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NEW ZEALAND BIBLE CLASSES

PREACHING THE RISEN CHRIST

Speaker: Bro. Roger Lewis

Study #2: The work of Philip continues

Reading: Acts 8:14 to 25

Thank you, brother chairman, and my dear brethren and sisters in the Lord Jesus Christ, and my dear young people.

Well, Acts 8 then, you'll remember that last time, we looked at verses 4 to 13, and this beginning of the story of the truth being preached in Samaria; and we found, remember, that this is the second great stage of the advance of the truth, that was predicted by Christ in Acts 1 verse 8 when He said, that the apostles would be witnesses unto Him in Jerusalem, in all Judea, in Samaria and unto the uttermost part of the earth. So Acts 8 and verses 4 to 25, or possibly 5 to 25, becomes that section of the truth going to Samaria. So the first thing is, if you haven't got that marked in you should do that now, is just have that lightly penciled out from either verse 4 or 5 (just a little pencil in the margin) and after the end of verse 25 (a little pencil in the margin, that just says that this is the beginning and end of a section which is one of the great stages of the advance of the truth marked out in Acts 1 verse 8). The truth going to Samaria which is the second great section of the advance of the truth.

You'll remember that what we found interestingly enough in our study last time was that the man who becomes the champion of this work was Philip, and that the man Philip in this chapter is **not** Philip the apostle, but Philip the evangelist. Now we worked that out by means of a set of cross-references; what we did was we took Act 8 verse 5, then verse 26, then verse 40, then Acts 21 verse 8, and by comparing those references we found that the Philip of Acts 8 who went down to preach in Samaria, was not the apostle but was Philip the evangelist, one of the seven, not one of the twelve. What's interesting about that is that this man, Philip, became as we pointed out, a sort of bridging point between the truth to the Jewish people for whom Peter was the champion, and the truth to the Gentiles for whom the apostle Paul was the champion; and in this middle section of the truth going to Samaria, we have another man who's marked out for this particular work, who was Philip the evangelist and so he truly becomes the bridge between the two. He's the bridge between the truth amongst the Jews championed by Peter, and the truth amongst the Gentiles championed by Paul. What's interesting about that and if I lost some people through either saying too much

last time or saying too much too quickly, I apologize, and let's just go back over that briefly in case I did. What's interesting therefore, in this record, is just this, that on the two occasions that Philip the evangelist is found in the record, he is associated with Peter here in Acts 8, and he's associated with Paul in Acts 21, and those are the only two chapters in which Philip the evangelist is found to be working; of course, he's mentioned in Acts 6 when he's first chosen, but the two other chapters that refer to Philip have him first associated with Peter the champion of the truth to the Jews, Acts 8, because as we're going to read tonight, Peter is going to become supportive of the work of Philip, and then in Acts 21 when he turns up again, the apostle Paul comes and stays with him, and so Philip is brought together with these two great other men. Marvellous in such a way, and you'll find this over and over again, by the way, in the Acts of the apostles, that Luke is a marvellous writer in terms of balancing things off. 'Do you see that', he says, 'here's the great intermediate stage'. Of course, the other thing that made the truth going to the Samaritans the intermediate stage, is that the Samaritans themselves were considered to be a mixed race, part of Jewish blood and part of Gentile origin. Part Jewish in their customs, part not Jewish, so they truly were an intermediate step as far as the truth was concerned. It went first from the Jews, then to people considered to be, as it were, half Jews, half Gentiles, and finally the truth would go to the Gentiles themselves. There's a marvellous balance in the way that Luke writes up this particular story.

Well, we were introduced to a sequence of events last time, and we found that Philip went down in verse 5 to a city of Samaria which we believe, by the way, was probably the city of Shechem, where Jesus Himself had preached the truth, in John 4, and had prepared the way earlier; and 'he preached' says verse 5, and the definite article is there and, by the way, what's the definite article mean? it means that the word 'the' should be there; so 'he preached **the** Christ unto them'. So if you didn't know that, that's a good thing to add in as well, when the definite article is used, it's normally significant in the Greek text. In fact, I'm going to give you another example tonight, where the definite article is not used, and ask you to think about that for homework. So what it says in verse 5 literally is, 'Philip went down to a city of Samaria and preached **the Christ** to them'. Now if we're to ask what is '**the Christ**' that Philip preached? do you know what the answer would be? the answer is, the risen Christ, that's the Christ that Philip preached to them, because you see, Jesus had already been amongst these people and had spoken to them concerning the matters of the gospel in John 4. Now Philip goes back and no doubt speaks to them of the resurrected Christ, and as a result of that, preaches the things in verse 12 concerning the kingdom of God and the name of Jesus Christ. Of course, he spoke on ears that were ready to hear because the Samaritans believed in Messiah, they believed in the prophet like unto Moses of Deuteronomy 18. They had a personal name for Him, the Taheb, or the Restorer who would come, and Philip must have been able to show them that, that the Christ, the

