

7522U

NEW ZEALAND BIBLE CLASSES

PREACHING THE RISEN CHRIST TO ALL NATIONS

Speaker: Bro. Roger Lewis

Study #1: The work of Philip going down to Samaria

Reading: Acts 8: 1-13

Brother chairman, and my dear brethren and sisters in the Lord Jesus Christ, and my dear young people.

Well, as our chairman has said, we start a new series tonight, our bible class as it were, gets under way, into one of the new series that we're looking at, God willing, this year. Now this particular study is entitled Preaching the Risen Christ to All Nations, and we're going to look, God willing, at Acts chapters 8 to 10, which is just a short part of the Acts of the apostles, but which marvellously brings forth this particular story of the work of the apostles as they went forth and turned the world upside down with their belief in the power of the risen Christ.

Now you'll notice that you are all sitting at tables, or most of you are, there are some spare spaces, by the way, and we'd love everybody to sit at a table, if that's possible; I can't compel you, I can only inspire you, but the reason for it is as follows, we want to encourage everyone to take notes, either in their bibles or on note paper, right now because this is actually a bible marking session, or rather a bible study session, rather than just a straight talk. Now you'll best facilitate that by being at a table so you can actually write notes into your margins, straightaway. We hope to try and do that as we go through these studies for the next 7 sessions, God willing, so that what we actually do, is not only move through Acts 8 to 10, but hopefully also, practice the skills of bible study. So as we go we're going to say, 'now why would we do this? why would we mark this point? where would we put it? how would we actually write it up?' so that we're actually developing not only our understanding of the bible text, so that God speaks to us, but learning in fact, the appropriate ways of studying the word and putting into practice the things that we've looked at, God willing, over the last two sessions in the previous two weeks.

Now in Acts 8 and verse 1 we read that, 'Saul was consenting unto the death of Stephen. And at that time there was a great persecution against the ecclesia which was at Jerusalem; and they were all scattered abroad throughout the regions of Judea and Samaria, except the apostles. And devout men carried Stephen to his burial, and made great lamentation over him. As for Saul, he made havoc of the ecclesia, entering into

every house, and haling men and women committed them to prison. **Therefore**, they that were scattered abroad went every where preaching the Word'. So the 8th chapter of the Acts of the apostles opens up with this idea, that the ecclesia that was up till this time gathered together in Jerusalem are now scattered abroad. How far are they scattered? Verse 1 says, 'throughout the regions of Judea and Samaria. Having spoken about the death of Stephen and the burial of Stephen, and the work of Saul in the persecution of the ecclesia; from verse 4 onwards of this chapter, Luke is going to tell us, how in fact, that scattering now began to take place. How it was that as the ecclesia began to scatter, the truth would be proclaimed now further and further afield from Jerusalem. So God willing, what we're really going to start with is verse 4 onwards which concerns in this particular case, our story this evening, the work of Philip going down to Samaria.

Now it says in verse 4, 'Therefore they that were scattered abroad went every where preaching the Word'. Now remember that the first thing about bible study is to read carefully, that so much of what we learn doesn't require Greek or Hebrew words, it's the reading of the text more than anything else that will inspire us in the truth with understanding, the reading of it and our meditation upon it. You know, there's a paradox in verse 4, isn't there? here's the paradox: you would think, wouldn't you? that if the ecclesia was to be scattered because of persecution, that the last thing that they'd want to do, is to preach the truth. You'd imagine what they'd do is to slink off to other cities and towns and villages and they would lie low because of the fact that persecution would come against them. Yet Acts 8 verse 4 says, 'they that were scattered abroad because of persecution, verse 1, 'went everywhere preaching the Word', so here's a marvellous thing, that the very work of the apostle Paul (of course, he wasn't the apostle at this stage), he was simply Saul, the very work of Saul in verse 3, who desired to try and stamp out the ecclesia, all he did was scatter the Word afar, a marvellous thing. That in his very endeavours to stop the truth from spreading and because of his persecutions against the ecclesia, what Paul actually became the instrument of was, the spreading abroad of the truth everywhere! Now isn't that a wonderful miracle of God? but it's more than a miracle of God, b&s, because it shows us how deep and how passionate was the belief of these, concerning the risen Christ. No persecution would stop them from preaching the truth, they might be obliged to leave Jerusalem, but wherever they went, they would take the Word with them, and they would preach that Word.

