



## Rice Memorial MBC

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### **The Ministry of the Spirit**

Definitions in **bold** letters are from **Strong's** Exhaustive Concordance  
Other definitions are from **Webster's** Dictionary, 1828 Edition  
or Roget's Thesaurus – **October 4, 2015**

## **Acts 8:9-24**

**Introduction:** A second major division of Acts begins with Acts 8:5; but the first four verses continue to focus upon the church in Jerusalem. ...As Joseph Benson noted: The great majority of the dispersed Christians held no office in the church; yet **they preached** wherever they came, and this spread of the gospel without the Holy City, this planting the church in the regions beyond, was effected not by the apostles but by an entirely voluntary and unofficial agency.

With Acts 8:5, a new era in the church began. The tide of **evangelism** burst forth from the Jewish capital, bringing the good news of salvation in Christ to Judaea and Samaria. **Samaria** was especially stressed by **Luke**, as he was a **Gentile**; and the **Samaritans** were particularly **despised** by the **Jews**. Therefore, by this, he would SHOW how the gospel was intended for all peoples, even the Samaritans. The evangelist who successfully preached Christ in Samaria was **one** of the **Seven** (*deacons*), called **Philip** the **evangelist**. (Acts 21:8) It is with his exploits that this chapter is principally concerned.

(Source: Coffman Commentaries on the Old and New Testament [studylight.org/com/bcc/](http://studylight.org/com/bcc/))

**Acts 8:1**, And **Saul** was **consenting (pleased, have pleasure)** unto his **death**. And at that time there was a **great PERSECUTION** against the church which was at Jerusalem; and they were all **scattered** abroad throughout the regions of Judaea and Samaria, **except** the **apostles**.

**NOTE:** In time, of course, the apostles would also leave Jerusalem; but for the moment they considered it their DUTY to remain.

(Source: <http://www.studylight.org/commentaries/bcc/view.cgi?bk=ac&ch=8#1>)

**Acts 8:5-11**, Then **Philip** went down to the city of **Samaria**, and **preached Christ** unto them. And the people with one accord gave heed unto those things which Philip spake, hearing and seeing the **miracles** which he did. 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**. And there was **great JOY** in that city.

**NOTE:** Luke, a distinguished **physician** and **scientist**, here made a separation between physical maladies like palsy and lameness, and the conditions attributed to **unclean spirits**, the same being proof enough that the wisest men of that age recognized the phenomenon of **demon possession**. This subject was reviewed repeatedly in the four gospels, and it would be profitless to repeat them here.

(Source: Coffman Commentaries on the Old and New Testament [studylight.org/com/bcc/](http://studylight.org/com/bcc/))

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

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

**Sorcery defined 3096. mageuo pronounced mag-yoo'-o; to practice magic.**

MAGIC, 1. The art (system of rules serving to facilitate the performance of certain actions) or science (knowledge) of putting into action the power of spirits; or the science of producing wonderful effects by the aid of superhuman beings, or of departed spirits; ENCHANTMENT (act of producing certain wonderful effects by the invocation [asking] or aid of demons; the use of magic arts, SPELLS or CHARMS; INCANTATION).

Spell, a charm consisting of some words of occult (magical) power

Charm, 1. a word or combination of words sung or spoken in the practice of magic.

2. Anything worn for its supposed efficacy to the wearer in averting ill or securing good fortune. (1913 Webster's Dictionary)

Incantation, the act or process of using formulas sung or spoken, with occult ceremonies, for the purpose of raising spirits, producing enchantment, or affecting other magical results. (1913 Webster's Dictionary)

**Bewitched defined 1839, to put out of WITS, make astonished** (confounded [stunned] with fear, surprise, or admiration).

Wits, in the plural, SOUNDNESS of MIND; intellect not disordered; sound mind.

No man in his wits would venture on such an expedition. Have you lost your wits?

**NOTE: which beforetime in the same city used sorcery;** who before Philip came thither, practiced magic arts; wherefore he is commonly called "Simon Magus", for he was a magician, who had learned diabolical (devilish) arts, and used enchantments and divinations, as Balaam and the **magicians** of Egypt did: **and bewitched the people of Samaria;** or rather astonished them, with the strange feats he performed; which were so unheard of and unaccountable, that they were thrown into an ecstasy and rapture; and were as it were out of themselves, through wonder and admiration, at the amazing things that were done by him...

(Source: The New John Gill Exposition of the Entire Bible)

**Exodus 7:10-12** ...Aaron cast down his **rod** before Pharaoh, and before his servants, and it became a **serpent**. Then Pharaoh also called the **wise** men and the **sorcerers:** now the magicians of Egypt, they also **did** in like manner with their **ENCHANTMENTS**. For they cast down every man his rod, and they became serpents: but **Aaron's rod swallowed up their rods.**

**Thought 1.** God had this take place to show the superiority of his supernatural power to the false supernatural power of Satan. The magicians used power from Satan to imitate God a few more times until it came to dust becoming lice.