risen Christ, was the very prophet spoken of in these Old Testament prophecies. So it was a great moment, a great moment in the history of the truth, as Philip commenced his preaching work in Samaria.

So we take up the record tonight then from verse 14, and there it says, 'Now when the apostles which were at Jerusalem heard that Samaria had received the word of God, they sent unto them Peter and John'. Now I think there is a couple of interesting things to notice about the 14th verse, you see, the apostles took this work seriously, and I think that the reason why they did what they did in verse 14, the reason why they sent Peter and John, is because, I think, they saw this as Acts 1 verse 8; they knew that Jesus had said that the truth would be witnessed to Samaria. Now the reports come back to Jerusalem that Philip has been down there and that the truth has been accepted by those of Samaria, and I'm sure that the apostles saw that as a fulfilment of the Lord's words in Acts 1 verse 8, and they realized that this therefore, was the next great stage. If it was, b&s, if it was, then they needed to confirm and endorse that that was the case; because there was Jewish prejudice against the truth going to anyone other than Jews. I think that the apostles said, 'Look, this is exactly what Christ said, we need to now step forward and to stand behind the work of Philip and to endorse that his work is in accordance with the will of God. So we'll send forth members of the apostles themselves to confirm that work!'

So they sent Peter and John! You know, it's funny how the bible always rings true! You know, at the time of the last supper, we're told in the gospel record of Luke, aren't we? (and we don't need to turn it up) and it's interesting in this respect, that it's the first time that this pairing occurs, we're told in Luke 22 verse 8, that in order to prepare for the Passover meal, Jesus sent Peter and John and said, 'you go and prepare the room'. That's the very first time that these two apostles are linked together, and I believe that the Lord did that on purpose; because Christ knew that these two men would become the leaders of the Jerusalem ecclesia in the early years after His death. The one who was the natural leader of men, Peter, and the other who was His dearest disciple in spiritual things, John, and Christ deliberately brought those two men together and He paired them off; and they're to be found again, aren't they? at the time of running to the empty tomb. They're to be found again, in Acts 3 in the matter of the lame man at the gate of the temple, and now they're to be found again here in Acts 8 verse 14, the apostles sent Peter and John to witness to the spreading of the truth now to Samaria.

Sent Peter and John! Well now, isn't that interesting! If you hold your hand in Acts 8, and come back to Luke 9 for a moment, there's been a change of heart here, hasn't there? because you see, in Luke 9, we're told this about the attitude of John on an earlier occasion as far as the Samaritans were concerned. It says in Luke 9 verse 51, 'It came to pass, when the time was come that He should be received up, He steadfastly

set his face to go to Jerusalem. He sent messengers before His face and they went and entered into a village of the Samaritans to make ready for Him. And they did not receive Him, because His face was as though He would go to Jerusalem. And when His disciples James and John saw this, they said, Lord, wilt Thou that we command fire to come down from heaven, and consume them, even as Elijah did? But He turned; and rebuked them, and said, Ye know not what manner of spirit ye are of. For the Son of man is not come to destroy men's lives, but to save them', and it's this man, it's this man John who once would have called down fire on the villages of Samaria in Luke 9, who now is sent forth in Acts 8 verse 14, in order to endorse the truth being given to Samaria and that they truly were accepted now as members of the great ecclesia of God'. There's been a change of spirit here, hasn't there? How appropriate that John be the apostle who was sent down with Peter, to witness to these things.