Now did we look up any Greek text to find that out? No! what did we do? we simply read the verse and thought about the words; 'they were scattered because of persecution and yet they preached the truth'. So there's a marvellous exhortation there, isn't there? concerning the power of the belief that these early believers had from the ecclesia in Jerusalem and this wonderful paradox, **that out of Saul's endeavours to stop the growth of the ecclesia, he, in fact, became the very instrument by which the truth was rapidly multiplied.** Now hands up, those that had seen that paradox in verse 4? not many hands up; now hands up those who have marked something in their bible now against verse 4 to say that? So we have to stop now, you see, because this is

what bible marking is all about; if you don't put it in your bible now, you won't remember in 6 months time, I'll guarantee that! By the way, I'm not saying you have to write it in your bible, but I'm saying if you don't write it either in your bible or on a piece of paper that is going to go into your bible, it will be lost in 6 months time and I know what will happen. Sometime later on you'll be doing the readings in Acts 8, and you'll say, 'I think there's a marvellous point about that verse but I can't remember what it was!' that's not how we grow spiritually, so bible study is all about focussing and when we hear something, we say, 'that's a good point, that's a good lesson'. Well, get it down now! that's how we grow spiritually, if we don't do that and our margins are empty 10 years later, we're not actually developing in our appreciation of divine principles. So what was the principle of verse 4? that no persecution or scattering was able to stop these from preaching, so they had absolute conviction of the truth, that's the first point! The second great point was, the paradox, that the very endeavours of Saul, verse 3, to stop the truth from spreading, became the very means by which the truth was spread. A marvellous paradox that God worked out there!

Verse 5 says, 'Then Philip went down to the city of Samaria and preached Christ unto them'. Now that's interesting because if you just hold your hand in Acts 8 for a moment, and coming back to Matthew 10, we know that the Lord had somewhat to say about this matter; 'then Philip went down to the city of Samaria and preached Christ unto them', and that appears to be contrary to the command of Christ, because in Matthew 10 the Lord Jesus Christ, verse 5, 'These twelve Jesus sent forth, and commanded them saying, Go not into the way of the Gentiles, and into any city of the Samaritans enter ye not: But go rather to the lost sheep of the house of Israel'. So here we have the Lord expressly prohibiting that they go and preach the truth in any city of the Samaritans, and yet in Acts 8 verse 5 it says that Philip went down to the city of Samaria and preached Christ unto them. So on what basis did he do that, given the prohibition of Matthew 10? Now that's the sort of thing, by the way, that bible students start to wrestle with, bible students want to ask questions, and the more questions they ask, the more they realize they don't understand. A bible student doesn't rest easy, until they've got an answer!

Well, of course, there happens to be an excellent answer to this little puzzle, doesn't there? Do you know what the answer to that is? well the answer is Acts 1, isn't it? that the Lord Himself overturned His own prohibition. Because in Acts 1, **after He was raised from the dead**, that Christ expressly told His disciples in Acts 1 verse 8, 'but ye shall receive power after the Holy Spirit has come upon you and **ye shall be witnesses unto Me, both in Jerusalem and in all Judea and in Samaria and unto the uttermost parts of the earth**'. So the Lord said, you'll be My witnesses in Samaria, Acts 1 verse 8, so the prohibition of Matthew 10 verse 5 was overturned by the risen Christ and He gave express sanction to the apostles that they could now take the truth further and further abroad, in fact, to the uttermost parts of the earth, and Samaria would, in fact, be one of the great stages by which the truth would be spread abroad. So that's interesting, isn't it? We're just working through one little puzzle at a time and solving it as we go; in fact, some of you may know this, but if you don't it's an excellent

thing.