**Exodus 8:16-19** ...the Lord said unto Moses, Say unto Aaron, Stretch out thy **rod**, and smite the dust of the land, that it may become **lice** throughout all the land of Egypt. And they did so; for Aaron stretched out his hand with his rod, and smote the dust of the earth, and it became **lice** in man, and in beast; all the dust of the land became lice throughout all the land of Egypt. And the **magicians** did so with their **enchantments** to bring forth lice, but they **could not:** so there were lice upon man, and upon beast. Then the magicians said unto Pharaoh, This is the **finger** of God...

**Thought 2.** This phrase "the finger of God" represents his hand: power; or a small part of it. (Ezra 8:22; Ezekiel 8:1-4, 13:8-9, 25:13) Further proof of the reality of a human learning these arts that are inferior to the power of God exercised by the Holy Spirit as God sees fit is the fact that before Israel entered the promised land, God gave commandment forbidding these actions.

**Deuteronomy 18:9-12**, When thou art come into the **land** which the LORD thy God giveth thee, thou shalt not learn to do after the abominations of those nations. There shall not be found among you any one that maketh his son or his daughter to pass through the fire, or that useth **divination**, or an observer of times, or an enchanter, or a witch, Or a charmer, or a **consulter** with **familiar spirits**, or a wizard, or a necromancer. For all that do these things are an abomination unto the LORD: and because of these abominations the LORD thy God doth **drive them out** from before thee.

**Thought 3.** Familiar spirits are demons that are aware of things about people, and will tell the “worker” these things that some people think only them and God knows. And this AMAZES them because they don’t know Satan also knows.

**2 Kings 23:19-24**, And all the houses also of the high places that were in the cities of Samaria, which the kings of Israel had made to provoke the LORD to anger, **Josiah** took away, and did to them according to all the acts that he had done in Bethel. And he slew all the priests of the high places that were there upon the altars, and burned men's bones upon them, and returned to Jerusalem. Moreover the workers with **familiar spirits**, and the **wizards**, and the images, and the idols, and ALL the abominations that were spied in the land of Judah and in Jerusalem, did Josiah put away, that he might perform the words of the law which were written in the book that Hilkiyah the priest found in the house of the Lord.

**Thought 4.** As it is, even today, through lack of knowledge of the “TRUE supernatural”, some Christians take part in acts of “WHITE witchcraft”, which is witchcraft used in an effort to bring about something that is good. Some things they do include keeping the bible open on a particular scripture, using it as a CHARM. Taking salt baths, or any bath for a spiritual purpose. Even wearing things on the body, putting something in a certain place, in the house, the car, or wherever for a spiritual purpose. Sometimes the charm calls for burying something in the yard. All of this is not faith in Jesus, or God!

And when it comes to spells, Christians are told to speak this scripture or that for so many a times a day for success. When actually, all we have to do is believe God’s word, DO what he says, and he will bless us. James 1:22-25

Paul called the use of sorcery, or witchcraft, a work of the flesh. In other words, it pertains to Satan’s nature, which we HAD before we were born again of God’s Spirit.

**Galatians 5:19-21**, Now the works of the **flesh (human nature [nature from Satan])** are manifest, which are these; Adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness, Idolatry, **WITCHCRAFT**, hatred, variance, emulations, wrath, strife, seditions, heresies, Envyings, murders, drunkenness, revellings, and such like...

**Witchcraft defined 5331, pharmakeia pronounced far-mak-i'-ah, medication** (the act of medicating. *1913 Webs. [This is abuse of medicine]*) (“pharmacy”), i.e. (by extension) **MAGIC** (lit. or figuratively):-- **sorcery**.

**Thought 5.** Last of all, let’s see what the book of Revelation says about people using power from Satan to work miracles.

**Revelation 16:13-14**, And I saw three **unclean spirits** like **frogs** come out of the mouth of the dragon, and out of the mouth of the beast, and out of the mouth of the **false prophet**. For they are the **spirits of devils**, working **miracles**...

**Revelation 19:20**, And the **beast** was taken, and with him the **false prophet** that wrought **miracles** before him, with which he deceived them that had received the mark of the beast, and them that worshipped his image. These both were cast alive into a **lake of fire** burning with brimstone.

**Acts 8:12**, But when they **believed Philip preaching** the things concerning the kingdom of God, and the **name (authority)** of Jesus Christ, they were baptized, both men and women.

**Thought 1.** Since they believed on Jesus: trusting in him for spiritual well-being, they were now born again. Next, as Jesus commanded, they were baptized in water since they're saved.