So Acts 8 verse 15 says, 'Who, when they were come down, they prayed for them that they might receive the Holy Spirit; (for as yet it was fallen upon none of them, only they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus)'. Now they prayed it says, 'they prayed for them that they might receive the Holy Spirit (for as yet it was fallen upon none of them, only they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus)'. Then verse 17, then laid they their hands on them and they received the Holy Spirit'. Now there are several interesting things therefore, about verses 15 to 17, because not only did the apostles go down in order to endorse the work of Philip here, but they, in addition to that, they sought the endorsement of God Himself upon that work. How did they seek the endorsement of God? **by praying that the Samaritans might receive the Holy Spirit**; so here's the first interesting thing; the Holy Spirit we're told in verse 17 came by the laying on of hands, but verse 15 says, it came by the prayers of the apostles. So the first thing we need to remember or learn is this, that in the finality of things the Holy Spirit was a grant from God. The apostles may have been able to impart the Holy Spirit by the laying on of hands, but only after beseeching the power of heaven to answer them. Therefore, the falling of the Spirit was first and foremost the endorsement of heaven itself; they first prayed that this might happen. And here's the next interesting thing, and we actually teach this as part of our teaching on the matter of the Holy Spirit; if it's true in verse 16 that not one single Samaritan had the Spirit, and yet Philip in verse 5, when he went down to Samaria, was a man who had the Spirit, who did wondrous miracles, verse 6, who healed the lame, verse 7, who performed miracles, verse 13, why couldn't Philip give the Samaritans the Spirit? and the answer is, because he was not an apostle, and therefore the apparent suggestion of this text in Acts 8, is that the apostles and the apostles only, could impart the Holy Spirit by the laying on of hands. It's evident that Philip couldn't, he was a good man, he was full of the Holy Spirit himself. We know that, by the way, but let's just check on that, Acts 6, let's just go back and confirm that; in Acts 6 verse 3 it says, 'Wherefore, brethren, look ye out among you seven men of honest report, full of the Holy Spirit'; verse 5, 'And the

saying pleased the whole multitude and they chose Stephen and Philip'. So Philip, the second on the list of 7, he's one of the men full of the Holy Spirit (verse 3). So Philip's a man of the Spirit, he heals according to the Spirit, he performs miracles according to the Spirit, but he wasn't able to pass on the Spirit. That's one of the reasons why we believe that the Spirit gifts as a power, died out in the first century ecclesia, one generation after the apostles died. Because after the apostles died, there was no one else who could transmit the power of the Spirit by the laying on of hands. So it would last as long as anyone who had received the Spirit from the apostles lived beyond them. Once they'd gone, the work of the Spirit was finished as far as the first century ecclesia was concerned, and that appears to be the evidence here of Acts 8. In fact, there are several other reasons for assuming that that's the case!

So they **prayed** therefore, says Acts 8 verse 15, 'they prayed that they might receive the Spirit', and then having prayed, 'they laid their hands on them', verse 17, 'and they received the Holy Spirit'. Now it's interesting that every major development in the spreading of the truth that's recorded in the Acts of the apostles, is accompanied by the granting of the Spirit and a proof that that granting has been given! Now I think this is one of these things that makes quite a good little table, so if I was going to put this anywhere, I probably would put this in a box at the bottom of your bible. But if you're not ready to put it in a box right now, maybe if we just work through the details together, you can take a note of this, but this would be a good little bible marking project, to mark in a box at the bottom of your bible. You might not want to mark it in Acts 8, by the way, but let's have a look at it.

First great stage

Acts 2, so let's just go back to Acts 2 and let's just take a note of these references, that show us these great epochs as it were, these great stages in the Acts of the apostles. In Acts 2, (now where are we in Acts 2? we're in Jerusalem) alright? so the first stage is **Jerusalem**, and who's the miracle performed amongst? and the answer is **it is performed amongst Jewish people**, and what's the miracle? Acts 2 verses 2 to 4, 'And suddenly there came a sound from heaven as of a rushing mighty wind, and it filled all the house where they were sitting. And there appeared unto them **cloven tongues like as a fire, and it sat upon each of them; and they were all filled with the Holy Spirit**, and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance'. So I want you to notice 2 things, on this occasion the Spirit fell **directly upon them**, it fell directly upon them and the evidence of the Spirit was **they began to speak with tongues**, verse 4. This is a miracle in Jerusalem amongst Jewish people; now there's the first great stage of the truth in this book.