Do you know that the whole of the Acts of the apostles can be broken into 3 great sections answering to the Lord's comment here in Acts 1 verse 8, 'ye shall be My witnesses in Jerusalem and Judea (stage 1) then to Samaria (stage 2) and finally to the uttermost parts of the earth (stage 3). These were to be the 3 great stages by which the truth would be taken to the then known world. Now let me show you those stages in the Acts of the apostles; well obviously Acts 1 verse 1 to Acts 8 verse 3 or 4 either would suit, becomes the end of the section of the truth in Jerusalem and Judea; it stops in Acts 8 verse 4. From Acts 8 verse 5 onwards, we're told that Philip is going to take the truth to Samaria, which is the second stage of Acts 1 verse 8, 'ye shall be My witnesses in Samaria'. So when does the section on Samaria finish, if it starts in chapter 8 verse 5, where does the section on Samaria finish? well, I can tell you, in fact, it finishes in verse 25, only just a few verses, you see. But in verse 25 of Acts 8 says, 'And they, when thy had testified and preached the word of the Lord, returned to Jerusalem, and preached the gospel in many villages of the Samaritans'. So the truth was preached throughout Samaria in accordance with the Lord's words of Acts 1 verse 8. So I suppose you could say, that from Acts 8 verse 26 onwards must be the next great stage (actually I don't think it is, by the way), I think if you come to Acts 11 verse 19, I think that the third stage of the truth going to the uttermost parts of the earth, actually starts in Acts 11 verse 19 which says, 'Now they which were scattered abroad upon the persecution that arose about Stephen travelled as far as Phoenicia, Cyprus, and Antioch, (and now we're going to find about the truth going to the Gentiles). So basically, everything between Acts 8 verse 26 to Acts 11 verse 18, is like a giant parenthesis, or a giant section that's sort of sandwiched by itself. Now have I lost you there?

So let me just go back over that again! Here it is, the truth to Judea - Acts 1 to Acts 8:4; the truth to Samaria - Acts 8:5 to Acts 8:25; the truth to the uttermost parts of the earth - Acts 11:19 to Acts 28:31.

And, by the way, where's the apostle Paul by the time we get to Acts 28 verse 31? he's in Rome, the truth has gone to the uttermost part of the earth. The Lord's commission of Acts 1 verse 8 has been fulfilled, it's gone to the then known world, to the Roman empire. Now we haven't got time to look at it tonight, but you're probably going to say to me, well, what about that sandwich in the middle that you didn't talk about, Acts 8:26 to 11:18? We won't talk about that tonight, we'll leave that to later on! But there's a very important reason for the sandwich in the middle!

So come back to Acts 8 now and verse 5, because now we appreciate that what we're dealing with in this section is actually a very important part of the fulfilment of the Lord's commission in chapter 1, 'ye shall be My witnesses in Samaria', this is one of the great stages well here it is! Now in Acts 8 verse 5 it says, 'that Philip went down to the city of Samaria, and preached Christ unto them'. A couple of interesting things, how readest thou? Let's just have a look at our geography, shall we? by the way, the city of Samaria

didn't exist in those days, so that's an interesting problem, how did Philip go to the city of Samaria when there was no such city? So that's a little problem that we have to sort out! In the time of the Maccabees, the city of Samaria was utterly destroyed; it was destroyed by John Hircanus of the Maccabees, and in fact, we are told that in New Testament times, the city had been rebuilt by Herod the great, before Christ came along, but the city of Christ's time was not called Samaria, it was actually called Sebaste; there was no city called Samaria in the day of the Lord. Now it's interesting that, and I have to be careful here, I have checked a number of manuscripts; I don't know if you know that much about manuscripts but the main Greek manuscripts are called Olaf A, B, C, D, etc. most of the manuscripts do not have the definite article in verse 5. What do we mean by a 'definite article'? well, it means that most don't have the **'the'** there, it should be translated, 'Philip went down to **a city** of Samaria, not 'the' city of Samaria. Now that's interesting because you see, I think he didn't actually go to the city of Samaria or Sebaste at all, I believe he probably went to another city altogether, but it was **a city** of Samaria.

