



THE
ACTS
OF THE APOSTLES

The title is set against a background of intense, orange and yellow flames. A large, dark cross is positioned behind the word 'ACTS', with its shadow cast onto the banner below. The banner itself is a light-colored, rectangular shape with a decorative border, partially obscured by the fire. The overall atmosphere is one of divine revelation and historical drama.

Acts 8:9-25 - Simon the Sorcerer

⁹ Now for some time a man named Simon had practiced sorcery in the city and amazed all the people of Samaria. He boasted that he was someone great, ¹⁰ and all the people, both high and low, gave him their attention and exclaimed, “This man is rightly called the Great Power of God.” ¹¹ They followed him because he had amazed them for a long time with his sorcery. ¹² But when they believed Philip as he proclaimed the good news of the kingdom of God and the name of Jesus Christ, they were baptized, both men and women. ¹³ Simon himself believed and was baptized. And he followed Philip everywhere, astonished by the great signs and miracles he saw. ¹⁴ When the apostles in Jerusalem heard that Samaria had accepted the word of God, they sent Peter and John to Samaria. ¹⁵ When they arrived, they prayed for the new believers there that they might receive the Holy Spirit, ¹⁶ because the Holy Spirit had not yet come on any of them; they had simply been baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus. ¹⁷ Then Peter and John placed their hands on them, and they received the Holy Spirit. ¹⁸ When Simon saw that the Spirit was given at the laying on of the apostles’ hands, he offered them money ¹⁹ and said, “Give me also this ability so that everyone on whom I lay my hands may receive the Holy Spirit.” ²⁰ Peter answered: “May your money perish with you, because you thought you could buy the gift of God with money! ²¹ You have no part or share in this ministry, because your heart is not right before God. ²² Repent of this wickedness and pray to the Lord in the hope that he may forgive you for having such a thought in your heart. ²³ For I see that you are full of bitterness and captive to sin.” ²⁴ Then Simon answered, “Pray to the Lord for me so that nothing you have said may happen to me.” ²⁵ After they had further proclaimed the word of the Lord and testified about Jesus, Peter and John returned to Jerusalem, preaching the gospel in many Samaritan villages.

❖ What is meant by “receive the Holy Spirit” (**Acts 8:15 & 19**)?

<https://www.bibleref.com/Acts/8/Acts-8-15.html>

<https://www.bibleref.com/Acts/8/Acts-8-19.html>

❖ What could the visible signs of the Holy Spirit have been?

❖ What does this passage indicate about baptism's power to save people?

❖ Simon wanted to buy the power of God. Would Jesus see any trace of buying or selling of church office or privileges in our churches today?

➤ Peter had harsh words for Simon’s audacious proposal. The Holy Spirit is a gift, and His power cannot be manipulated or controlled by humans. And in His power, the Holy Spirit confirmed that these Samaritans were now God’s children.

Acts 8:26-40-Philip and the Ethiopian

26 Now an angel of the Lord said to Philip, “Go south to the road—the desert road—that goes down from Jerusalem to Gaza.” 27 So he started out, and on his way, he met an Ethiopian eunuch, an important official in charge of all the treasury of the Kandake (which means “queen of the Ethiopians”). This man had gone to Jerusalem to worship, 28 and on his way, home was sitting in his chariot reading the Book of Isaiah the prophet. 29 The Spirit told Philip, “Go to that chariot and stay near it.” 30 Then Philip ran up to the chariot and heard the man reading Isaiah the prophet. “Do you understand what you are reading?” Philip asked. 31 “How can I,” he said, “unless someone explains it to me?” So, he invited Philip to come up and sit with him. 32 This is the passage of Scripture the eunuch was reading: “He was led like a sheep to the slaughter, and as a lamb before its shearer is silent, so, he did not open his mouth. 33 In his humiliation he was deprived of justice. Who can speak of his descendants? For his life was taken from the earth.” 34 The eunuch asked Philip, “Tell me, please, who is the prophet talking about, himself or someone else?” 35 Then Philip began with that very passage of Scripture and told him the good news about Jesus. 36 As they traveled along the road, they came to some water and the eunuch said, “Look, here is water. What can stand in the way of my being baptized?” [37] [c] 38 And he gave orders to stop the chariot. Then both Philip and the eunuch went down into the water and Philip baptized him. 39 When they came up out of the water, the Spirit of the Lord suddenly took Philip away, and the eunuch did not see him again, but went on his way rejoicing. 40 Philip, however, appeared at Azotus and traveled about, preaching the gospel in all the towns until he reached Caesarea.

- ❖ Who told Philip to travel on the road from Jerusalem to Gaza? What do you think was the purpose of this trip?
- Philip was on the move again. He was used by God in Jerusalem; he was used by God in the city of Samaria, and here God was moving him again. God sent Philip to travel on a road in a desert place. If Philip was confused or unsure why God commanded him this, he didn't show it. Rather than questioning God's command, he simply rose and went.
- Gaza was about sixty miles from Jerusalem. We are not sure where Philip started out on this journey, but he quickly met the person God had prepared for this encounter: an Ethiopian eunuch.
- ❖ What is a eunuch? <https://www.bibleref.com/Acts/8/Acts-8-27.html>
<https://biblehub.com/greek/2135.htm>
- ❖ What is the significance of the Ethiopian eunuch, and what does his inclusion in this story teach us about who belongs in God's kingdom?

- ❖ What are some ways you have been prompted to share the gospel? Have you made assumptions about how, or to whom, the gospel must be presented? What can you learn from Philip's example?
- Review **8:36-40.**
- During their conversation, they approached water and the eunuch asked, "*What can stand in the way of my being baptized?*" The rhetorical nature of this question implies the response was *nothing*. We have seen this already in our study (**2:38-41**) and we will see it again in (**10:47-48**). Once someone believes, many times the next step is to be baptized.
- Although there are a variety of views on baptism, we see in the Gospels and Acts that baptism was modeled after the Jewish ritual purification performed in mikvahs. Based on Luke's description, the eunuch most likely went all the way into the water with Philip by his side.