Second great stage

Now here's the 2nd great stage; Acts 8 (well, we looked at this tonight) but let's just get our bearings again; so really it would be Acts 8 verses 15 to 17, so where now is this miracle. We are now in **Samaria**, and this time, does the Spirit fall directly? and the answer is 'no'; it says in verse 17, 'it came by the **laying on of hands**', they laid their hands on them and they received the Holy Spirit'. And who does this go to? it goes to **Samaritans**; so the first one is in Jerusalem to Jews by direct falling of the spirit upon them with the evidence of tongues. The second occasion here is in Samaria, to Samaritans by the laying on of hands, and I'm going to suggest that there were probably tongues as well, even though the record doesn't say so. I think there was probably an evidence of tongues in Acts 8, that proved that the Samaritans had received the Spirit. One of the reasons for that is verse 18, when Simon **saw** that through the laying on of the apostle's hands, the Holy Spirit was given'. You see, he obviously saw something happen to prove that they had the Spirit, and I think the thing he saw was the evidence of tongues.

Third great stage

Alright, here's **the 3rd great stage!** The third great stage is, well, it's Acts 10 verses 44 to 48. Now where are we this time? well, we're now in **Caesarea** and who's this miracle being performed upon? the answer is upon **Gentiles**. Verse 44 says, 'While Peter yet spake these words, **the Holy Spirit fell on all them which heard the Word**. And they of the circumcision which believed were astonished, as many as came with Peter, because that on the Gentiles also was poured out the gift of the Holy Spirit. For they heard them speak with tongues and magnify God. Then answered Peter, Can any man forbid water, that these should not be baptized, which have received the Holy Spirit as well as we? And he commanded them to be baptized in the name of the Lord'. So here's the third miracle and it's in Caesarea, it's to the Gentiles, it's the Holy Spirit by direct falling upon them, and **there is the evidence of tongues**.

Fourth great stage

Now there's another stage! Now we move abroad beyond the Land, beyond the limits of the Land, and we come to one of the other great geographic stepping stones as the truth marches to the **uttermost parts of the earth**. In Acts 19, and reading verses 1 to 7, we read this, and now we've come to the time of Paul; now where is this miracle? Well, this time the miracle is in **Ephesus** and it's to Gentiles again, but it's **to Gentiles beyond the land of promise**, to Gentiles in the lands of the Gentiles. 'It came to pass, verse 1, that while Apollos was at Corinth, Paul having passed through the upper coasts came to Ephesus; and finding certain disciples, He said unto them, Have ye received the Holy Spirit since ye believed? And they said unto him, We have not so

much as heard whether there be any Holy Spirit. And he said unto them, Unto what then were you baptized? and they said, unto John's baptism. Then said Paul, John verily baptized with the baptism of repentance, saying unto the people, that they should believe on him which should come after him, that is, on Christ Jesus. When they heard this, they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus. And when Paul had laid his hands upon them, the Holy Spirit came upon them; and **they spake with tongues and prophesied**'. Now do you see how remarkably similar these 4 passages are, as they mark the great stages of the truth being advanced to the uttermost parts of the earth? First the miracle in Jerusalem to the Jews, how does the Spirit come? by direct outpouring manifested with tongues. Then a miracle to the Samaritans in Samaria, and how does it come? by the laying on of hands; then a miracle to the Gentiles, how does it come in Acts 10 in Caesarea? by direct outpouring and a manifestation of tongues; then a miracle at Ephesus to Gentiles, how does it come? by the laying on of hands! Now again, you'll notice the way in which Luke therefore, builds up his story, a direct outpouring, a laying on of hands, a direct outpouring, the laying on of hands, the truth goes from Jerusalem, to Samaria, to Caesarea, to Ephesus, and from Jew, to half Jew, to Gentile in the process. Each of those stages is marked by the outpouring of the Spirit of God; and that outpouring of the Spirit of God, was **the divine approval that that stage of the work was endorsed by God Himself**.

Now by the way, where would you mark that in your bible? and the answer is a better place than Acts 8 with a box at the bottom, would perhaps be , Acts 2, because Acts 2 is the first of those 4 great epochs. So maybe if you're going to mark it somewhere, that would be a good box to put in Acts 2, to show how those stages of the truth being spread abroad and endorsed by the Spirit, in fact, are going to unfold from Acts 2 onwards. Now you see, that's a very helpful sort of thing to do for bible marking, there's nothing particularly difficult with it, but it's an excellent summary that picks up some thoughts there, that are, in fact, scattered through the record for us to notice there.