Now let's just go to our maps for a moment because we've got a geographical puzzle that we've got to sort out; now which map would we turn to? Well, I've got one called Palestine under the Herods which is map 7 in my bible, have you all got that? or Palestine in Christ's Time? can anyone find Sebaste? yes, okay, now if you just come a little further down a few miles south, we come to an interesting city that seems to be between mount Ebal and mount Gerizim and it's called Neapolis, now does any one know what Neapolis really was? Well, Neapolis was Shechem, okay, and by the way, that word 'Neapolis' has been corrupted into the modern name which the Arabs have consistently called this place which is Nablus which is ancient Shechem. Now here's the problem, where does Acts say Philip is? he was one of them who was in Jerusalem, now where's Jerusalem? so if he was going from Jerusalem up to Neapolis, a Samaritan city, he'd have to travel northwards, up along the Judean plateau. Everyone clear on that? Philip would have to come from Jerusalem where he was, he would travel northwards and he'd travel up along the Judean plateau; so what's the problem in Acts 8? read carefully! Acts 8 verse 5 says Philip went **down** to Samaria; he didn't go down, he went up, he went north, but the point was that Jerusalem was regarded as the mother city and as the mother ecclesia, so there was a sense in which when the apostles went forth with their labours, wherever they went, they went **down** from Jerusalem. In fact, in some cases the spirit became one of pride, that they thought very much that they were going down from Jerusalem wherever they went. But that certainly appears to be the sense of the narrative here, because geographically, we know he actually went north and he went to what we believe was **a city of Samaria**, and I believe, the city of Samaria that he probably went to, was in fact, Shechem. I'll tell you why!

You'll notice what happens when Philip arrives there, 'he preached Christ unto them, and the people with one accord, gave heed unto the things which Philip spake'. He had a fantastic response! he arrived in Shechem and everyone fell over the speaker in order that they might come to the knowledge of the truth. It was as if the whole city turned to

him with one accord, but you see, if it was Shechem that Philip had gone to on this particular occasion, then we know the reason for that response, don't we? because the Lord had already preached there Himself. Do you remember that? in John 4, so if you come back there, we find that the Lord Himself had already prepared the ground in this area, and this probably accounts for the degree of response that Philip enjoyed on this occasion. In John 4 we're told in verse 4, it says, 'Jesus must needs go through Samaria; then cometh He to a city of Samaria which is called Sychar near to the parcel of ground that Jacob gave to his son Joseph', (and that parcel of ground, of course, relates to Shechem. So here He is, the Lord Himself, and He not only went to Samaria but He preached the truth there; and this is what He said, verse 22, 'Ye worship ye know not what, for we know what we worship, for salvation is of the Jews; but the hour cometh and now is, when true worshippers shall worship the Father in spirit and in truth. For the Father seeketh such to worship Him. God is a Spirit, and they that worship Him, must worship Him in spirit and in truth. The woman saith unto Him, I know that Messiah cometh which is called Christ, when He is come, He will tell us all things. Jesus said unto her, I that speak unto thee, am He'. And verse 39 says, 'and many of the Samaritans of that city believed on Him, for the saying of the woman who testified that 'He told me all that I ever did'; so when the Samaritans were come unto Him, they besought Him to tarry with them, and He abode there 2 days, and many more believed because of His own word, and said unto the woman, 'now we believe, not because of thy saying, for we have heard Him ourselves and know that this is indeed the Christ, the Saviour of the world'. So Jesus, b&s, had been in this very place Himself, and I think when Philip went down to a city of Samaria in Acts 8 verse 5, he probably went back to Shechem, and there the people with one accord gave heed to them because it says in verse 5, 'he preached the Christ unto them', and they were ready for that because Jesus Christ had already been there and manifested His power amongst these people.

But there were more things to tell them now, weren't there? and Philip would be speaking to them about the risen Christ and about the hope of the kingdom which was to come. Now Philip would be tying the whole story together of Christ's death and His resurrection and the work that He would accomplish. Interesting fact, by the way, the Samaritans believed in a Messiah, they believed in the Messiah of the Old Testament, of course, you know that the Samaritans had a bible which was only the Pentateuch, they only believed in the first 5 books of the bible, so therefore, their belief concerning Messiah was founded in that book and they called Him, the Samaritans have their own name for Messiah, they called Him 'Taheb' which means 'the Restorer', who would be the Messiah, was identical to the prophet of Deuteronomy 18, 'a Prophet like unto Moses, I will raise up from among thy brethren'. One can imagine Philip therefore, going down to this place and preaching to them, the risen Christ, starting at the book of the Law and saying, 'this is the One that Moses was told about in Deuteronomy 18:18, the very 'Taheb', the Restorer, that you yourselves believe in, is none other than Jesus of Nazareth. He would begin with the Law, you see, these people only believed in the Law of Moses, (this would be a fantastic study, wouldn't it?) imagine now, as a digression to Acts 8, is actually thinking about ways to preach to the Christ and the risen Christ, and the kingdom out of the book of the Law! which is the only thing that the

Samaritans used. So that would be an interesting side study, wouldn't it? Christ hidden in the Law, that's what Philip went and spoke to these people.