**1 John 5:1**, Whosoever **BELIEVETH** that Jesus is the Christ is BORN of God...

**Matthew 28:18-19**, And Jesus came and spake unto them, saying, All **power (authority)** is given unto me in heaven and in earth. Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and the Son, and of the Holy Ghost...

**Acts 8:13**, Then Simon himself **BELIEVED** also: and when he was **baptized**, he continued with Philip, and wondered, beholding the miracles and signs which were done.

**NOTE:** There is absolutely nothing in this passage to suggest that Simon's "believing" was any different from that of others who became Christians, or that his "baptism" came about from impure motives. On the contrary, we have already seen that his conduct was utterly unlike that of **Elymas** (Acts 13:8), thus making it clear that he **proved** his **sincerity** by **accepting** Philip's preaching, an act that repudiated his sorceries, destroyed his long sustained influence over the city, and identified him absolutely with forces clearly opposed to all he had been and done in the past. This was no small thing that Simon did. The thesis that Simon merely joined a movement with a design of procuring the powers manifested by Philip is refuted by the fact that such an intention would have been defeated by what he did. Those who allege such a proposition make a fool out of Simon; and, whatever he was, he was no fool. **On this basis**, therefore, **we REJECT such notions as the following:**

(Simon) believed in the genuineness of Philip's miracles, but did not believe in God with a spiritual and saving faith. Simon himself also believed, but it was not a sincere belief in Jesus Christ. It would be true to say that he had the fides informis, faith not preceded by repentance and not perfected by love.

Such views, of course, are merely human opinion. It should be remembered that this narrative was **written**, not from the standpoint of Philip, but from that of **Luke**; and it is simply incredible that if Simon's **faith** and baptism had not been fully sufficient, Luke would have said so here. Luke was **INSPIRED**; and, when it is considered that inspiration says that Simon "**believed** and **was baptized**," there is no way to set aside **his conversion** as inadequate or hypocritical.

(Source: *Coffman Commentaries on the Old and New Testament* [studylight.org/com/bcc/](http://studylight.org/com/bcc/))

**Acts 8:14-16**, Now when the **apostles** which were at **Jerusalem** heard that **Samaria** had received the word of God, they sent unto them Peter and John: Who, when they were come down, **prayed** for them, that they might **RECEIVE** the Holy Ghost: (For as yet he was **fallen UPON NONE** of them: only they were baptized in the **name (authority)** of the Lord Jesus.)

**Receive defined 2983, be amazed** (astonish; this word implies astonishment arising from something extraordinary).

Receive, to be endowed with (BY). Ye shall receive **POWER** after that the Holy Spirit has come UPON you. Acts 1.).

**Thought 1.** This phrase "fallen UPON" takes us back to when Jesus was FILLED by the Holy Ghost. Afterwards, he went back home and read from Isaiah about it.

**Luke 4:17-18**, And when he had opened the book, he found the place where it was written, The **Spirit** of the Lord is **UPON me**, because he hath **anointed me** to preach the gospel to the poor; he hath sent me to heal the brokenhearted, to preach deliverance to the captives ...recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty...

**Thought 2.** In Acts 8:16, notice, HE, the Holy Ghost, was fallen upon NONE of them. The only that had taken place was they had been baptized in water. That verse is NOT saying, The only ones on whom he had fallen were those baptized in the name of the Lord.

Most people that believe this way believe that to baptize in the name of the Lord means you have to say the words, “In the name of Jesus.” They also believe that if a person is baptized, and the baptizer says, “In the name of the Father, and the Son, and of the Holy Ghost”, then that person was baptized incorrectly. The reason they have this belief is because they didn’t define the word “name” in the phrase, “In the name of.”

When we define the word name from the Greek, this is what we find. The Greek word is onoma pronounced *on'-om-ah*, (**authority**, character). If we choose the meaning that fits the context of the verse “authority” is the correct definition. Remember, Jesus said in Matthew 28:18 that “All power (authority) is given unto me, in heaven and in earth. Go ye therefore... What he meant was go in **his authority**. This is why he also said, “And these signs shall follow them that believe; In my name (authority) shall they cast out devils; they shall speak with new tongues; They shall take up serpents; and if they drink any deadly thing, it shall not hurt them; they shall lay hands on the sick, and they shall recover. Mark 16:17-18

Also, did you notice that they did not “TARRY” for the Holy Ghost, in order to be filled? The word “tarry” is defined “WAIT.” Now, that the Holy Ghost is here, no one needs to “tarry”, or wait for him. He came on the day of Pentecost according to acts 2. So now, we just need to have FAITH to be filled.

**Acts 8:17**, Then **laid** they their **hands** on them, and they **received (be amazed [astonish ; endowed with (BY)])** the Holy Ghost.