So coming back to Acts 8 then, we notice this then in verse 17, 'then laid they their hands on them and they received the Holy Spirit', so the apostles come down from Jerusalem, and they no doubt had spoken to the Samaritans with Philip there, and they prayed that this might be the case, that God Himself might endorse this great stage of the work, and He answers their prayer, so that in the laying on of hands, they received the Holy Spirit. Verse 18 says, 'And when Simon saw that through laying on of the apostle's hands (see that phrase, by the way, there it is) through the laying on of the apostle's hands (you see, he picked up who had the power to do this). He saw that Philip didn't do this, but the apostles had something that Philip didn't; they could transmit this power. When he saw that, well verse 18 says, 'he offered them money, Saying, verse 19, Give me also this power, that on whomsoever I lay hands, he may receive the Holy Spirit'. You see, when Simon was baptized in verse 13, you notice this,

you see, he was a 'wonder worker', wasn't he? he was a worker of magic, and it says in verse 13, that when he believed himself and was baptized, he continued with Philip and wondered beholding the miracles and signs that were done.'

You see, this man was a trickster, he knew that all his magic, was actually simply hocus-pocus! he knew that it was all smoke and mirrors, but he knew there was no accounting for the miracles that he'd seen from Philip. He knew that there was a genuine power there, but the question is, what was the motive of Simon's baptism? what were the reasons for Simon to come into the truth? and the answer appears to be even from verse 13, that he had a fascination with the power of the Spirit. Now when he saw the apostles come down, and he saw that they had the power to actually transmit that to other people, he had a marvellous opportunity! He said, 'look, a business could be built out of this! if I could get sufficient cash together to be able to buy some of that, but of course, when he says in verse 19, 'give me this power that on whomsoever I lay hands, he may receive the Holy Spirit', it probably sounded very pious and noble, it was what the spirit of Simon was that he would like to spread the truth abroad and grant the Spirit to others. Yes, but for a small cash consideration, that's what he had in mind.! He knew that his own initial investment of the money offered in verse 18, could be recouped many times over; he was already a worker of miracles, if he could do things that could astound an audience, and then offer to sell them that power, why! he could retire early!

Verse 20 says, 'But Peter said unto him, Thy money perish with thee, because thou hast thought that the gift of God could be purchased with money. You know, do you see the word 'perish' in verse 20, 'thy money perish', literally that word means 'thy money go to perdition with thee'. Now do you know where that word 'perdition' turns up again? Well, if you turn back to John 17, that's the word that Christ used in His prayer, 'thy money go to perdition with thee', says Peter. Now in John 17 and verse 12 in the prayer of Christ, He says, 'While I was with them in the world, I kept them in Thy name; those that Thou gavest Me I have kept and none of them is lost, except the son of perdition'. Now who was the son of perdition of John 17 and verse 12? but Judas, who had an eye for the commercial enterprise that could be gotten out of the truth! Judas, whose spirit of avarice and of covetousness lead him to dip his fingers in the bag; and Peter says to Simon in Acts 8, 'thy money go to perdition with thee' and uses the very word that Jesus uses to describe the grasping greed of Judas who fell, at least, for one of the reasons, for that same spirit that he had. No doubt Peter was making allusion to that! but he was making allusion to more than that, because you know, in verse 20 of Acts 8 when Peter says, 'thy money perish with thee', he's actually referring (it's in the margin, I believe this is a correct cross-reference), he's referring us to 2 Kings 5, now I want you to come and have a look at this, because you'll see what Peter's doing here.

In 2 Kings 5, we have the episode of Naaman the Syrian; and Naaman the Syrian, of course, is miraculously cured. Having been wondrously cured by dipping in the Jordan by the instruction of Elisha, we're told in the 15th verse of 2 Kings 5, 'That he came and stood before him and said, behold, I know there is no god in all the earth, but in Israel, now therefore, I pray thee, take a blessing of thy servant. But Elisha said, as Yahweh liveth before whom I stand, I will receive none'. So the spirit of Elisha was, **the gifts of the truth cannot be purchased for money!** and he refused the blessing of Naaman on that basis. But verse 20 says, 'Gehazi the servant of Elisha, the man of God, said, Behold, my master hath spared Naaman the Syrian in not receiving at his hand that which he brought; but as Yahweh liveth, I will run after him, and take somewhat of him.' So you see, Gehazi had that same grasping spirit of avarice whereby he sought to make profit from the things of the truth. The New Testament counterpart to the greed of Gehazi, is Simon the sorcerer in Acts 8, and I believe, the apostle Peter makes reference to that in the 20th verse, when he takes us back to that very chapter in 2 Kings 5, where another man sought to make merchandise of the gift of God and to actually profit from a monetary point of view out of the things of the truth. So he took from him, of course, 2 talents of silver and two bags and 2 changes of garments. Now we're told that Elisha said to Gehazi, he said, 'what do you think you did that for? and as a result of that he says to Gehazi, 'the leprosy of Naaman shall cleave unto thee and thy seed forever'; and Gehazi went out a smitten man, by the words of the prophet Elisha'. Now Peter stands up as the latter day Elisha, turns to Simon and says, 'thy money perish with thee', and I think as this record is about to unfold, that Simon was in mortal fear of being smitten with a disease by Peter, just as Elisha had smitten Gehazi in 2 Kings 5.

