**THE BOOK OF ACTS – CHAPTER 8**

**Acts 8:1-4**

1. Who was Saul and to whose death was he "consenting" (Acts 8:1)?

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1. Why would "devout men" (Acts 8:2) lament over Stephen's exemplary courage for Christ?

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**Acts 8:5-8**

1. Where is "Samaria" (see 1 Kings 16)?

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1. Who is "Philip" (Acts 8:5)?

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**Acts 8:9-13**

1. To whom did the Samaritans attribute Simon's powers?

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1. Why did they "believe" (Acts 8:12) Philip, and what does it affirm?

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**Acts 8:14-19**

1. What is meant by "receive the Holy Spirit" (Acts 8:15 & 19)?

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1. Wasn't the Holy Spirit visible as a dove when He descended on Jesus upon His baptism?

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**Acts 8:20-25**

1. Was Simon a believer?

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1. Why does Acts 8:13 say that Simon "believed"?

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**Acts 8:26-40**

1. Who told Philip to catch up to the eunuch?

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1. How was Philip able to hear what the eunuch was reading?

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**SOURCES:**

1. <http://www.bibleversestudy.com/>
2. Life Application Study Bible – NIV
3. Life In The Spirit Study Bible- NIV

**THE BOOK OF ACTS – CHAPTER 8**

**8:1-4**

1. Who was Saul and to whose death was he "consenting" (Acts 8:1)?

**Saul was the "young man" who looked after the clothes of the mob while they stoned Stephen. He then became a leading persecutor of Christians**

1. Why would "devout men" (Acts 8:2) lament over Stephen's exemplary courage for Christ?

**Jewish law prohibited public mourning of any kind for a condemned criminal. By making "great lamentation" (Acts 8:2) over Stephen's death, these men were publicly expressing that he was not a criminal but a righteous man, and in effect protesting against those who murdered him**

Bonus: Why were the other Christians "scattered" (Acts 8:1, 4)?

**Saul might have thought that they scattered to avoid capture and some of the Christians who scattered might have thought that as well. But they then "went everywhere preaching the word" (Acts 8:4). *διασπαρεντες (diasparentes)*, the original Greek word translated "were scattered," gives us the English word diaspora and means "to disperse," as well as “to sow throughout.” Whenever a true Christian church grows, Satan attacks, but God uses that persecution for His purpose, to spread the Gospel to other regions, as happened when the persecution in Europe later spread the Gospel to North America. Satan trying to extinguish Jesus' work is like trying to extinguish an oil fire by throwing water on it - it spreads the fire and makes it bigger.**

**8:5-8**

1. Where is "Samaria" (see 1 Kings 16)?

**The "city of Samaria" (Acts 8:5) is located about 50 kilometers (30 miles) north of Jerusalem in central Israel. Samaria was bought and built in 878 BC by Omri, the king of the northern kingdom of Israel (The twelve tribes of Jews that settled in Israel eventually split into the northern kingdom of Israel and the southern kingdom of Judah): "In the thirty-first year of Asa king of Judah, Omri became king over Israel, and reigned twelve years. Six years he reigned in Tirzah. And he bought the hill of Samaria from Shemer for two talents of silver; then he built on the hill and called the name of the city which he built, Samaria, after the name of Shemer, owner of the hill" (1 Kings 16:23-24). Samaria remained the capital of the northern kingdom of Israel until 722 BC, when it was conquered by the king of Assyria, who exiled its upper class to Assyria and brought in pagans from five Assyrian cities (**[**2 Kings 17**](http://www.bibleversestudy.com/2kings/2kings17-chapter.htm)**) who brought along their idolatry, including child sacrifices (i.e.**[**Moloch**](http://www.bibleversestudy.com/acts/acts7-moloch.htm)**), and intermarried with the lower class Jews who had been allowed to remain in Samaria. (It should be noted that "Samaria" also referred to the lower half of the northern kingdom of Israel, and eight centuries later, to the central third of Israel, with Judea to the south and Galilee to the north.**

1. Who is "Philip" (Acts 8:5)?

**One of the seven deacons of the church in Jerusalem (**[**Acts 8**](http://www.bibleversestudy.com/acts/acts8-bible-study.htm)**)**

Bonus: Why did Philip go to Samaria to preach Christ?

