

## Acts Part 22 – Philip the Deacon/Missionary/Evangelist

A sermon series by Pastor Byron Chesney Wednesday, February, 17, 2016

Last week we looked at the first 4 verses of Acts chapter 8 and were introduced to Saul the Persecutor. We saw how zealous Saul was to rid the world of Christianity and how he had the authority to go and drag people from their homes that were suspected Christians.

Tonight, I would like for us to look at verses 5-13 and where we witness the preaching ministry of Philip. We are also going to be introduced to a man named Simon the Sorcerer.

### † Acts 8:5-13

5 Then Philip went down to the city of Samaria, and preached Christ unto them.

6 And the people with one accord gave heed unto those things which Philip spake, hearing and seeing the miracles which he did.

7 For unclean spirits, crying with loud voice, came out of many that were possessed with them: and many taken with palsies, and that were lame, were healed.

8 And there was great joy in that city.

9 But there was a certain man, called Simon, which beforetime in the same city used sorcery, and bewitched the people of Samaria, giving out that himself was some great one:

10 To whom they all gave heed, from the least to the greatest, saying, This man is the great power of God.

11 And to him they had regard, because that of long time he had bewitched them with sorceries.

12 But when they believed Philip preaching the things concerning the kingdom of God, and the name of Jesus Christ, they were baptized, both men and women.

13 Then Simon himself believed also: and when he was baptized, he continued with Philip, and wondered, beholding the miracles and signs which were done.

5 Then Philip went down to the city of Samaria, and preached Christ unto them.

We first read about Philip in Acts 6:5 as being one of the 7 chosen men to serve in the Church in a role similar to that of a deacon. **Acts 6:5-6:** And the saying pleased the whole multitude: and they chose Stephen, a man full of faith and of the Holy Ghost, and Philip, and Prochorus, and Nicanor, and Timon, and Parmenas, and Nicolas a proselyte of Antioch: 6 Whom they set before the apostles: and when they had prayed, they laid their hands on them.

I don't know if you ever noticed this or not but when the Bible gives us that list of the seven men it starts out with Stephen, the man that we read about first being a martyr for Christ. But the second man mentioned is Philip, the next man mentioned in Scriptures.

We see that he is also a chosen vessel to preach and later on he is referred to as an Evangelist. **Acts 21:8:** And the next day we that were of Paul's company departed, and came unto Caesarea: and we entered into the house of Philip the evangelist, which was one of the seven; and abode with him.

Because of the scattering of the Church, the Bible says that they scattered abroad went everywhere preaching the Word. Isn't it interesting that the first place mentioned is Samaria? If you remember just before Jesus ascended up to heaven he told the disciples what was going to happen after he left. He said in **Acts 1:8:** But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall

be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judaea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth.

Samaria was the first region beyond Judaea, so here again we see the Bible in perfect Scriptural harmony and order. May I say to you tonight, that God is a God of order.

**Samaria:** There was a lot of bad blood between the Samaritans and the Jews. Jesus at one point had even instructed his disciples not to even go into any city of the Samaritans: **Matthew 10:5** These twelve Jesus sent forth, and commanded them, saying, Go not into the way of the Gentiles, and into any city of the Samaritans enter ye not:

In the days of Jesus and the New Testament, the Samaritans had become a mixed race of people made up of both Israelites and pagans. They mainly worshiped Yahweh the same as the Jews, but their religion was not mainly Judaism. They only accepted the first five books of the Bible and they built their own temple on Mount Gerazim instead of on Mount Zion in Jerusalem.

**Where the hatred began** was back in the Old Testament, when after the Jews began rebuilding the Temple in Jerusalem after the captivity, the Samaritans offered to help them but the Jews rejected their offer and they become lifelong enemies.

### Ezra 4:1-5

1 Now when the adversaries of Judah and Benjamin heard that the children of the captivity builded the temple unto the LORD God of Israel;

2 Then they came to Zerubbabel, and to the chief of the fathers, and said unto them, Let us build with you: for we seek your God, as ye do; and we do sacrifice unto him since the days of Esarhaddon king of Assur, which brought us up hither.

3 But Zerubbabel, and Jeshua, and the rest of the chief of the fathers of Israel, said unto them, Ye have nothing to do with us to build an house unto our God; but we ourselves together will build unto the LORD God of Israel, as king Cyrus the king of Persia hath commanded us.

4 Then the people of the land weakened the hands of the people of Judah, and troubled them in building,

5 And hired counsellors against them, to frustrate their purpose, all the days of Cyrus king of Persia, even until the reign of Darius king of Persia.

The Samaritans had no interest in the religious aspects of the Temple and the Jews knew that. All the Samaritans wanted was to get a piece of the pie that King Cyrus was offering the Jews for the rebuilding of the Temple and the Jews knew that. You probably remember how they gave Nehemiah such a hard time while he was rebuilding the walls of the Temple:

**Nehemiah 6:1-2:** Now it came to pass, when Sanballat, and Tobiah, and Geshem the Arabian, and the rest of our enemies, heard that I had builded the wall, and that there was no breach left therein; (though at that time I had not set up the doors upon the gates;) 2 That Sanballat and Geshem sent unto me, saying, Come, let us meet together in some one of the villages in the plain of Ono. But they thought to do me mischief.