So Peter says, verse 21, 'Thou has neither part nor lot in this matter: for thy heart is not right in the sight of God'. You know that phrase 'thou has neither part nor lot in this matter', that's a Hebrew proverb, and you'll find it's in the margin in Deuteronomy 10 verse 9, uttered firstly concerning the Levites, that the Levites were to have no part nor inheritance in Israel, because their lot was God Almighty! So the Levites had no part or inheritance with Israel because of their commitment to the Father who would provide for them. But, Simon has no part or lot in the truth because of his own wickedness of heart, in fact, that word 'lot' (2819) is the same word translated in Colossians 1 verse 12, who have made us meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light' The inheritance, 'you don't have an inheritance amongst us' says Peter to Simon, he had forfeited his inheritance in the hope of the truth, because of the spirit that he had. 'For, verse 21, 'thy heart is not right in the sight of God', now you see that phrase, thy heart is not right in the sight of God, Acts 8 verse 21, that's another bible quotation. Hold your hand in Acts 8 and come back to Psalm 78. The apostle Peter is quoting, we believe, from Psalm 78, 'thy money perish with thee because thou hast thought that the gift of God may be purchased with money. Thou hast neither part nor lot in this matter, for thy

heart is not right in the sight of God'. Now in Psalm 78 we read these words in the 36th verse, 'Nevertheless they did flatter Him with their mouth and they lied upon Him with their tongues; for their heart was not right with Him, neither were they steadfast in His covenant'. So the spirit of Israel of old, whose heart was not right with their God, is echoed now in this man Simon in Acts 8. But do you notice the hope of the psalm? the psalm says in verse 38, 'But He, being full of compassion, forgave their iniquity, and destroyed them not'.

So you wonder, b&s, when you come back to Acts 8, in view of the fact that those whose heart was not right in the Psalm, who were nevertheless forgiven their iniquity by the compassion of God, you wonder whether in Acts 8 if Peter has that in mind, when he says in the 22 nd verse, 'Repent therefore, from this thy wickedness and pray God, **if perhaps**, if perhaps the thought of thine heart may be forgiven thee', and maybe the word 'perhaps' in verse 22, springs from the context of the psalm, that God might on this occasion also, show a spirit of compassion to forgive the iniquity in Simon. Maybe that was so, but it would be predicated, says Peter, it would be based upon one thing that had to happen first! Verse 22, Simon had to repent; if there was no repentance, there would be no forgiveness! So now the matter lies with this man! 'For I perceive, verse 23, I perceive thou art in the gall of bitterness and in the bond of iniquity'. You know, that both those phrases are from the Old Testament, 'the gall of bitterness' and 'the bond of iniquity' (both of them are in the margin, by the way, and they are correct); the gall of bitterness is Deuteronomy 29 verse 18, the bond of iniquity is Isaiah 58 verse 6. You see, when Peter says in verse 23, 'I perceive', I think he does that under the power of the Spirit, he was able to read the heart and mind of Simon at this time. He takes him back again to these Old Testament references to basically say, 'you Simon, are infected by the poison of covetousness and are chained to your own desire!'

Now, by the way, I think there is a tremendous lesson that comes out of this episode, as far as the words of Peter are concerned. You know, Peter opens his mouth and what comes out? Out comes scripture!

