



## *ACTS - Living in the Promises of Jesus*

### Acts 8

### Lesson 6

Acts 7 closes with the martyrdom of Stephen. Acts 8 begins with the persecution of the church, which resulted in the gospel being proclaimed throughout the world. The "salt" was now leaving the "Jerusalem saltshaker" to be spread over all Judea and Samaria, just as the Lord had commanded. This chapter highlights the lives of four men: a zealous persecutor (Saul), a faithful preacher (Philip), a man poisoned with bitterness (Simon the Sorcerer), and a concerned seeker (the Ethiopian Eunuch). Which of these men do you find yourself identifying with?

#### **OBSERVATION: Read Acts 8**

1. Read through this week's verses using both your Observation Worksheet (the last page of this homework) and another Bible translation or paraphrase. After reading through these verses, what would you say to someone if they asked you what they are about?

2. Key words help us to better understand the verses. We have listed below key words. Mark each one in a distinctive way (either with a symbol, highlighting, or some form of boxing, circling, or underlining). Mark each of the key words each time they are used in the text. Remember to mark any personal pronouns that refer to *God, Jesus, Holy Spirit*, or any people who have been designated as key words.

Key Words: *God, Jesus, Holy Spirit, Simon, Philip, the Ethiopian eunuch, baptized, believe(d), and evidences of the working of the Holy Spirit*

3. The contrasting word *but* was used four times in Acts 8. Mark each time the word was used. Choose one of those times and record what is being contrasted.
4. The term of conclusion, *therefore*, was used two times in Acts 8. Mark each time the word was used. Choose one of the times; record the conclusion and what it was based upon.

## THE SCATTERING: Read Acts 8:1-4

1. According to Acts 8:1, who was *consenting* to Stephen's death?
2. We read in verse 2 that *devout men carried Stephen to his burial, and made great lamentation over him*. What might have been some of your thoughts if you were one of these men?
  - a. When you read of a believer seemingly losing a battle with unbelievers, whether it be the media or a school board, what are your thoughts?
3. According to verse 3, what did *Saul* do?
  - a. Write a few words describing what you think *Saul* would have been like at this time.
  - b. After his conversion, *Saul* will be known as *Paul*. For you that are familiar with the converted Paul, what does it say to you that he *consented* to Stephen's death?
4. What event seemed to preclude the *persecution* of the church? verse 1
  - a. What was the result of this *scattering*? verses 1,4
    - 1.) Note that this *scattering* did not result in a denial of Christianity. Rather, what did they do?
      - a.) Why do you think they continued to *preach the word*, knowing the reaction that could follow?
        - (1.) How does this speak to you?
5. Compare Acts 1:8 with Acts 8:1,4 and share how this new level of persecution actually brought about God's will.
  - a. How might this cause you to look at opposition in your life?

## FIRST SAMARITAN BELIEVERS: Read Acts 8:5-17,25

1. *Then Philip went down to the city of Samaria.* What do we know about *Philip* from Acts 6:5?
  - a. What does it say to you about *Philip*, knowing that he served alongside Stephen and continued to *preach Christ*?
2. Luke described a visit to Samaria by Jesus and His disciples in Luke 9:52-54. What happened?
  - a. Challenge: Using other verses, record the relationship of the Jews and Samaritans.
3. According to Acts 8:7, what *miracles* did the Lord do through *Philip*?
  - a. Besides healing and deliverance, what was the reaction of the people? verses 6,8
    - 1.) In what ways has *heeding* the words about *Christ* brought *joy* to your life?
4. Acts 8:12 states that the *Samaritans believed Philip*. What specific two things did they *believe*?
  - a. What do you think is important to *believe* about *the kingdom of God* and *the name of Jesus Christ*?
  - b. What did they do after they *believed*?
5. Read Acts 8:14-17 and summarize what happened.
  - a. What can we learn about the *falling upon* of the Holy Spirit from these verses?
6. *So when they had testified and preached the word of the Lord, they returned to Jerusalem...* (Acts 8:25). What did they do on their journey back to Jerusalem?

- a. We all have things to do or obligations to meet. In what way are you challenged by this verse to use those times to look for opportunities to *preach the gospel*?

### **SIMON THE SORCERER: Read Acts 8:9-13; 18-24**

1. In the midst of the story of the work of God among the *Samaritans*, we are told of a man named *Simon*. Scan verses 9-13 and describe *Simon*.
  - a. How had the people reacted to *Simon's sorcery*?
  - b. *Simon* had also been a man of great powers. What do you think it was about *Philip* that caused the people to switch their loyalties to Jesus?
2. What did Simon offer the apostles? verse 18
  - a. What did he want to buy?
  - b. What did he want to do with the *power of the Holy Spirit*? verse 19
  - c. Using verse 20-23, summarize *Peter's* response.
    - 1.) Previous verses indicate that Simon believed and was baptized, yet what did Peter say about him in verse 23?
      - a.) How can a believer continue to be *bound* by the old ways?
3. Record *Simon's* response in verse 24.
  - a. What are some other things we can do when we realize we are acting or reacting much like we used to before we were saved?

## THE ETHIOPIAN EUNUCH: Read Acts 8:26-40

1. Acts 8:26 records a new assignment for *Philip*. What was it?
2. Traveling along the road, Philip met a man *sitting in his chariot*. What can we learn about this man from verses 27,28?
3. What did the *Holy Spirit* tell Philip to do?
  - a. Consider the word *overtake*. The King James Version used the phrase *join thyself to*. What do you think the Holy Spirit was telling *Philip* to do?
4. The *Ethiopian* was reading from Isaiah 53 and did not understand what he was reading. *Philip* explained to him that these statements were made about *Jesus*. Make a list of what these verses declare about *Jesus*. Acts 8:32,33

Challenge: Read the entire 53<sup>rd</sup> chapter of Isaiah and record additional revelations about Jesus.