Now verse 6 says, 'The people with one accord gave heed unto those things' (now remember what we said, good bible study is based on good bible reading, it's all to do with reading carefully), 'the people with one accord', now have you heard that phrase before? yes, let's go back and have a look at that, so that's a key phrase, now have a look at this, Acts 1 verse 14, 'these all continued with one accord', now hands up those that have it coloured in? not enough, this is a key word in the early chapters of Acts, one accord, so if you haven't done it, put them in now; now how do you put them in? Well, if you've got a coloured pencil, colour them now; if you haven't got a coloured pencil, you can do one of two things. Even if you've got an ordinary pencil what you can do is put a little circle around it and I find that's quite a good way or you could put a little cross in the margin, to remind you when get home, that you should in fact, colour that in. So not enough people have got that down so let's do that now; remember there's no time like right now to do these things as you here them. So Acts 1 verse 14, 'they all continued with one accord'; chapter 2 verse 1, 'they were all with one accord in one place'; chapter 2 verse 46, 'and they continuing daily with one accord in the temple'; chapter 4 verse 24, 'and when they heard that, they lifted up their voice to God with one accord; and another one which isn't really quite the same but it's the same spirit, chapter 4 verse 32, 'the multitude of them that believed were of one heart and one soul'; chapter 5 verse 12, 'and by the hands of the apostles were many signs and wonders wrought among the people; and they were all with one accord in Solomon's porch'. Now without making a great deal about this, what inference would we draw from that phrase, do we need to look up the Greek words? if we look up the phrase 'one accord', (3661) what do you think it might tell us? well, it might tell us that they were of 'one accord' perhaps. You see, the real power of it, doesn't lie in the word, does it? what does that phrase tell us about the ecclesia in Jerusalem? it tells us that they had an absolute spirit of unity, they were 100% committed together in the truth, and they felt that bond of the truth, as a power amongst them, they were of 'one accord'.

Now do you see what's interesting about Acts 8 verse 6, here's the next great stage of the truth, now it's going to go to Samaria, and what happens? Philip goes to preach the truth in a city of Samaria and the people with one accord gave heed! Oh, you see, I think that's fantastic! and what's that telling us? What that is telling us is, that these who are non Jewish people can show the same spirit of the truth; the same sense of unity of purpose; the same passion and commitment and they're **not Jews**. Oh, I think Luke enjoyed writing that, I think Luke enjoyed telling us that as the truth was now going to go further abroad to those who were of the Gentiles, moving steadily amongst the Gentiles, and Luke is telling us, **and they showed the spirit**, he says.

So now, what have we done here? Let's just go back to bible study things. We started with the fact that the word 'one accord' in verse 6, is the same as a phrase that has already turned up several times in the early chapters about the ecclesia in Jerusalem and Judea. That's a fact! what principle did we establish out of the fact? the principle

we established is that those who are not Jews are here shown as having the same power to be united in the truth. That's a principle! that the truth taken out beyond Jewry was powerful enough to unite them with that same spirit amongst them. Now what's the exhortation arising from that principle? Well, of course, one exhortation would be, 'do we really have that sense of unity of spirit?' 'do we feel the power of the truth as it was in Samaria here? are we of one accord in our day, or are there so many distractions, so many things affecting us in daily life, so many other things that we're full of that the truth really isn't first and it's not perhaps even second or third, and so are we really of one accord in this the last days? have we got that spirit, yes or no? that's an exhortation! which brings out of a principle, which in turn grew out of a fact. Now if the only thing we had was the fact, which was of this word used several times, then that fact is meaningless, isn't it? The simple fact that that word occurs several times remains just as a fact unless we do something with it. The moment we take a principle out of that, we now have the ability to find and to establish and apply exhortations which are powerful for us all!