Verse 20, he refers to John 17

Verse 20, he refers to 2 Kings 5

Verse 21, he refers to Deuteronomy 10

Verse 21, he refers to Psalm 78

Verse 23, he refers to Deuteronomy 29

Verse 23, he refers to Isaiah 58

Everything that Peter said was basically a collection of scripture; out comes the thoughts of scripture, the words of scripture, the principles of scripture, that's how Peter reasoned, that's how Peter thought. Of course, when in verse 24, Simon answered him

in verse 24 and said, 'Pray ye to the Lord for me that none of these things which ye have spoken come upon me', you'll remember, of course, that only a few pages earlier in this book, that when Peter confronted Ananias and Sapphira it became evident that the apostles had the power to smite with death! Remember that? Let's go back! to Acts 5 where we're told this in verse 4, 'Peter said to Ananias, after it was sold, was it not in thine own power? why hast thou conceived this thing in thine heart? thou hast not lied unto men, but unto God. And Ananias hearing these words, fell down and gave up the spirit, and great fear came on all those that heard those things. Verse 9, Peter said to Sapphira, how is it that you've agreed together to tempt the Spirit of the Lord? Behold, the feet of them which have buried thine husband are at the door, and shall carry thee out. And she fell down straightway at his feet and yielded up the spirit'. The apostles had the power to smite with death, and in Acts 8, we don't know everything that Peter said, but it may well have been that Simon stood in mortal fear that he would be smitten by the apostles with those things that are referred to in these verses. So he speaks to them desperately in verse 24, he says, 'Pray to the Lord for me that none of these things which ye have spoken come upon me'.

But that's not what Peter had said, was it? What Peter had said in verse 22 was **that Simon needed to pray to God**, and what Peter had said in verse 22, was that **Simon had needed to repent and to make his own confession before God**; Simon turns around in verse 24 and says, 'No, you pray for me!' and do we detect any spirit of repentance in Simon in the 24th verse? no! we only detect in verse 24 a desperation from Simon to escape the consequences of his sin, but no indication of his repentant attitude, and instead of praying to God in the spirit of repentance, he asks the apostles to pray for him, that he might escape from the judgments to come. That's not what Peter asked and it's not what God wants! So we're not told in the record eventually, we're not told whether Simon did truly repent or not, whether he lost his life or not or whether he was truly converted. So one Simon confronted another Simon in this story - Simon Peter versus Simon the sorcerer.

Then in verse 25 it says, 'And they, when they had testified and preached the word of the Lord, returned to Jerusalem', but before they did so, and on the way back, 'they preached the gospel in many villages of the Samaritans'. Now you see, that verse becomes therefore, the close of this section, that the truth didn't just go to this one city where Philip had begun the preaching work in verse 5; by the time they got back to Jerusalem, they had spread the truth throughout the whole region of Samaria and preached the gospel in many villages, so much so (tape turned) 'shall come to pass this day, one tribe lacking in Israel'. Again, in Judges 21 verse 6, 'the children of Israel repented for Benjamin their brother and said, there is one tribe cut off from Israel this day; verse 15, 'and the people repented them for Benjamin because Yahweh had made a breach in the tribes of Israel'. **Yahweh had made a breach!** b&s,

God had made a breach? God hadn't done this, had He? It was their unrestrained rage that had made a breach upon one tribe so that it was lacking that day, not God!

Verse 31, it says there, 'Then had the ecclesias rest throughout all Judea and Galilee, and Samaria'. The ecclesias in Samaria, Acts chapter 9 verse 31, where did they come from? and the answer is, they came from the preaching work of Philip in Acts 8 verse 25, who accompanied the apostles back to Jerusalem, but as they did so, they spread the truth throughout the whole region of Samaria, and the words of Christ were fulfilled, 'ye shall be My witnesses unto Me throughout Samaria', so it was fulfilled in the 25th verse.

Now here's an interesting thought about Acts 8 verses 5 to 25. This is the story then, **of the truth going to Samaria**. But it's actually two stories woven together, and what I'm going to suggest that we do, by way of homework and discussion, in fact, what we're going to do is this, God willing, we're going to close with hymn and prayer, so we're no longer 'in ecclesia', we're 'in house' and we're then going to briefly have a discussion before supper, at which both sisters and brethren can feel free to contribute; and I'm just going to set a little task for you to think about! for the discussion at that point, because I think there's another very interesting little box that we should mark in about this section and it's this: you see, this is about the truth going to Samaria, but it's really about two stories, isn't it? It's about the truth going to Samaria and woven into the middle of that story, like another one mixed together, is the story of Simon the sorcerer, isn't it?

Have a look at this! Have a look at the verses that relate to each story:

The truth going to Samaria

verse 5, verse 6, verse 7, verse 8
verse 12,
verse 14, 15, 16, 17
verse 25

Simon the sorcerer

verse 9, verse 10, verse 11
verse 13
verse 18, 19, 20, 21, 22, 23, 24

And do you know what you'll find? that those two sets of verses are virtually matched side by side. The whole record is almost split down the middle in terms of the material that it presents. Now why those two stories? interwoven throughout this section? Well, God willing, we'll look at that at discussion time!