**To obey Him (Acts 1:8)**

**8:9-13**

1. To whom did the Samaritans attribute Simon's powers?

**"God" (Acts 8:10)**

1. Why did they "believe" (Acts 8:12) Philip, and what does it affirm?

**Because he "he preached the things concerning the kingdom of God and the name of Jesus Christ" (Acts 8:12). The Gospel and the name of Jesus Christ overpowers even long-held demonic strongholds.**

Bonus: How can demonic "signs" be distinguished from Godly signs?

**Jesus warned in Matthew 24:24, "For false christs and false prophets will rise and show great signs and wonders to deceive, if possible, even the elect."**

**8:14-19**

1. What is meant by "receive the Holy Spirit" (Acts 8:15 & 19)?

**The conversion of the human heart, which only the Holy Spirit can accomplish, isn't immediately and visually observable. Given that Simon "saw" (Acts 8:18) the manifestation of the Holy Spirit when Peter and John "lay hands" (Acts 8:19) on the people, the context of this passage makes it likely that the new Christians of Samaria were receiving the observable gifts of the Holy Spirit when Peter and John touched and prayed for them.**

1. What gifts could the new Christians have received?

***επιπεπτωκος (epipeptokos)*, the original Greek word translated "fallen" in Acts 8:16 is derived from the same root verb as *επεπεσεν (epepesen)*, the original Greek word that is translated "fell" in Acts 10:44 (**[**Holy Spirit falls**](http://www.bibleversestudy.com/acts/acts10-holy-spirit-falls.htm)**): 44 While Peter was still speaking these words, the Holy Spirit fell upon all those who heard the word. 45 And those of the circumcision who believed were astonished, as many as came with Peter, because the gift of the Holy Spirit had been poured out on the gentiles also. 46 For they heard them speak with tongues and magnify God. Then Peter answered, 47 “Can anyone forbid water, that these should not be baptized who have received the Holy Spirit just as we have?” (Acts 10:44-47). Notice that Peter simply declared that the recipients had "received the Holy Spirit" (Acts 10:47) to refer to the fact that they had received the "gift" (Acts 10:45) of "tongues" (Acts 10:46). Therefore, the gift of tongues could have been one of the manifestations of the Holy Spirit that "Simon saw" (Act 8:18) as well.**

Bonus: Why might the Lord have delayed the gift of the Holy Spirit to the Samaritans until Peter and John came to them?

**To have Peter and John return to Jerusalem and share with any skeptics among the Jewish Christians the 'proof' that God had expanded the church to include even the Samaritans. Also, the new Samaritan Christians could have claimed independence from the church in Jerusalem if they had received the gift of the Holy Spirit from someone else laying hands on them. The Lord was keeping the growing church united in Christ**

**8:20-25**

1. Was Simon a believer?

**Acts 8:13 says, he “believed” and that he was even baptized, but the rest of the passage above raises serious questions about his faith.**

1. Why does Acts 8:13 say that Simon “believed”?

**For the same reason that James sarcastically chastises in James 2:19, “You believe that there is one God. You do well. Even the demons believe – and tremble!” The root of the original Greek words translated “believe” is *πιστευω (pisteuo)*, which can mean “to think to be true,” “to trust,” or “to have Christian faith.” Both Simon and demons “thought it true” that God is God, but they didn’t “have Christian faith.” Jesus wasn’t their personal Lord and Savior.**

Bonus: What does this passage indicate about baptism’s power to save people?

**Simon was baptized but died unsaved and went to hell. Baptism is supposed to outwardly express that one has been saved; it does not bring about salvation.**

**8:26-40**

1. Who told Philip to catch up to the eunuch?

**The Holy Spirit**

1. How was Philip able to hear what the eunuch was reading?

**In those days, all reading was customarily done aloud, even when alone.**

**SOURCES:**

1. <http://www.bibleversestudy.com/>