So Philip comes down and I think he probably comes down to the very area that Christ Himself has prepared the ground, and he sows the seed and 'puff', up comes a bumper crop. Verse 6 says, that they give heed unto those things which Philip spake, hearing and seeing the miracles which he did, because unclean spirits crying with loud voices came out of many that were possessed with them and many were taken with palsies, and that were lame, were healed'. Oh, now that's interesting too because, well you see, bible echoes; part of good bible study is that you've read your bible carefully enough so that as you're reading through the bible text, other things, other ideas, other quotations spring to mind. Now do any other quotations spring to mind as you read verse 7? Well, by the way, I suppose what I'm saying is I'm asking all these questions but the answers are essentially rhetorical, so we continue to move it along; so even if I pause significantly, I'm not necessarily asking you to come up with a learned and erudite reply. But here's one quotation which ought to spring to mind, now hold your hand in Acts 8 and come back to Mark, now which chapter in Mark? Mark 16, yes, this is the one I was thinking of, because in Mark 16 verse 17 it says, 'These signs shall follow them that believe; in My name shall they cast out devils, speak with new tongues; take up serpents, drink deadly things; they shall lay hands on the sick, and they shall recover; Verse 20, They went forth, and preached everywhere, the Lord working with them, and confirming the Word with signs following'. Now by the way, Where would you like to start that whole run in Mark 16? what verse would you pick it up in Mark 16? verse 15, 'He said unto them, Go ye into **all the world**, and preach the gospel to every creature', and now we have Acts 8, the next great stage of the truth, going beyond the Jews; it's the beginning of the truth going into all the world, and Christ saves, if you do that, you lay hands on the sick and they shall recover and they went forth and they did that, 'and the Lord was with them, confirming the Word with signs, and Philip goes off to Samaria and the unclean spirits come out of them, and them that were taken with palsies, and that were lame' and this is a fulfilment of Mark 16, isn't it? This is the fulfilment of the promise of Christ as they went to take that truth abroad, and it's the **risen Christ** that's with them, it's the risen Christ that's fulfilling that Word with them, with signs following.

Verse 8 says, 'And there was great joy in that city'. Now you see, when we're studying, good bible study is related to good questions! I can think of at least 3 reasons why there could have been joy in the city: now a good bible student says, I know there's at least 3 reasons but maybe one's more important than the other. Can we find out from the record which might be the great reason? I'm not going to tell you any of the reasons but you might like to think about that for homework; I can think of 3 reasons why there was joy in the city, you might be able to think of more, but is there one joy in particular that stands out? see what you think!

Now verse 9 says, 'But there was (now don't you like the word 'but' in the bible record, and the word 'but' is always excellent, isn't it?) **but** there was, there was, verse 9, a certain man called Simon, which beforetime in the same city used sorcery, and bewitched the people of Samaria, giving out that he 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'. So now you see there's a challenge to the truth of Philip, in fact, that challenge was there from the moment that Philip walked into the city.

How do we reconcile what with John 4? That's a good question! and I think the answer is that the Samaritans appear in the record as highly superstitious and they were people that gave credence to superstitions and so obviously what had happened here, I mean this is a while later, we're not told when Simon came into this area, but we know that he was born in Samaria, in fact, I don't know if you know much about Simon but we know from other writings that Simon was regarded as the greatest magician of the time. So I think when it says he bewitched the people, you'll notice that the word is used 3 times; in verse 9, 'he bewitched the people, verse 11, 'he bewitched them, verse 13 which is an interesting idea, in verse 13 I think the word 'wondered' in verse 13, is the same word here(1839) but this time it's Simon that's bewitched rather than the people. So the fact that Christ had been there and preached the truth, didn't mean, and I think when it says in verse 10, 'to whom they **all** gave heed', I wouldn't probably read that to mean every single person; to digress, the word 'all' often doesn't mean all in the sense of absolutely all; do you want to have proof of that? verse 1, 'Saul was consenting unto his death, and at that time there was a great persecution against the ecclesia which were at Jerusalem; and they were **all** scattered abroad except the apostles'. Verse 2 says, 'devout men carried Stephen to his burial', well, there couldn't have been devout men there if they were all scattered abroad. So obviously there were some other people there in Jerusalem aside from the apostles, who obviously weren't scattered. So 'all' doesn't really mean 'all', does it? all means the ecclesia was effectively dispersed, all here means, to all Simon had huge influence in this particular area.