Well, before anyone asks a question, let's just see if we can answer that question we had at the end there, that in Acts 8 verses 4 to 25, we've got two stories woven together, almost the identical amount of material on each. Any thoughts on the

significance of that? Yes, I think it's the great scriptural theme - **the seed of the serpent vs. the seed of the woman** and it's always there at every stage of the development of the truth; the two ways, the two minds, the two seeds, are always there. So who's the seed of the woman in this story? yes, and perhaps as the champions, both Philip and Peter, and as the seed of the serpent, in terms of his mode of thinking is Simon the sorcerer and so that would be an interesting thing then, just to investigate, wouldn't it? not just here but in every stage of the development of the truth in the Acts. You might find, if we look closely, that the two seeds will always be seen in contrast to each other.

Now let's just have a look at that, for 2 minutes, of how that outworks. I want you to give me the key words in this section, beginning from verse 5 about the response of the Samaritans to the truth. In other words, this is the thinking of the Spirit, the response of those to the truth. Give me the key words! verse 6 - one accord, verse 6 - gave heed, verse 8 - great joy, verse 6 -hearing and seeing, and where else? verse 12 - they believed, they were baptized, aren't they words of response as well? verse 14 - received the Word. So here is a whole set of verbs that describe the response of the true seed of the woman.

Now give me the words that show the spirit of the seed of the serpent: verse 9 - used sorcery, bewitched (now I'm going to be tough on you and say all of them are no good, it's the response of the seed of the serpent to the things of the kingdom that we want, so that will bring us to verse 12 onwards) verse 13 - wondered beholding the miracles, verse 18 - saw, offered money; verse 19 - give me this power; verse 24 - you pray to the Lord for me so that I can avoid these disasters. What I'm saying is that I think you could easily build a little table here of the response of faith vs. the pseudo response of the flesh, the thinking of the Spirit vs. the thinking of the flesh, the two seeds are always there found in the bible record, in this particular case, they're woven together as two parallel stories entwined together in that marvellous work of the truth going to Samaria.

Presumably that's why they're there, that's why so much time is given to the account of Simon the sorcerer, to say that even in the midst of the truth going to other righteous parts there are always those that are moved by the thinking of the flesh.

Okay, any other questions before I sit down?

The cross reference to the 'gall of bitterness' ? Deuteronomy 29 verse 18.

Numbers 18 verse 20; if you begin with Numbers 18 verse 20, you'll find in the margin of verse 20 a whole set of cross references to that phrase to show that it's a Hebrew expression in the Old Testament.- 'hath no part nor inheritance'.

The question was, the apostle Paul was the apostle to the Gentiles, but he said to Timothy 'lay hands suddenly on no man', what does that mean? Can I just give you a quick answer - Acts 6, the laying on of hands was not specifically associated with the giving of the Holy Spirit, it may have been, but the context tells you what the laying on of hands is for! The laying on of hands had primarily to do with an appointment to a particular office or function. If you look at Acts 6 you can prove that, because in Acts 6 and verse 3 it said, 'Look out 7 men full of the Holy Spirit'. Now verse 6 says, 'When they choose the 7, they set them before the apostles and when they prayed, they laid their hands on them'. So why did the apostles lay hands on the 7 in Acts 6 verse 6? it can't have been to give them the Spirit because they already had it, verse 3, the laying on of hands was for the appointment of the 7 to the responsibilities that they had as being over the business of the tables. So the laying on of hands in this case, was the appointment to office, the appointment to responsibility here, confirmed by the apostles in that way. Now I believe that the reference that you're talking about in 1 Timothy 5 verse 22, the whole section is about elders in the ecclesia. Let the elders that rule well be counted worthy of honour', the 'labourer is worthy of the reward', 'against an elder receive not an accusation' and then he says, 'lay hands suddenly on no man', and I think that what he's talking about there, is about appointing people to positions of responsibility and leadership in the ecclesia, it ought not to be done suddenly or hastily, one ought to give due thought before those appointments are made, and you'll see that the whole context of that passage in Timothy is about the appointment of elders in ecclesial life. Nothing to do with the Holy Spirit on that particular occasion.

Any other questions? excellent! it must be supper!