5. Acts 8:36 declares that *they came to some water*. What did the *Ethiopian* want to do?
  - a. According to verse 37, what is the condition that must be met in order to be *baptized*?
  - b. What did the Ethiopian confess that proved he had met that condition?
6. What happened to Philip after the Ethiopian was *baptized*?
  - a. What was the reaction of the *Ethiopian* after he was *baptized*?
    - 1.) His *rejoicing* was probably based upon both his salvation and his *baptism*. Consider your own *baptism* experience and share how it affected you.

## REVIEW: Read Acts 8

1. How have you been challenged to be bolder in your witness for Christ and not consider the possible negative reaction of others?
2. What did you learn from the story of the *Samaritan* believers?
3. What are some ways that we can have the same kind of mindset as *Simon*?
4. Share one thought from the story of the *Ethiopian*.
5. In what ways have you been challenged or encouraged by this lesson?

*You search the Scriptures, for in them you think you have eternal life;  
and these are they which testify of Me.  
- John 5:39*

## Observation Worksheet

### Acts 8:1-40

<sup>1</sup> Now Saul was consenting to his death. At that time a great persecution arose against the church which was at Jerusalem; and they were all scattered throughout the regions of Judea and Samaria, except the apostles. <sup>2</sup> And devout men carried Stephen *to his burial*, and made great lamentation over him. <sup>3</sup> As for Saul, he made havoc of the church, entering every house, and dragging off men and women, committing *them* to prison. <sup>4</sup> Therefore those who were scattered went everywhere preaching the word. <sup>5</sup> Then Philip went down to the city of Samaria and preached Christ to them. <sup>6</sup> And the multitudes with one accord heeded the things spoken by Philip, hearing and seeing the miracles which he did. <sup>7</sup> For unclean spirits, crying with a loud voice, came out of many who were possessed; and many who were paralyzed and lame were healed. <sup>8</sup> And there was great joy in that city. <sup>9</sup> But there was a certain man called Simon, who previously practiced sorcery in the city and astonished the people of Samaria, claiming that he was someone great, <sup>10</sup> to whom they all gave heed, from the least to the greatest, saying, "This man is the great power of God." <sup>11</sup> And they heeded him because he had astonished them with his sorceries for a long time. <sup>12</sup> But when they believed Philip as he preached the things concerning the kingdom of God and the name of Jesus Christ, both men and women were baptized. <sup>13</sup> 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. <sup>14</sup> Now when the apostles who were at Jerusalem heard that Samaria had received the word of God, they sent Peter and John to them, <sup>15</sup> who, when they had come down, prayed for them that they might receive the Holy Spirit. <sup>16</sup> For as yet He had fallen upon none of them. They had only been baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus. <sup>17</sup> Then they laid hands on them, and they received the Holy Spirit. <sup>18</sup> And when Simon saw that through the laying on of the apostles' hands the Holy Spirit was given, he offered them money, <sup>19</sup> saying, "Give me this power also, that anyone on whom I lay hands may receive the Holy Spirit." <sup>20</sup> But Peter said to him, "Your money perish with you, because you thought that the gift of God could be purchased with money! <sup>21</sup> You have neither part nor portion in this matter, for your heart is not right in the sight of God. <sup>22</sup> Repent therefore of this your wickedness, and pray God if perhaps the thought of your heart may be forgiven you. <sup>23</sup> For I see that you are poisoned by bitterness and bound by iniquity." <sup>24</sup> Then Simon answered and said, "Pray to the Lord for me, that none of the things which you have spoken may come upon me." <sup>25</sup> So when they had testified and preached the word of the Lord, they returned to Jerusalem, preaching the gospel in many villages of the Samaritans. <sup>26</sup> Now an angel of the Lord spoke to Philip, saying, "Arise and go toward the south along the road which goes down from Jerusalem to Gaza." This is desert. <sup>27</sup> So he arose and went. And behold, a man of Ethiopia, a eunuch of great authority under Candace the queen of the Ethiopians, who had charge of all her treasury, and had come to Jerusalem to worship, <sup>28</sup> was returning. And sitting in his chariot, he was reading Isaiah the prophet. <sup>29</sup> Then the Spirit said to Philip, "Go near and overtake this chariot." <sup>30</sup> So Philip ran to him, and heard him reading the prophet Isaiah, and said, "Do you understand what you are reading?" <sup>31</sup> And he said, "How can I, unless someone guides me?" And he asked Philip to come up and sit with him. <sup>32</sup> The place in the Scripture which he read was this: "*He was led as a sheep to the slaughter; and as a lamb before its shearer is*

*silent, so He opened not His mouth.* <sup>33</sup> *In His humiliation His justice was taken away, and who will declare His generation? For His life is taken from the earth."* <sup>34</sup> So the eunuch answered Philip and said, "I ask you, of whom does the prophet say this, of himself or of some other man?" <sup>35</sup> Then Philip opened his mouth, and beginning at this Scripture, preached Jesus to him. <sup>36</sup> Now as they went down the road, they came to some water. And the eunuch said, "See, *here is* water. What hinders me from being baptized?" <sup>37</sup> Then Philip said, "If you believe with all your heart, you may." And he answered and said, "I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God." <sup>38</sup> So he commanded the chariot to stand still. And both Philip and the eunuch went down into the water, and he baptized him. <sup>39</sup> Now when they came up out of the water, the Spirit of the Lord caught Philip away, so that the eunuch saw him no more; and he went on his way rejoicing. <sup>40</sup> But Philip was found at Azotus. And passing through, he preached in all the cities till he came to Caesarea.