What did he do and what did he say? verse 9, 'He gave out that he himself was some great one, that's interesting actually because I think the phrase 'some great one' in verse 9 and the phrase in verse 10, 'to whom they all gave heed from the least to the greatest, saying, This man is the great power of God', it's almost in verse 10 as if that

reads like a title, a tittle of Simon, this man is - the great power of God, and I think that that perhaps was a title that Simon used of himself, because of his magic tricks; he had given out that, in fact, in some shape or form, perhaps a form of Messiah or great One himself.

Verse 10, 'To whom they all gave heed', is that significant? does that phrase ring a bell in this record? verse 6, 'and the people with one accord gave heed unto those things that Philip spake', so now we've got the challenge, you see, we've got a man who's come into the area and has dominated them with sorceries and with trickeries. By the way, the word 'sorcery' (3096) in verse 9, in the Septuagint version is the word used in Daniel 2 concerning the astrologers; so part of what he was concerned with was the powers of astrology. So firstly, they gave heed to him, but now Philip has come, they give heed to Philip so there is a transfer of interest and intention, as it were, from one to the other.

Verse 12 says, 'But when they believed Philip preaching the things concerning the kingdom of God, and the name of Jesus Christ they were baptized both men and women'. Notice that, not children, those baptized were just adults. Now a couple of interesting things then about verse 12: by the way, this Philip, now who is the Philip of this chapter? Is he Philip the apostle? is he Philip the apostle, one of the 12? Just what would you think, just straight off? hands up those who think it's Philip the apostle? hands up those who don't think it's John the apostle? hands up those who think they could prove either way? Well, it's not Philip the apostle but let's now prove that it's not, so let's just take this idea through for a moment. If you'll come back to Acts 6 for a moment, it says in verse 1 onwards, 'In those days were the number of the apostles were multiplied, there arose a murmuring of the Grecians against the Hebrews because their widows were neglected. Then the 12, verse 2, the 12 called the multitude of the disciples unto them, 'It is not reason that we should leave the word of God, and serve tables. Wherefore, brethren, look ye out among you **seven** men of honest report, full of the Holy Spirit; so we've got the 12 in verse 2 but the 7 in verse 3.

Verse 5 says, 'The saying pleased the whole multitude: and they chose Stephen, a man full of faith and of the Holy Spirit, and Philip, and Prochorus, and Nicanor, and Timon, and Parmenas, and Nicolas a proselyte of Antioch:' and what's interesting, of course, is that all of those seven names are Greek and the problem here related to the Greek widows versus the Hebrew widows, and the congregation of Jews chose 7 Greek Hebrews, as it were, in order to solve this problem. So the 7 are faithful men who are not apostles, but they were responsible for certain matters of administration in the Jerusalem ecclesia and the second of those is a man called Philip, verse 5. Now when we come to Acts 8, what's happened? Just think about this! Stephen's dead, so the first of the 7 is gone, we're specifically told in verse 1 that the 12 apostles were the only ones who remained in Jerusalem; they stayed in Jerusalem whilst the rest of the ecclesia were scattered abroad. So it's unlikely that the Philip of verse 5, who starts going abroad is of the 12, he's more likely to be of the seven. Now let me show you what happens to this man (5376) in this chapter.