**Sanballat** was one of the commanders of the Samaritan army – so there has been a lot of bad blood between the Samaritans and the Jews for centuries. But, Jesus included them in His plan of Salvation and he sends Philip there to preach Christ unto them.

**Why Philip preached Christ unto them:** The Samaritans believed in a coming Messiah because when Jesus had a conversation with the Samaritan woman at the well they discussed it. **John 4:24-26: God is a Spirit: and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth. 25 The woman saith unto him, I know that Messias cometh, which is called Christ: when he is come, he will tell us all things. 26 Jesus saith unto her, I that speak unto thee am he.**

So, since the Samaritans were looking for a Messiah to come which is called Christ, then that is exactly what Philip preached unto them.

**6 And the people with one accord gave heed unto those things which Philip spake, hearing and seeing the miracles which he did. 7 For unclean spirits, crying with loud voice, came out of many that were possessed with them: and many taken with palsies, and that were lame, were healed. 8 And there was great joy in that city.**

We see that Philip has great success in Samaria preaching Christ. He also was enabled to perform the miracle of healing and many people were healed. They just had a great revival that broke out in Samaria. And there was great joy in that city.

**9 But there was a certain man, called Simon, which beforetime in the same city used sorcery, and bewitched the people of Samaria, giving out that himself was some great one: 10 To whom they all gave heed, from the least to the greatest, saying, This man is the great power of God. 11 And to him they had regard, because that of long time he had bewitched them with sorceries. 12 But when they believed Philip preaching the things concerning the kingdom of God, and the name of Jesus Christ, they were baptized, both men and women.**

Now we are introduced to Simon the Sorcerer. We are told that he spent his life delving in witchcraft and sorcery – black magic. The problem is that he had fooled the people into thinking that the power that he possessed came from God. But in reality his power came from Satan.

Up until Philip showed up, Simon was the biggest thing going in that town. He had everyone fooled into believing he had some power from God. He was able to pull off some kind of witchcraft and sorcery to fool people but Philip's power was very different and everyone knew it and Simon saw his crowd of followers not running after Philip. He couldn't let that happen.

I want you to understand tonight that this Simon was a worker for Satan both before he made a confession of faith and after he made a confession of faith. In essence he became the first Church Heretic. I will explain as we continue.

**13 Then Simon himself believed also: and when he was baptized, he continued with Philip, and wondered, beholding the miracles and signs which were done.**

Now, one thing I want you to notice here is that the Bible says “**Simon himself believed also.**” If you just take that statement at face value then you just automatically assume that Simon the Sorcerer, by faith, trusted Jesus Christ as his Savior. But, that is not what happened.

You see, Simon witnessed the healings and the unclean spirits coming out of those that were possessed. He believed that the miracles that were wrought by Philip were done through the power of Jesus. So he believed that Jesus had healing power and the power of miracles. That was enough for him to profess that he was one of his followers as well. He even went as far as to be baptized and he even

“**continued with Philip.**” Sounds like the perfect salvation story doesn't it? One time demon possessed magician trusts Jesus as Savior, gets baptized, and then continues a life of faith... the end. But that's not the end.

In the Book of **James 2:19: Thou believest that there is one God; thou doest well: the devils also believe, and tremble.**

You see, there is believing there is a God and there is a believing in God as your Savior. The devils even believe in God but they do not believe in him to be their Savior. Simon the Sorcerer has the type of belief that the devils have. The belief in God's existence, but that is not enough to save him.

What is scary about this, is that Simon has fooled everyone. He was fooling them before he made his profession and he is fooling them after he made his profession, and nobody, not even the Preacher could see through his deception. Philip heard his confession, baptized him, and even let him tag along during his ministry.

I heard a very foolish pastor one time say, “***I can look people in the eyes and tell whether or not they're saved.***” Hey, Philip the Evangelist couldn't tell that Simon was a phony what make you think you can tell if someone is saved or not?

That is why the Bible warns us about the tares and the wheat.

**Matthew 13:24-30**

**24 Another parable put he forth unto them, saying, The kingdom of heaven is likened unto a man which sowed good seed in his field:**

**25 But while men slept, his enemy came and sowed tares among the wheat, and went his way.**

**26 But when the blade was sprung up, and brought forth fruit, then appeared the tares also.**

**27 So the servants of the householder came and said unto him, Sir, didst not thou sow good seed in thy field? from whence then hath it tares?**

**28 He said unto them, An enemy hath done this. The servants said unto him, Wilt thou then that we go and gather them up?**

**29 But he said, Nay; lest while ye gather up the tares, ye root up also the wheat with them.**

**30 Let both grow together until the harvest: and in the time of harvest I will say to the reapers, Gather ye together first the tares, and bind them in bundles to burn them: but gather the wheat into my barn.**

Simon was a tare among the wheat of the early 1<sup>st</sup> Century Church. So far Satan has attempted every means to try and destroy the Church.

1. He used the religious leaders to try and destroy it from the outside.
2. He tried using Ananias and Sapphira to cause disruption through deception.
3. He tried using Saul of Tarsus to stomp it through intimidation and violence.
4. Here he tries using Simon the Magician, a tare among the wheat.

But, as you have noticed so far, all of Satan's ploys has only caused the Gospel to grow. While he meant it for bad, God turns it all around and uses it for the good.

We will discover in our next study that Simon was only pretending to be saved but he is found out!

† All Scripture from the Authorized King James Version