**Thought 1.** In Acts 10, Cornelius, and those with him, were filled while Peter preached.

**Acts 10:42-48**, And he commanded us to **preach** unto the people, and to testify that it is he which was ordained of God to be the Judge of quick and dead. To him give all the prophets witness, that through his **name (authority)** whosoever believeth in him shall receive remission of sins. While Peter yet spake these words, the Holy Ghost 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 Ghost. 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 (obtain, be amazed; endowed with (BY))** the Holy Ghost as well as we? And he commanded them to be **baptized** in the name of the Lord.

**Thought 2.** They were baptized because they believed on Jesus and therefore had been baptized by the Holy Spirit who was now IN their spirit, meaning they were born again. Next, a split second later they were filled: endowed BY the Holy Spirit with POWER to work. And we know this is true because they spoke in tongues, which is proof of being FILLED by the Holy Spirit.

Now, some people are filled soon after rebirth, others are filled later, as in Acts 8, and with Paul. Acts 9:17 Still others, like me, are filled even years later. And then there’re other Christians, who through lack of faith, don’t get filled at all. This means they don’t have the power to do certain works and aren’t able to speak in tongues, meaning they can’t talk to God in this manner and be built up in faith as they do so.

**1 Corinthians 14:2-4**, For he that speaketh in an *unknown tongue* speaketh not unto men, but **unto God**: for no man understandeth *him*; howbeit in the **spirit** he speaketh mysteries. But he that prophesieth speaketh unto men to edification, and exhortation, and comfort. He that **speaketh** in an **unknown tongue** **edifieth (builds up) himself**; but he that prophesieth EDIFIETH the church.

**1 Corinthians 14:15**, What is it then? I will **pray** with the **spirit**, and I will pray with the understanding also: I will **sing** with the **spirit**, and I will sing with the understanding also.

**Jude 1:20**, But ye, beloved, **building up** yourselves on your most holy **faith**, praying in the Holy Ghost...

**Acts 8:18-19**, And when **Simon** saw that through laying on of the apostles' hands the Holy Ghost was **given (minister)**, he offered them money, Saying, Give me also **this power**, that on whomsoever I lay hands, he may **receive (be amazed)**; be endowed with (BY) the Holy Ghost.

**NOTE:** Regarding Simon's sinful proposal here, Harrison said that "It appears that Simon was really converted, but that the **habits** of the old life had not been broken." **And when he saw ...** The time indicated by this clause was not prior to or concurrent with Simon's conversion, but afterward. The supposition that Simon became a Christian hypocritically with the intent of adding to his own powers such abilities as Philip had demonstrated is refuted by this text. It was at some indefinite, and perhaps even considerable, time after his conversion that Simon was tempted and fell into the sin mentioned here.

(Source: Coffman Commentaries on the Old and New Testament [studylight.org/com/bcc/](http://studylight.org/com/bcc/))

**Thought 1.** It's obvious that his mind had NOT yet been renewed to discern God's will.

**Romans 12:2** ...be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the **renewing** of your MIND, that ye may **prove (discern** [to see or understand]). what is that good, and acceptable, and PERFECT, will of God.

**Acts 8:20**, But **Peter** said unto him, Thy money perish with thee, because thou hast **thought** that the GIFT of God may be purchased with money.

**Thought 1.** Simon wasn't able to discern between good and evil thoughts.

**NOTE:** The difference between what Peter said in this passage and what men affirm he meant is astounding. Benson, for example, interpreted Peter's meaning here thus:

His offering money for a spiritual gift is incontestable evidence that he was yet under the power of a worldly and carnal spirit and that he was yet a mere natural man, who received not the things of the Spirit of God.

There is, of course, an ocean of difference between saying that a man's heart is **not** right (present tense), and the declaration that it had **never BEEN RIGHT**. That is precisely the difference between what the word of God says of Simon, and what men say concerning him.

**Beware of believing men rather than believing the Lord.**

(Source: Coffman Commentaries on the Old and New Testament [studylight.org/com/bcc/](http://studylight.org/com/bcc/))

**Acts 8:21-23**, Thou hast neither part nor lot in this matter: for thy **heart** is not right in the sight of God. **Repent** therefore of this **thy wickedness**, and pray God, if perhaps the thought of thine heart may be forgiven thee. For I perceive that thou art in the gall of **bitterness**, and in the **bond** of iniquity.

**NOTE:** The sin for which Simon required forgiveness was not that of impure motivation of his baptism, nor of any insufficiency of FAITH in his conversion, but the **specific wrong** of **thinking** to buy the gift of God with money. Therefore, the apostle did not command Simon to repent of his sins (plural), but to repent of the **specific sin** in evidence, "this thy wickedness." If this had not been the case, Peter's command to Simon would have been different.

(Source: Coffman Commentaries on the Old and New Testament [studylight.org/com/bcc/](http://studylight.org/com/bcc/))

**Acts 8:24**, Then answered **Simon**, and said, **Pray ye to the Lord for me**, that none of these things which ye have spoken come upon me.