Verse 26, Philip arises and goes to the south; verse 40, Philip is found at Azotas; and passing through he preached in all the cities, till he came to Caesarea. Alright! Caesarea, now is that the same Philip that's gone down to Samaria? Yes, the same fellow that's gone to Samaria is now ended up in this chapter in Caesarea. Now come to Acts 21, so this is just a little bit of bible sleuthing here just to make sure that we've got our minds correct on this. Acts 21 verse 8, where did Philip end up? Caesarea, says Acts 9, 'The next day we that were of Paul's company departed, and came unto Caesarea: and we entered into the house of Philip the evangelist, which was one of the seven'. Now is that the same Philip as the Philip of Acts 8 who goes down to Samaria? and the answer is absolutely, yes! okay, same man. He goes to Samaria, he preaches to the Ethiopian eunuch, he's found at Azotus, he travels up to Caesarea, and by the time the apostle Paul comes down to Jerusalem in Acts 21, Philip's still at Caesarea and he's known as one of the seven, not one of the twelve. So the Philip that goes down to Samaria in Acts 8 is Philip the evangelist who is one of the seven and not one of the 12.

Now what's interesting about this and the reason why I'm drawing this out, because you might think that this is a boring fact, so now let me give you something interesting about the balance of the facts; you see, what we really have therefore, is Philip turning up on two separate occasions, Acts 8 and Acts 21. Who is Philip associated with in Acts 8? and the answer is Peter! and Peter is going to come down to Samaria where Philip has done his preaching work, and Peter is going to be involved with the spreading of the truth in this region in concert with Philip. So Philip is brought side by side with the apostle Peter in Acts 8; who's Peter? he's the apostle to the **circumcision**? isn't he? So Philip is brought alongside Peter the apostle of the circumcision in Acts 8! Now is Acts 21, who's Philip associated with? he's associated with the apostle Paul; who's Paul? Paul is the apostle to the **Gentiles**, so on the two great occasions that Philip the evangelist appears in the divine record, on the first occasion he's linked with the apostle to the Jews, and on the second occasion he's linked with the apostle to the Gentiles, and what's Philip himself going to do? and the answer is he's going to be exactly what Luke has made him, the man between the two of those, the man who's in between, who will be the bridge between the truth going from the Jews to the truth going to the Gentiles; and the man who is the bridge between, is Philip the evangelist who takes the truth to the Samaritans; and you know who the Samaritans were, b&s, they were half Jews and half Gentiles. They were a halfway house! they had Jewish blood in them, so therefore, we truly have, as it were, an intermediate stage here, which is partly why the Lord said 'the truth will go from Judea and then out to Samaria', which was like a halfway point; half Jew and half Gentile, and then finally 'to the uttermost parts of the earth', which was to the Gentiles themselves in its fullness. And how does Philip turn up in the divine record? firstly with Peter and then with Paul! I think that's just so fantastic! I think that's just so wonderful how Luke paints that in his story of the Acts of the apostles. Luke is a fantastic writer, b&s, Luke wants us to note all these details, because he's unfolding for us, the way in which the truth would be truly spread abroad to all parts of the earth, but stage by stage as Christ had said. There's the intermediate

stage, and there's the intermediate man, the one who sits between the two, and so the truth going to Samaria here, was truly a great stage in the development of the work and that stage would be lead by this one who was Philip the evangelist, one of the seven not one of the twelve.

How did we work all that out? Well, we simply worked it out by looking up every time the work 'Philip' occurs, placing what happened to him, figuring out that he's one of the seven and not one of the twelve, noting that he's associated with Peter in one chapter and Paul in another, and then saying, what's interesting or significant about that? and of course, it's only when you start to chew on that, and meditate upon it, you suddenly say, 'that's interesting! that's interesting! the fact that he's once with Peter and once with Paul, in fact, that's very interesting that that should be the case.

Well, in Acts 8 verse 14 it says, 'Now when the apostles who were at Jerusalem **heard** that Samaria had received the Word of God, they sent unto them Peter and John', so you see, obviously the apostles also realized how significant this was with the truth going to the Samaritans in this way. I think they saw this as the fulfilment of Acts 1 verse 8, 'ye shall be My witnesses unto Me, ye shall be My witnesses unto Judea, and then unto Samaria', and I think the apostles when they heard about the work of Philip, they felt that it was the next stage that Christ had said would be, and they said, 'we need to authorized this, we need to consolidate this, we need to give apostolic approval to this, so everybody understands that the truth has now gone to this next great stage'. So they did! they sent Peter and John with that work of consolidation and approval might be accomplished as far as the truth going forth to the Samaritans was concerned. That, of course, is whilst an interesting story, is in fact, the next great stage!