

Acts 8:9-25
CBBC
10/26/2025

Big Idea—False doctrine comes from unrepentant sin.

Introduction—False doctrine has always been a threat to the church for centuries. False beliefs come in that untether us from the power and beauty of the Gospel. Jesus is redefined. Universalism. Prosperity gospel. We forget that the majority of false doctrine rises from within. Paul makes the warning in I Timothy 1, that teachers within the church have started teaching worthless things. False teaching arises from within most of the time.

I. Simeon's life—9-13. **We are saved out of sin, and we still live in a sinful world.**

Stephen has been killed. He is the first martyr, the first one killed for the sake of Christ.

The apostles stay, and some Christians, but everyone else runs for it. They go into the surrounding countryside in Judea, and they go into Samaria, which is somewhere no self-respecting Jew would go. There was a lot of hatred between Jews and Samaritans. Jews saw the Samaritans as ungodly half-breeds, and the Samaritans hated that the Jews thought they were better.

The believers move into Samaria and tell people why they are there. They proclaim Christ. They also have Philip, who is this guy? We don't think he is an apostle, but he comes proclaiming the truth of the Gospel while confirming it with signs and wonders. People are amazed. Samaria is an example of syncretism. They said, "We believe in the God of the Old Testament, but we believe you can also worship him up here in Bethel and at Dan. Originally, they had golden calves, and they taught that if one prayed or worshipped one of these gods, they would be worshipping the God of Israel. It combined the truth of the Law with the lie of convenience.

We are introduced to Simeon, and he had practiced magic in the city of Samaria. Some would say that he was a charlatan, performing sleight of hand to fool people into

believing in his supernatural powers. Others would say that he had supernatural abilities granted to him by demonic powers. I think it was a combination of both. He was probably skilled at sleight of hand, but I do think that there was a supernatural ability to affect reality that was granted to him by demonic powers. It impacted the people.

I want us to pay attention to his character and the people around him. He marketed himself as someone great. I am “Simeon” the great. I am the most wonderful guy. Look at what I can do. Simeon wanted to be known as powerful. It was important to him that people lauded him, and they did. In fact, down in verse 10, what do they say? “This guy has the power of God, who is called great.” They believed that his abilities came from God. They saw him as God’s representative.

But then comes the real thing. Philip comes to town. He proclaims the Gospel. He does miracles, which we saw earlier. He preaches the good news. They are baptized in response to that. Simeon believes. He becomes a Christian. He comes to Christ, and he sees the signs and miracles, and he is amazed by it all.

While we are no longer slaves to sin when we become believers, we still bring those sins with us when we become Christians. It is rare for God to produce a personality transplant. Simeon was an incredibly proud man. He took on his practice because of the power and recognition it gave him. He operated in a sin-cursed world that was glad to give him that recognition.

If we don’t start repenting and putting off those sins and running to Christ, we excuse those sins and sugarcoat them.

II. False beliefs rise from within.—14-17

Peter and John come. They had heard that the word of God had come to Samaria. This was a big deal. Jews did not like Samaritans. We know that even within the church, there was animosity due to ethnic backgrounds. Remember the complaint between local widows and Hellenistic widows? They want to make sure that it is the true Gospel going out and that these people are really following Christ, and that they are not coming up with something different. They also wanted them to receive the baptism of the Spirit as they had been baptized into Jesus.

This is a new thing. You have the Gospel, which is Jewish at its heart, moving into an area that is not so Jewish; it is somewhat warped, even. Jews don't trust Samaritans. Do you think that Jewish Christians would also not look at new Samaritan Christians with suspicion? Peter and John come, examine their profession, and then they lay hands on them so that they receive the Holy Spirit. The new believers start showing sign gifts as evidence that they have been changed by the Holy Spirit because of the Gospel.

You have Peter and John come down. They see that everything is good. In fact, it's great. You have all of these people coming to Christ. Peter and John laid hands on and confirmed that they are believers through the baptism of the Holy Spirit. Remember when Jesus told Peter that Peter was the rock on which the church would be based? Peter gives testimony that the Samaritans were indeed believers. This would shut down the doubting minds of Jewish Christians. They are Samaritans. They can't be saved. Oh, yes, Peter was there and confirmed it. Peter will do this again with Cornelius and the Gentile believers to prove that Gentiles can be Christians. We do not need apostles to lay hands on us to receive the Spirit; this happens as soon as we become Christians.

We don't need sign gifts. There was evidence that the Spirit was working. This was the beginning of the church and a very special time. Things needed to be proved to others.

Simeon saw this happening. He saw that the Spirit was given to new believers through the laying on of hands and that they were able to do sign gifts. He approaches the apostles. He offers them money so that they would give him the ability to lay hands on others and receive the Spirit. I don't think he wants the sign gifts as much as he wants the ability to give others sign gifts. Because giving sign gifts shows that you are in charge. That you are special. Everyone else already has tongues or whatever, so you wouldn't be special. But to give those gifts would be special. Remember that we are told how much he was lauded and lifted up. As a believer, he is no longer special. He didn't have his abilities anymore. Becoming a Christian got rid of all of that. He believed that salvation was by grace, but that you could purchase features of Christianity. Unrepentant sin leads to ungodly thinking.

20-24—**Unrepentant thinking leads to false teaching.**—Peter says, “May your silver perish with you.” May both you and your offer be destroyed. Why is Peter so angry? Because you thought you could buy this gift with money. Peter had been with Christ throughout all of his ministry. He saw the way that Jesus had not condemned wealth, but rather the power that wealth had over people. He talked about how the rich man was not charitable towards Lazarus. He showed how the rich young ruler would not follow Christ if it meant losing his wealth. He said it is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter heaven. What is the only coin that God deals with? Faith and repentance, and that's all. This guy came to Christ by faith and repentance, and then thinks that the blessings of following Christ can be purchased like

add-ons. Peter says, “You can’t have any of this because your heart is not right with God.” The only answer is to repent of this wickedness and pray that the desire of Simeon’s heart would be forgiven. His sin is incredibly serious. It is where we see God’s teachings warped by sin. Where does this come from? Simeon is in the gall of bitterness. It is the poison of bitterness. Where did the bitterness come from? It was the envy of what the apostles had that Simeon didn’t. He used to be the one whom people said came from God. He lost all of that, but now he sees others who give abilities to others. Maybe he can be seen as one who is from God again. He does not want this because he wants more of Christ; he wants this because he wants his old position back in the eyes of the people. He is bitter that they have something that he used to have. That led to ungodly thinking and twisting God’s truth. Simeon says, “Pray for me that this doesn’t happen. I don’t want this judgment.” I don’t know whether Simeon was really a believer or not. There are good arguments on both sides. I hope he repented. To continue in ungodly thinking is to turn to false doctrine.

Be aware of sin in your own life and repent of it. Hate it. Destroy it. Beg God to remove it. We will sugar coat it. We will hide it. We will also warp biblical teaching so that it will accommodate sin. (biblical example—Aaron and the golden calf)

Confront sin—we rescue. Jude 22-23.

Know and love God’s Word... its not enough to know it. We have to love it.