeps him, and the evil one does not touch him. <sup>19</sup> We know that we are of God, and that the whole world lies in *the power of* the evil one. <sup>20</sup> And we know that the Son of God has come, and has given us understanding so that we may know Him who is true; and we are in Him who is true, in His Son Jesus Christ. This is the true God and eternal life.
- ▶ <sup>21</sup> Little children, guard yourselves from idols.
- ▶ **2 Corinthians 5** <sup>14</sup> For the love of Christ **controls us**, having concluded this, that one died for all, therefore all died. <sup>15</sup> And **He died for all, so that they who live would no longer live for themselves, but for Him** who died and rose again on their behalf.
- ▶ <sup>16</sup> Therefore from now on we recognize no one according to the flesh; even though we have known Christ according to the flesh, yet now we know Him *in this way* no longer. <sup>17</sup> Therefore **if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; the old things passed away; behold, new things have come.** <sup>18</sup> Now all *these* things are from God, who reconciled us to Himself through Christ and gave us the ministry of reconciliation, <sup>19</sup> namely, that God was in Christ reconciling the world to Himself, not counting their transgressions against them, and He has committed to us the word of reconciliation.
- ▶ <sup>20</sup> So then, we are ambassadors for Christ, as God is pleading through us. We beg you on behalf of Christ, be reconciled to God. <sup>21</sup> He made Him who knew no sin *to be* sin on our behalf, **so that we might become the righteousness of God in Him.**

# The Rest of the Story...

- ▶ John MacArthur in his book “The Truth War” (2007 Thomas Nelson) writes concerning Simon the Sorcerer... “Apostasy is someone who has received the light but not the life, the seed but not the fruit, the written Word but not the living Word, the truth but not a love for the truth... Acts 8:9-25 gives a classic biblical example of how apostasy can occur. There we meet Simon, a magician who, according to Luke, had made his reputation by astonishing the people of Samaria with “sorcery” (most likely by sleight of hand), claiming he was someone great and powerful. In other words, Simon was a professional con artist. According to Luke, the people of Samaria believed Simon’s tricks were wrought by “the great power of God (v.10).”
- ▶ But when the gospel came to Samaria, everything changed. Verses 12-13 say, “When the Samaritans believed Philip as he preached the things concerning the kingdom of God and the name of Jesus Christ, both men and women were baptized. Then Simon himself also believed, and when he was baptized he continued with Philip, and was amazed, seeing the miracles and signs which were done.”
- ▶ We can be certain that Philip’s message was a clear, complete, accurate, faithful presentation of the gospel of Jesus Christ. People – evidently lots of them – were being baptized. Philip was having a profound evangelistic impact among the Samaritans, and the gospel reverberated so deeply into the community that even Simon the magician “believed.”
- ▶ How authentic Simon’s faith at first *appeared* is seen in the fact that he was baptized and “continued with Philip” and was amazed at what he saw. Signs and wonders (truly great miracles, not tricks) were taking place, and Simon was genuinely astonished...he saw plainly and understood immediately that Philip was no cheap grifter. He could see right away that Philip’s message was truth and Simon’s initial response was all positive. At least on the superficial level “he believed.” That is, when he saw the truth and understood it, he didn’t reject it outright.
- ▶ But verses 18-19 tell us, “When Simon saw that through the laying of the apostle’s hands the Holy Spirit was given, he offered them money, saying “Give me this power also, that anyone on whom I lay hands may receive the Holy Spirit.” Apparently, when the apostles laid hands on the new believers in Samaria, there was some visible manifestation of the Holy Spirit’s coming to that person. In all likelihood, the Samaritan converts spoke in tongues miraculously (not with mere gibberish, but in known, recognizable languages) just as the first believers at Pentecost had. The outpouring of languages would have been a clear sign that the Samaritans were receiving the same Holy Spirit on the same terms as the original Jewish believers, lest there be a division in the church. When Simon witnessed such a wondrous sign, he desperately wanted the power to perform that miracle at will.

