

Bible Study 26 – Acts 8:9-13 – Simon the magician

But there was a man named Simon, who had previously practiced magic in the city and amazed the people of Samaria, saying that he himself was somebody great. 10 They all paid attention to him, from the least to the greatest, saying, “This man is the power of God that is called Great.” 11 And they paid attention to him because for a long time he had amazed them with his magic. 12 But when they believed Philip as he preached good news about the kingdom of God and the name of Jesus Christ, they were baptized, both men and women. 13 Even Simon himself believed, and after being baptized he continued with Philip. And seeing signs and great miracles[b] performed, he was amazed.

1. Philip encounters Simon the magician: But there was a man named Simon, who had previously practiced magic in the city

a) Philip, one of the first deacons in the church, had fled Jerusalem under fierce persecution. He had made his way to Samaria and has entered her chief city with a view to proclaiming Jesus Christ as Lord and Saviour. He does so in obedience to the Great Commission given the church by the Lord Christ. And we can detect the hand of Providence in these developments.

b) Philip encounters Simon the magician who was famed in Samaria. The people there believed that God was working through Simon but no, he was a magician, it was the trick of the hand – it was all smoke and mirrors.

c) Philip must engage with Simon and the people to enlighten them about God, their need and how that is met in Jesus.

2. Simon had mesmerised and mystified the people of Samaria: But there was a man named Simon, who had previously practiced magic in the city and amazed the people of Samaria, saying that he himself was somebody great. They all paid attention to him, from the least to the greatest, saying, “This man is the power of God that is called Great.” 11 And they paid attention to him because for a long time he had amazed them with his magic.

a) Simon drew massive crowds: They all paid attention to him, from the least to the greatest...

b) Simon deceived the people, who uniformly declared: “This man is the power of God that is called Great.” And they paid attention to him because for a long time he had amazed them with his magic.

c) Simon depended on the gullibility of the people... amazed the people of Samaria

3. Simon had manufactured a reputation for himself: saying that he himself was somebody great.

- a) Simon centred attention on himself... he sought celebrity status... the contrast with Philip is stark...
- b) Simon coveted greatness and the prestige, power, and prosperity that accompanied it...
- c) Simon cared about none other than himself... He had no qualms about misleading the people and pretending to be a servant of God...

4. Simon marvelled at the gospel Philip proclaimed: Even Simon himself believed, and after being baptized he continued with Philip. And seeing signs and great miracles performed, he was amazed.

- a) Simon was confronted and challenged by the gospel Philip preached...
- b) Simon was called by the gospel Philip preached...
- c) Simon was convinced by the gospel Philip preached...

5. Simon made a confession of faith: Even Simon himself believed, and after being baptized he continued with Philip.

- a) Simon believed and made a profession of faith and repentance...
- b) Simon was baptised in obedience to Christ's institution...
- c) Simon belonged to the visible church and adhered to the ministry of word and sacrament... Like those that believed and were baptised in Jerusalem at Pentecost who devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching, the fellowship, the breaking of bread, and the prayers.

6. Simon was only one of many that believed the Good News: But when they believed Philip as he preached good news about the kingdom of God and the name of Jesus Christ, they were baptized, both men and women.

- a) Many responded positively to the good news Philip proclaimed...
- b) Many reacted positively to God's rule and redemption in Jesus Christ... the gospel is the power of God for salvation...
- c) Many were received into Christ's church via the sacrament of Baptism...

Questions

1. One door closes and another opens! What does Philip's approach to adversity teach us?
2. What does Philip's approach teach us about who needs to hear and heed the good news?
3. What is the good news/gospel the church is to proclaim?
4. How should people respond to Christ's gospel?

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