JOHN  
MACARTHUR

FIGHTING for CERTAINTY in an AGE of DECEPTION

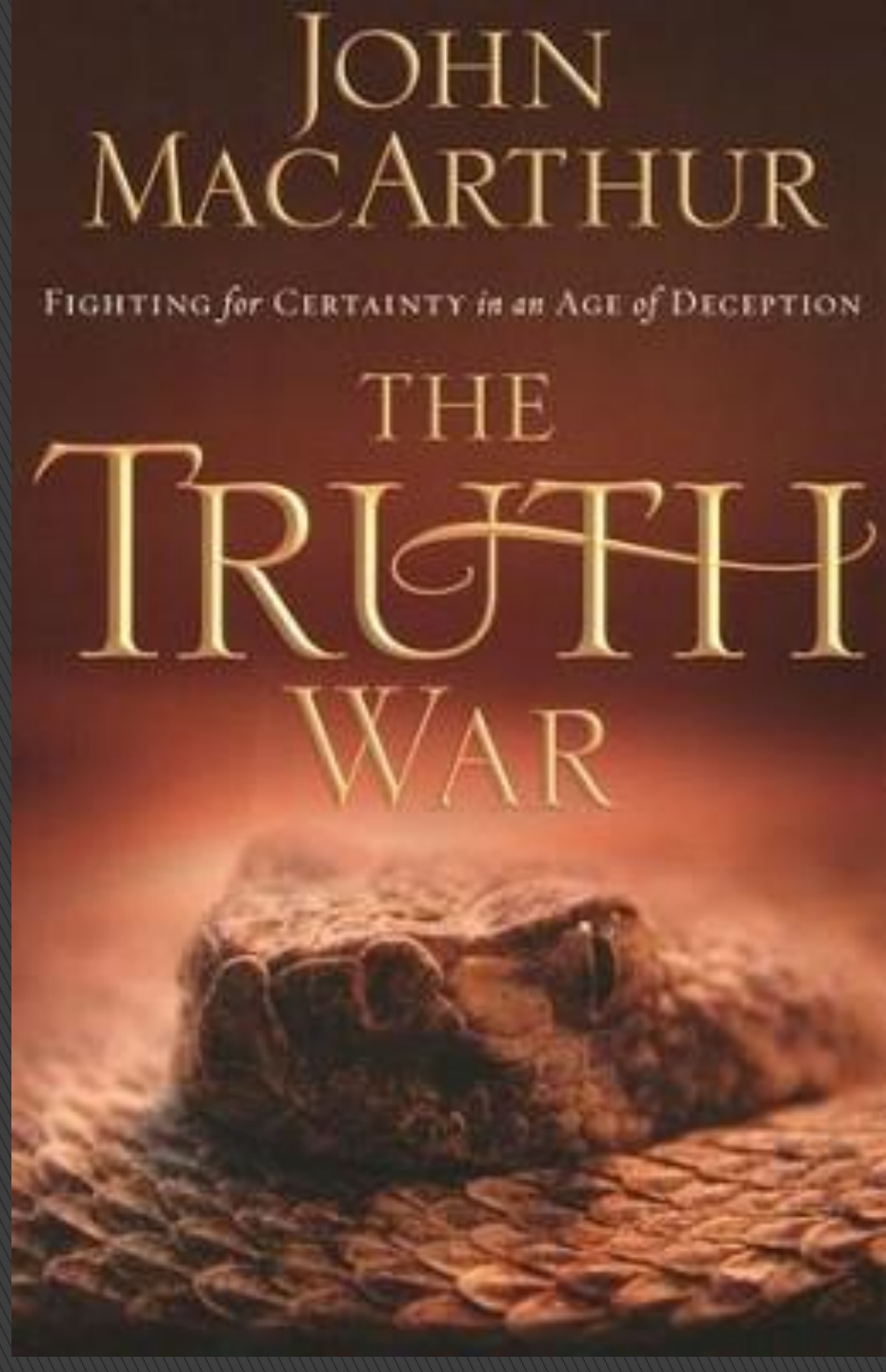
THE  
TRUTH  
WAR





# The Rest of the Story...

- ▶ Remember, Simon had believed, been baptized, continued with Philip, observed all the signs, and was constantly and positively amazed. By all outward appearances, his faith seemed authentic. But Peter said to him, “Your money perish with you, because you thought that the gift of God could be purchased with money!” (v.20). Peter clearly regarded Simon’s request as evidence that the magician was not a real believer at all. “You have neither part nor portion in this matter, for your heart is not right in the sight of God.” (v. 21). That, by the way, is known as the *direct* method of confronting an apostate. Notice that in Peter’s subsequent call for Simon’s repentance, the apostle speaks of forgiveness in almost hypothetical terms, suggesting that Simon’s sin was so serious that it might not even be forgivable: Repent therefore of this your wickedness, and pray to God if perhaps the thought of your heart may be forgiven you. For I see that you are poisoned by bitterness and bound by iniquity” (vv. 22-23).
- ▶ Simon pleaded for Peter to pray for him, “that none of the things which you have spoken may come upon me” (v.24). He was obviously shaken and terrified by Peter’s rebuke – for the moment, at least. Simon’s sense of dread at the prospect of his own apostasy does not seem to have lasted long. Apparently, he fell away from Christ forever that very day. He is never again mentioned by Luke (or anywhere else in the Biblical record). But Justin Martyr, an apologist of the early church who was himself a Samaritan and who lived barely a generation after Simon’s time, recorded some details about Simon, and there is no reason to doubt Justin’s account. He says Simon was from the Samaritan village of Gitta. Justin and Irenaeus (close contemporary of Justin’s and fellow apologist) both record that Simon began one of the very first quasi-Christian cults.
- ▶ According to Irenaeus, the magician borrowed biblical terminology and adapted them to various myths that he invented about himself – including the blasphemous claim that Simon himself was the true God incarnate. Simon is regarded by many early church historians as the founder of the first full-fledged gnostic sect. He is known in church history as Simon Magus, and from his name is derived the term *simony*, the practice of selling ecclesiastical offices for money. No one is more dangerous to the Christian faith than an aggressive apostate. The career of Simon gave early proof of that.



# SO WHAT?

## Application



### **2 Corinthians 13:5**

<sup>5</sup> Test yourselves *to see* if you are in the faith; examine yourselves! Or do you not recognize about yourselves that Jesus Christ is in you—unless indeed you fail the test?

### **2 Timothy 2:19**

<sup>19</sup> Nevertheless, the firm foundation of God stands, having this seal, “THE LORD KNOWS THOSE WHO ARE HIS,” and, “EVERYONE WHO NAMES THE NAME OF THE LORD is to DEPART FROM WICKEDNESS.”